

THE GATEHOUSE, CHEPSTOW

WINS SAWDAY'S GUEST CHOICE AWARD

www.sawdays.co.uk/awards2014

Sawday's, champions of independent and special places to stay has launched its first ever set of awards to coincide with its 20th anniversary. [The Gatehouse](#) in Monmouthshire have been chosen as the **Guest Choice Award** winner.

The awards were presented by Alastair and Toby Sawday to winners at a celebratory event at the Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol on 27 October 2014.

All 13 Sawday's award winners have been selected by a panel of judges that included Alastair and Toby Sawday, Ben Ross, Travel Editor at the Daily Telegraph and Columba Colivet from Country Homes and Interiors magazine.



In May, Sawday's guests were asked to nominate their favourite Sawday's stay. After more than 1000 nominations, The Gatehouse was crowned winner of the Sawday's Guest Choice Award.

Winning the award with an overwhelming majority, guests praised The Gatehouse:

"Everything is so beautifully done, from the generous welcome basket to the view from the top of the tower. We loved every aspect of our stay and can't wait to return to the Gatehouse!"

"Enchanting setting; step through the gate and the world seems to stop. Beautiful space, just what is needed for a romantic idyll."

"The Gatehouse is an utterly delightful property - magical in its era and decor... a fairytale to stay at."

Owners Juliet Grayson and William Ayot say: *"To be picked as the Sawday's Guest's Choice out of almost 5,000 properties is such a privilege. Having used Special Places To Stay ourselves since its earliest days, we've come to understand just how special Sawday's choices really are, whether that be in Suffolk or Dorset, Scotland or Wales, so to know that our special place is appreciated in such good company is an extraordinary compliment. We feel proud, and honoured, and deeply touched."*

The Gatehouse has a rich and varied history, having welcomed guests from lords, ladies and generals, to courtiers, writers, and bishops since 1271. When Juliet and William arrived in 2003, renovating it was no mean feat; a fire ten years earlier had left the place dangerous and unfit for

habitation. Restricted by the building's 2* listed status, they embarked on a project to secure the structure and transform the interior. Homely touches were added such as two-storey-high brocade curtains, a set of original agricultural prints by 1920s artist Clare Leighton and a wet-room in a once dusty pigeon loft. Inspired by the many lives of the home, owner and writer William Ayot wrote a 61 page history for visitors.

Alastair Sawday says of the awards, "It is a real joy for us to be able to shine a light on the work of such talented and committed people as our Award winners and see so many Special Places doing their own thing and doing it brilliantly. These lovely winners are just the tip of the Sawday iceberg; they are among hundreds more whose work sparkles and makes travel so rewarding.

- Ends -

For photography or an interview with owners of the Guest Choice Award winners Juliet Grayson and William Ayot, contact Sawday's press office.

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Note to editors:

About Sawday's

Sawday's was founded by Alastair Sawday who decided to seek out special and independent places to stay. Sawday's published its first ever guide, Special Places to Stay: French B&Bs in 1994, and has sold more than 1.4 million guidebooks since, as well as providing online guides for UK, France, Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Italy.

Sawday's (www.sawdays.co.uk) is neither a travel agent nor a booking facility but is a respected, independent voice for thoughtful travellers. All of Sawday's places have been inspected, but what makes each place 'special' varies hugely. Common to all are owners whose personality, friendliness and local knowledge ensure a memorable stay.

Sawday's has 5000 special places, an eclectic selection of B&Bs, hotels, self-catering places and pubs & inns as well as places to 'glamp' through Sawday's sister company, Sawday's Canopy & Stars. Each Special Place is inspected before selection; only the most special receive the Sawday's stamp.