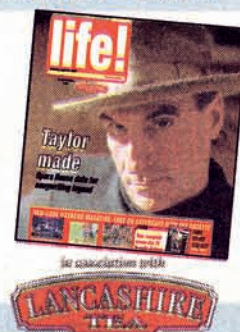




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New 'Number One' aiming for Illuminations opener

Best B&B aims to light up town

By NICK HYDE
Business Writer

WE'RE Number One – but we're not stopping there!

The owners of Blackpool and Britain's best B&B say they have plans to open a new self-styled guesthouse in time for the Illuminations.

And as the champagne continues to flow at the Number One in South Shore, Claire and Mark Smith have set their sights on a former hotel in Harrowside.

The three-bedroom boutique-style B&B, on St Luke's Road, was crowned the best in the country at the tourism "Oscars" – a glittering ceremony on Wednesday.

But Mark is hoping some of his wife's good luck will rub off on him when he opens the new 'Number One' at the end of August.

RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL B&B: CLAIRE SMITH'S TOP FIVE TIPS

- **ANTICIPATE** what the customer wants and provide what you think every person could need
- **MAKE** your accommodation as nice as many people's homes are these days
- **IT'S** got to have a comfortable bed
- **IF** you don't provide evening meals, make sure the breakfast is the best
- **BE** approachable, keep your door open and, no matter what happens, keep smiling!

The 12-room former Red Court Hotel, on Harrowside West, is undergoing a six-figure makeover and is based on the success of the couple's B&B just down the road.

With views of the Solaris Centre and the attractions of New South Promenade, the new guesthouse will have similar features to those which made the original Number One a landslide success.

Mark said: "The new guesthouse will have some elements from the original Number One but on a bigger scale.

Delegates

"We have totally refurbished the former hotel, adding a new roof and rooms, and giving it a more welcome feel.

"I have invested in the property with two silent partners and we are set to open at the same time as the Illuminations."

The couple will still continue to run the original Number One, with Mark taking the helm at his new venture.

Claire said Blackpool's B&B industry could take a leaf out of Number One's book to improve

the resort's status as a seaside resort.

She added: "The original Number One will always be my baby but there is no reason as to why all Blackpool B&Bs can't be as successful as we are.

"When we started with the Old Coach House, 16 years ago, there was little help available.

"Now it is nigh on impossible to fail with the help you can get from people like the Blackpool Hotel and Guest House Association (BHGHA). I cannot understand how B&Bs in Blackpool can fail."

Derrick Ellershaw, secretary of the BHGHA, said: "I am delighted Claire has found support important from the association.

"We are delighted that one of our members is enjoying great success."

nick.hyde@blackpoolgazette.co.uk



GOLDEN REWARD: Claire and Mark Smith
Picture: BILL JOHNSON

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LATEST VENTURE: The former Red Court Hotel which will open this summer

GTV
FOR a look round the award-winning Number One go to www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk

Assault with a snooker cue

A ST ANNES man playing pool struck out with a cue as he thought he was being sexually assaulted.

Preston Crown Court was told the victim of the attack had not groped Tony Sullivan, but someone else had.

Sullivan, 21, of St Annes Road, St Annes, appeared for sentence after admitting assault. He was sentenced to a 12-month community order and 100 hours unpaid work for the community.

Jo Shepherd, prosecuting, told the court the offence took place on September 17, 2005.

Sullivan lashed out with the cue causing a 3in injury to the left-hand side of the victim's forehead.

Sullivan said he felt someone touch him and he thought he was being sexually assaulted.

Andrew Alty, defending, said Sullivan had believed himself offended against. He struck out but it was not premeditated.

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