

Event Caterer of the Year

Sponsored by Rota

THE SHORTLIST

Carringtons Catering

Jockey Club Catering

Payne & Gunter

Searcys

PAST WINNERS

2018

Sodexo

2017

Tapenade,
Eventist Group

2016

Excel London

2015

Global Infusion
Group

2014

Kings Place Events

2013

Absolute Taste



2019 WINNER

Searcys

Searcys is one of the longest-running catering companies in the UK, dating back to 1847. While it is proud of its heritage, the company was recognised by the judges for its forward-thinking outlook.

The company is part-way through a five-year plan, introduced in 2018 by managing director Matt Thomas, that is focused on bringing Searcys' identity closer in line with its legacy while making it more contemporary. It has launched its first corporate responsibility pledges, which include committing to buying the best ingredients, with 90% of fruit and vegetables and all meat sourced from the UK. It has also put in place a target to reduce its waste by 20% and to focus on healthier diets, with a higher proportion of plant-based protein on menus.

The recruitment of talent has been key, with newly appointed recruitment manager Sarah Hutchings revolutionising the way the company attracts employees. As well as posting traditional recruitment adverts, she also uses social media and visits jobs fairs to create talent banks for each London venue. Through the creation of an @searcyspeople Instagram account, she has cultivated a community among employees that engages the team as well as attracting new staff. A monthly newsletter sharing news across the business adds to the sense of inclusivity among employees.

Development Searcys, a learning and development programme of more than 400 courses, has proved fundamental in retaining employees. Additionally, Searcys has created support for local communities through its partnership with Beyond Food, a social enterprise that helps those who are at risk of homelessness to gain employment in hospitality.

All these initiatives have helped drive a healthy organic sales growth, with Searcys achieving a significant number of contract

“Great to see an organisation with a key focus on the past, present and future”

Simon Lewis

wins. For instance, Searcys at the Gherkin recently enjoyed its best year to date, hosting more than 900 events and 22,614 guests, while catering sales at Blenheim Palace, which has been a client since 2012, have seen a 35% uplift.

Winning the contract at the Alnwick Garden in Northumberland was especially noteworthy, as it was where founder John Searcy worked as a confectioner to the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland. The current Duchess described the company as having “a world-renowned reputation for quality, sustainability and innovation, using sustainable produce and a delightful food and beverage offering that fits our vision of the Alnwick Garden and the Treehouse”.

Searcys is regarded as an event caterer that is set to have an equally lengthy future as it has had an illustrious past.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

“The winner champions great British produce and shows innovation in sustainability and stand-out food trends.”

Julia Edmonds, managing director, Lexington

“I loved that there was a holistic view on all aspects of the company.”

Mark Philpott, chairman, Vacherin

“Great to see an organisation with a key focus on the past, present and future.”

Simon Lewis, operations manager, HIT Training

