



PURDEY

Gun & Rifle Makers

PRESS RELEASE
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TWO OUTSTANDING CONSERVATION PROJECTS TIE FOR GOLD IN 2011 PURDEY AWARDS

The owners of a once derelict industrial site in Essex, Gary Wilson and Steven Wallis, and a wild grey partridge restoration project within a family farm shoot in Bedfordshire run by Simon Maudlin, have been announced as the joint winners of the coveted Purdey Gold Award.

Passionate conservationist and TV personality Phil Spencer also presented the Gold Award Certificates and cheques for £3500 to the winners at the Purdey Awards for Game and Conservation held last night (17th November) at Purdey HQ in London's Mayfair.

Gary Wilson and Steven Wallis acquired Berwick Marshes in Rainham, Essex, just 8 miles from London Bridge, in 2008. It is now an SSSI (site of special scientific interest) which they have successfully transformed from an 80 acre expanse of exhausted gravel pits into 30 acres of fen and open ponds (providing up to eight high quality wildfowling days per season) and 50 acres into a peaceful sanctuary harbouring a rich biodiversity of plant and wildlife including wild pheasants, skylarks, orchids and a thriving adder population. The land is now also grazed by rare breed Dexter cattle which provide a natural means of controlling the spread of invasive scrub.

Simon Maudlin took over the management of his family's Caldecote Farm Shoot in 2002 after studying land and shoot management at Sparsholt College. He has successfully built on the 800 acre Bedfordshire shoot's sound foundations, which were established by his father in the early 1960's. As a result of Simon's energetic conservation efforts and skilful management, the shoot now boasts a sustainable population of wild grey and wild red leg partridge, which is supplemented by a modest release programme of 1000 pheasant and 600 red leg partridge, which is managed without detriment to the wild populations.

Simon Maudlin has turned a good family shoot into something exceptional, creating a wildlife haven for a multitude of species within an intensive farming regime while actively encouraging the involvement of his local community.

Phil Spencer also presented Awards Certificates and Laurent-Perrier Champagne to eight further shortlisted conservation projects across the UK.

The Purdey Silver Award went to the Camddwr Shooting Society, based near Aberystwyth. The Society is celebrating its Golden Jubilee and received recognition for its community spirited conservation efforts and shoot improvement.

The Purdey Bronze Award was presented to the Irish Grouse Conservation Trust for their well managed and successful efforts to re-establish a red grouse population at Glenwherry Moor, in County Antrim, Northern Ireland.

Meanwhile Dr. Stephen Marsh Smith, Wayne Richards and Ted Filmer of Ireland Moor, near Builth Wells, received a Highly Commended Certificate for ongoing efforts in restoring red grouse to Central Wales.

Richard Purdey said:

“Our judges were impressed by the wide variation of entries this year. The key objective of the Purdey Awards is to give recognition and reward to those who achieve exceptional results from their shoot management and conservation work while involving local communities to educate wider audiences.

“We must remember, “added Mr Purdey, “that without game shooting there would be very little motivation or money to undertake conservation work and without it our countryside’s carefully managed and balanced eco system would soon unravel and become barren.”

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The Purdey Awards for Game and Conservation have their origins in the Laurent Perrier Wild Game and Conservation Awards, which were run annually by Laurent Perrier Champagne (UK) Ltd from 1986 until 1998. James Purdey & Sons took over their sponsorship in 1999, but Laurent Perrier have maintained their support and connection with the Awards by generously providing their champagne for the presentations ceremony, prizes for the winners and finalists, and to assist the judges’ deliberations at their twice yearly meetings.

The Panel of Judges is chaired by the Marquess of Douro, and the competition is organised and run by Richard Purdey, in close cooperation with The Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust. Among members of the judging panel are The Duchess of Devonshire; Jonathan Young, Editor of *The Field*; David Clark, Head Keeper at Sandringham; Roy Green, Sporting Manager of Buccleuch Estates and Will Garfit, author, artist, and a former winner of the Laurent Perrier Award.

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