

Kelso couple still basking in the glory of producing the goods 12 months on

AFTER being crowned last year's Local Produce Champions in the Eating Out Competition, Annika and Gavin Meiklejohn (pictured) are still reaping the benefits at The Cobbles Inn.

The young couple had only taken over the Kelso establishment (inset) a few months before and were thrilled to pick up the award for serving the best local produce in a category sponsored by NFU Scotland.

Chef Gavin enthused: "We were very pleased to get this award so soon after opening as it gave us lots of publicity, much more than we thought, and it has brought in new trade."

The couple received many congratulations from their customers at the time of the presentation last November and since then the certificate has sat proudly in the newly-refurbished bar, highlighting Gavin's continuing commitment to using fresh local produce.

He added: "Local produce is not always the least expensive option, but it's such good quality here in the Borders. I enjoy using it, especially in a town like Kelso that has so many visitors."

"It's very popular with our customers who like to feel they are tasting a flavour of the region and making a real local connection. The award flagged up our dedication to only using the best ingredients."

Annika, who deals with front of house, agreed: "From the customer point of view, the competition gives an assurance that we are taking the trouble to provide really good fresh food. It's a great recommendation to someone who doesn't know the area - a recognition of good quality."

Both believe the competition is very worthwhile. Gavin stressed: "I would definitely recommend that all establishments get involved in the competition. We use the award by mentioning it on all our menus and printed stationery."

"Encourage your customers to vote for you this year."

If you have a favourite eating establishment that deserves an award, nominate them for one of this year's Scottish Borders Eating Out Awards.

As part of the competition,



customers are being asked to pen an entertaining 100-word piece to describe an eating-out experience in a Borders establishment.

All entries will be judged by the editor of **The Southern Reporter** at the end of the competition which closes on August 25 and winning entries will be featured in these columns later in the year.

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- Gavin Meiklejohn