

Business

Renewed Skyline is big winner

David Porter



SKYLINE Rotorua took out the top award as Sharp Tudhope Lawyers Exporter of the Year at this year's Bay of Plenty ExportNZ awards in Tauranga last night.

Some 440 high-flying exporters and Bay business and political leaders crammed into the ASB Arena Stadium, which had been redecorated to reflect the glamorous golden age of travel in the 1950s.

"Our Bay of Plenty Export Award entrants this year were from a variety of sectors, ranging from recent start-ups through to established exporters," said head judge Kelvin Trask, director of Productivity.

"The commitment to exporting excellence these businesses demonstrate, and their willingness to be judged, is exciting for our region."

While Rotorua tourism events icon Skyline took out the top award, competition was tight with a region-wide spread of winners, said ExportNZ BOP executive officer Melissa Conrad.

Honey exporters did especially well. Streamland Honey Plant won the YOU Travel Emerging Exporter of the Year award. New Zealand Manuka Group executive chairman Phil Caskey received the Beca Export Achievement Award and the company, which he founded, also took out the Page Macrae Engineering Innovation in Export Award.

Graeme Marshall, a well-known Bay businessman with a passion for shipping and international trade, received the New Zealand Trade & Enterprise Service to Export Award for his outstanding contributions to the export community throughout the region.

Zespri International sponsored the awards evening, themed "1950s — Golden age of air travel" and MC-ed by Samantha Hayes, with the Wellington City Shake Em-on-Downers providing entertainment.

The judges said they were impressed by the variety of businesses that had entered across the awards categories (see panel for the full list of finalists).

Overall winner Skyline Rotorua was cited for having transformed its business, developing a multi-attraction venue which offered visitors a unique and memorable destination experience. The company beat other finalists Automation & Electronics NZ and Ntec Tertiary Group to the title.

Skyline's transformation has included new large runs, wine-tasting facilities, a revamped hospitality offering, new retail platforms showcasing NZ design, a mountain bike track, and a dedicated star-gazing observatory. Skyline is also extensively involved with Destination Rotorua and a wide range of industry and community stakeholders to ensure major national and international events and individual visitors come to Rotorua. "Skyline has transformed their



SUPREME EFFORT: Graeme Marshall won the New Zealand Trade & Enterprise Service to Export Award at last night's Bay of Plenty ExportNZ awards.

Rotorua venue into a multi-attraction, multi-activity international tourism experience," the judges said.

Engineering Innovation in Export Award winner New Zealand Manuka Group harvests and exports both consumer and medical honey products. NZ Manuka also processes seaweed into laboratory-grade agar and bio-media, and manuka leaves from the East Cape into a range of essential oils and bio-active products. Skyline Rotorua and new startup off-road electric bike manufacturer Ubco were the other finalists in the category.

Based in Awakeri near Whakatane and with operations throughout the Eastern Bay of Plenty, NZ Manuka is involved with a range of stakeholders, including beekeepers and landowners via partnership arrangements. The company is building capability and investing heavily in developing manuka plantations, propagating and planting manuka seedlings that will be mechanically harvested.

"NZ Manuka Group is connecting local communities and their natural resources, through a matrix of innovative science, an ethos of environmental sustainability, and smart investment in know-how and people capability," said the judges.

The company's founder, chairman and driving entrepreneurial spirit, Phil Caskey, picked up the Export Achievement award, given to recognise a material contribution to a company's export success by a particular individual within the company.

He was credited as an early pioneer in recognising the wider potential of manuka-based products and has driven the company's scientific research into new products, production facilities and

cultivation and harvesting of manuka plantations for oil extraction, and the incorporation of that oil and derived triterpenes into an ever-expanding product range.

Mr Caskey has led from the front in planning his vision, building teams of collaborators, fostering relationships, harvesting, and building the plant and facilities themselves, the judges said.

"Phil Caskey's vision and determination to establish a business that has, at its core, a real commitment to benefiting communities everywhere, is a significant achievement in its own right."

The other finalists were Chris Chaplin of Trimax Moving Systems and Peter Edmondson and Peter McCormick of Shoti Darts (Puma Darts).

Rotorua-based Streamland Honey Plant, winner of the Emerging Exporter Award, has been operating since March 2014. The company sources bulk honeys from all over New Zealand, tests and grades them, then creates its own blends of manuka UMF quality mark and other mono-floral honeys. Products include Lemon 'n Honey and Cranberry 'n Honey. The flagship brand is Streamland Honey and they also contract pack honey for export.

The judges said Streamland Honey had utilised years of knowledge and in-market relationships to launch its new venture strongly into the NZ honey export market.

"Having designed their own custom-built plant and differentiated their product range from others, they have maximised their considerable growth of revenue ever since starting only a couple of years ago."

Other finalists in the Emerging Exporter category included C-Corp,

Bay of Plenty Expo Award Winners and Finalists

Sharp Tudhope Lawyers of the Year Award Winner: Skyline Rotorua

Finalists: Automation & Electronics

Ntec Tertiary Group

New Zealand Trade & Enterprise Service to Export Award

Winner: Graeme Marshall

Beca Export Achievement

Winner: Phil Caskey — New Zealand Group

Finalists: Chris Chaplin — Trimax Moving Systems

Peter Edmondson & Peter McCormick — Shoti Darts

Page Macrae Engineering Innovation in Export Award

Winner: New Zealand Manuka Group

Finalists: Skyline Rotorua

YOU Travel Emerging Exporter of the Year Award Winner: Streamland Honey Plant

Finalists: C-Corp NZ (Solomon's Chocolate)

You Know We Ain't Volcanic Hills Winery

creator of Solomons Gold C clothing company You Know and Volcanic Hills Winery.