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SWA Bulletin Achievers 2025 Special



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SCOTTISH WHOLESALE ACHIEVERS AWARDS CELEBRATE PEOPLE, INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION ACROSS SCOTLAND'S FOOD AND DRINK WHOLESALE SECTOR

SCOTLAND'S most innovative, forward-thinking and resilient wholesalers – and their people – have been recognised and rewarded by the industry at the annual Scottish Wholesale Achievers Awards.

Achievers, now in its 22nd year and organised by the Scottish Wholesale Association, recognises excellence across all sectors of the wholesale industry and the achievements that have made a difference to individuals, communities and businesses over the last year.

Over 550 guests attended the Achievers gala dinner and awards presentation, hosted by sports broadcaster Eilidh Barbour, at the O2 Academy Edinburgh, on Thursday, 20 February. Scotland's Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands, Mairi Gougeon MSP, was in attendance and co-presented two awards.



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Wholesaler categories up for grabs incorporated retail, foodservice, licensed, technology, and sustainability and there was also an award for the wholesaler deemed Great Place to Work, this year won by Fáilte Foods, Glasgow.

Scotland's wholesalers also had an opportunity to impress the judges in the Best Marketing and Best Innovation categories and demonstrate their commitment to the environment in the Sustainable Wholesaler of the Year category.

Recognising the importance of people within the wholesale industry, Achievers paid tribute to the many individuals who play such an integral part in the success of wholesale and supplier businesses with awards for Rising Star, Employee of the Year, Wholesale Local Food Champion, Supplier Sales Executive of the Year, and Wholesale Driver of the Year.

Wholesale Local Food Champion and Employee of the Year were both won by Megan Smith, purchasing co-ordinator at Glasgow-based Lomond Foods while Rising Star of Wholesale went to Matt Farmer, commercial development co-ordinator at Brakes Scotland.



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With the judges highlighting John Martin's "passion, patience, caring nature and customer service" as second to none, the employee of Kilmarnock-based Braehead Foods took home the Wholesale Driver of the Year accolade.

The Supplier Sales Executive of the Year award was won by Craig Barr, regional business development manager at AG Barr, who the judges described as "absolutely dedicated to his company and his customers".

Multiple winners on the night included United Wholesale (Scotland) – picking up Best Delivered Operation – Retail, Best Cash & Carry for its depot in Queenslie, Glasgow, Best Licensed Wholesaler – Off-Trade, and Best Marketing Initiative.

In the Best Cash & Carry category, the judges praised United's "first-class customer service and shopping experience, with particularly impressive NPD activation and digital activity". They added: "It offers retailers advice, collaborates closely with suppliers, and has a dedicated and well-supported team."



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And in Best Delivered Operation – Retail, while United claimed the title, the worthy runner-up, CJ Lang & Son, went on to win Best Symbol Group, with the judges pointing to the Dundee-based Spar business’s “excellent execution in-store, and its onboarding strategy and initiatives involving local communities” which made it stand out from its competitors.

Meanwhile, United’s “Spin To Win” concept entered for Best Marketing Initiative was described by the judges as a “game-changer and a fantastic way to generate excitement for a brand, drive footfall into depots, and gain distribution”, ensuring another accolade for the wholesaler’s award cabinet.

For west of Scotland wholesaler JW Filshill, it was “meeting its vast number of sustainability and environmental goals” that saw it take home the important Sustainable Wholesaler of the Year category – with the judges stating that the business has worked on several initiatives that have been “for the wider benefit of other wholesalers, suppliers and retailers”, with staff empowered by senior management to take the lead in driving sustainability initiatives.



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Best Delivered Operation – Foodservice was also a close-run category, with the independent judging panel forced to implement a tiebreaker question to choose the winner – Brakes Scotland – from the top five entrants. In its answer, the business “clearly demonstrated how it put its customers’ plight ahead of its own commercial interests”, the judges said.

In the two drinks categories, United Wholesale (Scotland) won Best Licensed Wholesaler with the judges pointing to its “incredible supplier and customer relationships” and pushing NPD in a tough market, helping suppliers and customers understand Scottish legislation and investing in its retailers – and having a “forward-thinking attitude in the digital space”.

For Inverarity Morton, Best Licensed Wholesaler – On-Trade, the judges were impressed with the sales team’s excellent product knowledge and a minimum of Level 2 accreditation from the Wine & Spirit Education Trust, as well as the Glasgow company’s “exceptional support for its customers with its use of the Power BI business intelligence system to present its range, pricing and product details”.



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Technology was at the fore for Lynas Foodservice in Bellshill in the Best Innovation category. Its AI process that allows orders placed by photo, Excel, Word or PDF to be automatically put into the system for picking and invoicing impressed the judges. They also said that Lynas took the title because its innovation has not only benefited its own business but has also generated interest from many of its competitors.

Suppliers were recognised for their support of the wholesale sector with awards in categories including Best Overall Service and Best Foodservice Supplier – both won by soft drinks giant AG Barr. Both of these awards involves wholesaler members of the SWA voting each month over a four-month period for the shortlisted suppliers.

AG Barr also shone in the Project Wholesale category for “The Great Transition”, its project to move all the sales from Barr Direct into the wholesale industry. And in a fun segment during Achievers, attendees watched five TV ads shortlisted by wholesalers across Scotland with the Best Advertising Campaign going to the supplier’s IRN-BRU – ‘Mannschaft’.



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Indeed, it is the first time in the history of Achievers that one supplier has won all the supplier awards.

Meanwhile, Local Supplier of the Year, this year claimed by Perthshire-based Taylors Snacks, complements the SWA's Delivering Growth Through Wholesale (DGTW) programme with entrants showing how they have implemented new processes to help support Scottish producers hoping to supply their business.

Finally, two stalwarts of the Scottish wholesale industry – Jonathan Kemp and Ian Johnstone of AG Barr, who have been staunch supporters of Achievers since its inception – received Lifetime Achievement Awards in recognition of their valued contribution to the sector over many years.

The event also recognised wholesale members Dunns Food and Drinks and JW Filshill, both of which are celebrating their 150th anniversaries in 2025.



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SWA chief executive Colin Smith said: “Tonight is all about recognising and celebrating the exceptional achievements of not only businesses but also individuals in the Scottish wholesale channel, the gateway to Scotland’s food and drink industry.

“The people who work in wholesale are the glue that binds our food and drink industry together – be it those who work in partnership with our producers and suppliers, or those who help support, develop and deliver into the local retailer, hotel, school or hospital.

“Once upon a time, the wholesale industry largely flew under the radar of those in the corridors of power, but today, Scotland’s wholesale industry is far more widely recognised by MSPs and MPs alike for the vital role it plays in the food and drink supply chain.

“Every wholesaler, every supplier – be they local or national, large or small – are an essential cog in Scotland’s complex food and drink supply chain. That’s why is it more important than ever that we celebrate their success and recognise everything they do to ensure that food and drink reaches our plates and tables.”

Thank you again to all our principle sponsors.











Check out more photos from the night here:

tinyurl.com/AchieversPics2025

Want to look back on Achievers 2025? Watch our video below:

tinyurl.com/AchieversVid2025

winners

Scottish Wholesale Association

achievers 2025

Rising Star of Wholesale

Sponsored by KP Snacks

Highly Commended: Suzanne Hood, Bidfood
Runner-Up: Zygmunt Jan Ruszczyk, United Wholesale Grocers
Winner: Matt Farmer, Brakes Scotland

Project Wholesale

Sponsored by Tapestry

Joint Runner-Up: Swizzels
Joint Runner-Up: Tennent's
Winner: AG Barr

Local Supplier of the Year

Sponsored by Lomond Foods

Highly Commended: Amity Fish Company
Runner-Up: Mossgiel Farm
Winner: Taylors Snacks

Wholesale Driver of the Year

Sponsored by Philip Morris

Highly Commended: Stephen Maxwell, Booker Glasgow
Joint Runner-Up: Charles McSherry, JB Foods
Joint Runner-Up: Jesus Jiminez Ramos, Bidfood Glasgow
Winner: John Martin, Braehead Foods

Great Place to Work

Sponsored by Premier Foods

Highly Commended: Greencity Wholefoods
Runner-Up: Lynas Foodservice
Winner: Falte Foods

Best Delivered Operation – Retail

Sponsored by C&C Group

Runner-Up: CJ Lang & Son
Winner: United Wholesale (Scotland)

Best Delivered Operation – Foodservice

Sponsored by Red Bull

Highly Commended: Lomond Foods
Runner-Up: Falte Foods
Winner: Brakes Scotland

Employee of the Year

Sponsored by Coca-Cola Europacific Partners

Highly Commended: John McAndie, Bidfood
Runner-Up: Matthew Wardropper, JB Foods
Winner: Megan Smith, Lomond Foods

Best Advertising Campaign

Sponsored by Tapestry

Winner: IRN-BRU 'Mannschaft'

Best Innovation

Sponsored by JTI

Highly Commended: Brakes
Runner-Up: Bidfood
Winner: Lynas Foodservice

Lifetime Achievement

Jonathan Kemp, AG Barr
Ian Johnstone, AG Barr

Best Foodservice Supplier

Sponsored by Bestway

Joint Highly Commended: Unilever Food Solutions
Joint Highly Commended: Vegware
Runner-Up: Taylors Snacks
Winner: AG Barr

Supplier Sales Executive of the Year

Sponsored by Unitas Wholesale

Highly Commended: Jonny Rennie, Taylors Snacks
Runner-Up: Zoe Stephens, KP Snacks
Winner: Craig Barr, AG Barr

Wholesale Local Food Champion

Sponsored by Scotland Food & Drink and TWC

Highly Commended: Gerry Davies, Bidfood
Joint Runner-Up: Matt Farmer, Brakes Scotland
Joint Runner-Up: Ewan Harvie, Brakes Scotland
Winner: Megan Smith, Lomond Foods

Best Symbol Group

Sponsored by Pernod Ricard

Highly Commended: Premier, Booker
Runner-Up: Day-Today, United Wholesale (Scotland)
Winner: SPAR Scotland, CJ Lang & Son

Sustainable Wholesaler of the Year

Sponsored by AG Barr

Highly Commended: Bidfood
Runner-Up: Lomond Foods
Winner: JW Filshill

Best Licensed Wholesaler – On-Trade

Sponsored by Hi Spirits

Highly Commended: Sutherland Brothers
Runner-Up: Dunns Food and Drinks
Winner: Inverarity Morton

Best Licensed Wholesaler – Off-Trade

Sponsored by AB In-Bev

Highly Commended: Booker Irvine
Runner-Up: United Wholesale Grocers
Winner: United Wholesale (Scotland)

Best Marketing Initiative

Sponsored by Suntory

Highly Commended: CJ Lang & Son
Runner-Up: Inverarity Morton
Winner: United Wholesale (Scotland)

Best Overall Service

Sponsored by Bestway

Highly Commended: Imperial Tobacco
Runner-Up: JTI
Winner: AG Barr

Best Cash & Carry

Sponsored by Carlsberg Britvic

Highly Commended: United Wholesale Grocers, Springburn
Runner-Up: Booker, Galashiels
Winner: United Wholesale (Scotland), Queenslie, Glasgow