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SENIORS NAMED UK'S BEST FISH & CHIP SHOP FOR 2012

Seniors in Thornton, Lancashire, has been named the best British fish and chip shop after battering its rivals in the National Fish and Chip Awards 2012 on Tuesday (17 January 2012).

The shop, run by brothers Alastair and Dominic Horabin, was announced as Independent Takeaway Fish & Chip Shop of the Year 2012 by celebrity chef Richard Corrigan at a glittering awards ceremony in London's Riverbank Park Plaza Hotel.

It's a break out year for the north west chippy, which was also a finalist in the Independent Restaurant of the Year and Good Catch categories.

With Alastair's wife, Sally, due to give birth later in the week, January 2012 will be a month to remember for the Horabin family.

Ten of the UK's best fish and chip shops fought hard for the top place, with expert judges deliberating well into the night on Monday. Hanbury's in Babbacombe, Devon, earned second place, while Quayside in Whitby came third.

Alastair said: "To be named the best fish and chip shop in Britain is an honour beyond our wildest dreams. We were delighted to come third last year and spent the past 12 months looking at the ways we can improve our business and add further value to the experience of staff and customers in the shop with this being our ultimate goal.

"We've had the same management with us since we built the shop from a car park in 2006 and our success is thanks to their hard work, passion and dedication. I'm overjoyed for them all and I'm proud to be their boss."

The final 10 places were hard earned after an unannounced visit from industry judges. Shops were assessed on a wide variety of judging criteria including; product quality, customer service, food preparation procedures, hygiene, innovation, staff training and development, promotional activity and approaches to sustainable sourcing.

Organised by Seafish, the authority on seafood, the Independent Takeaway Fish and Chip Shop of the Year Award recognises the wealth of quality, value and choice offered by the nation's much loved independent fish and chip shops. The title has in the past resulted in a sales increase of up to 100 per cent for the winning shop.

Awards presenter and chef-proprietor, Richard Corrigan, said: "Fish and Chips is an iconic meal, part of British culture. Its integrity is preserved by many of the nominees today as it is in Bentley's where it's served every day.

"Combining heritage with innovation, skill with approach, attention to detail with great produce, Seniors well deserve their title of the UK's best fish and chip takeaway. A brilliant execution."

Nikki Hawkins, foodservice and events manager at Seafish, said: “This competition has undoubtedly been our fiercest yet and we congratulate Seniors for their stellar effort in achieving the number one spot.

“The awards have recognised the best of the UK’s fish and chip shops for the past 24 years with 2012’s high standard of entries testament to the industry’s commitment to continued improvement and sustainability.”