Media release

Newest Scottish Experience Draws Plaudits with Thrilling Preview Night

One of Scotland’s oldest institutions has thrown open its doors, allowing Scotland’s foremost travel agents, event agents, hoteliers and tourism industry influencers to experience the newest Scottish attraction before it opens to the public.

Visitors from across the globe will soon be given the chance to say Slàinte to a Scottish night to remember at the historic Playfair Building at Surgeons’ Hall in Edinburgh.

Over one hundred leading industry experts were given the chance to sample the food, music and entertainment which will be laid on for up to 16,000 visitors per year.

Leading the praise, Alexandru Dina-Gargala, Marketing Associate at Expedia, said: “This is exactly what tourists look for. They want to discover the place, immerse themselves in the culture and get a feel for the place that they are in.

“This event will give them that real feeling of discovery.”

Hosted by local legend Bill Barclay, guests to the The Slàinte Scottish Experience will be treated to food, drink and a show featuring bagpiping, world renowned Scottish musicians, including accordionist Gordon Pattullo and fiddler Iain Anderson and a traditional display of Scottish dancing from the Angela Forsyth Dancers.

The real star of the show promises to be the setting itself. The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh is one of the world’s oldest medical institutions founded in 1505 after receiving a Royal Seal of Cause from the town council which was ratified by King James IV 1506.

John Donnelly, Chief Executive at Marketing Edinburgh, said: “The highlight for me tonight was Surgeons’ Hall. I always personally enjoy my visits here and at Marketing Edinburgh we do a lot of work with Surgeons’ Hall.

“On top of that, to see the guestlist enjoying themselves in the environment the building offers, to that programme, resulted in a very relaxed and enjoyable evening.”

Once launched to the public The Slàinte Scottish Experience will run regularly from May to October, providing a taste of Scottish cuisine, history and culture in the magnificent setting and it expected to provide a huge boost to the Scottish tourism industry.
Michael McCuish, Assistant PR Manager at Visit Scotland, said: “What is great about this evening is that it really encapsulates the Scottish spirit. It offers everything you want, from the food and drink, from the hospitality, the dancing and the singing.

“My advice for anyone would be to come, experience it for yourself and have a great time here at Surgeons’ Hall.”

Scott Mitchell, Commercial Director at Surgeon’s Hall said: “This has the potential to be one of the biggest dedicated events for visitors to Edinburgh that has been launched in years. We are determined to get it right, so it is essential for us to ensure the first people to test it out are those experts most deeply embedded in Scotland’s tourism industry.

“They are the people who help attract people to Scotland, make sure that visitors have the best possible experience while they are here. They are also the people who will be working alongside us and we want them to show them exactly what a quality event we are laying on.”

The traditional evening is the latest development of The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh Commercial Enterprises, which makes the most of the institution’s impressive buildings, to help safeguard the College’s globally important work.

The Slàinte idea was formulated because the redevelopment of the Edinburgh St James area means the closure of the King James Thistle Hotel – and end to the popular ‘Jamie’s Evenings’ which have run there for 40 years, entertaining tourists.

Scott Mitchell added: “When we heard Jamie’s Evenings were coming to an end something clicked into place and we realised there was an important opportunity for the Royal College – and a fantastic service for visitors to the city.

“There is an undoubted demand because for 40 years visitors have been flocking to these evenings in a hotel function suite. Think how much more amazing that experience will be in the unparalleled setting of our Playfair Main Hall.

“It is important for those within the industry to see just how much potential The Slàinte Scottish Experience has and how we could make this a top destination for international travellers. We are hugely excited about the possibilities, opening up a genuine Scottish architectural gem to visitors. In fact, we are pretty confident that it won’t just be tourists who come along.”

It is renowned for its Playfair Building, dating back to 1832, including the magnificent, Playfair Hall, where the events will be held. The College is also home to the famous Surgeons’ Hall Museum, which houses collections of international importance.

The Royal College provides education and assessment for medical students, surgical trainees and consultants and supports research to advance standards of care for the future. Surgeons trained and assessed through the College take skills all over the world.

The college’s Commercial Enterprises promotes, sells and manages all commercial activities held within the College Campus, which include the four-star, 77-bedroom hotel, Ten Hill Place. All profits support the charitable aims of the College which are education, assessment and advancement in surgery.

The nights will officially open to the public in May with tickets priced at £65 per person. This includes the show, dinner, a taste of whisky at the Address to the Haggis and unlimited wine, beer and soft drinks.
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