

ENTERPRISE NEWS

AWARD FOR SOUL TREE

AN INDIAN wine company, based in Solihul, has been praised for its performance and vision by the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce (BCC). Soul Tree Wines won the Most Promising New Business category at the BCC's annual dinner and awards last month.

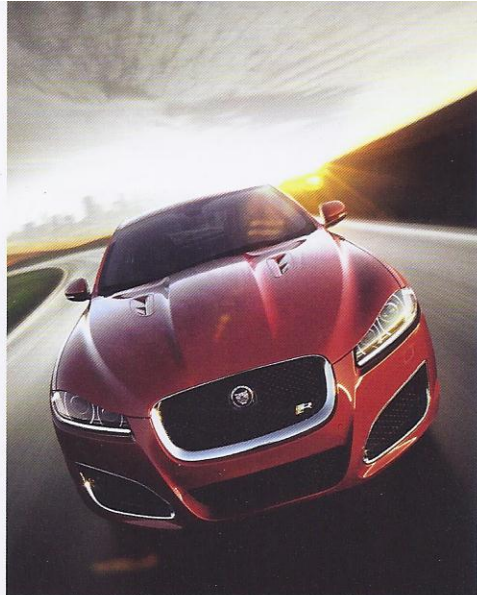
The company, founded by Alok Mathur and Melvin D'Souza in 2009, faced stiff competition from the likes of Aceon Battery Solar Technology Limited, Aristi Limited, Guykat Solutions and Pure Destinations.

"We are honoured that the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce has recognised our performance and our vision," said Mathur.

"Indian wines are the new kid on the block and we are on a mission to put them on the global wine map."

The duo say they spotted a gap in the market for Indian wines as they were not being stocked by restaurants, and research suggested British diners would buy them if they were on the menu.

The insight appears to be correct, as Soul Tree's wines are now stocked by 225 restaurants across the UK.



CLEAR ROAD AHEAD FOR JLR

Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), whose future in the Midlands looked in threat just a few years ago, has posted record profits and is set for a period of high growth and development. The car manufacturer posted end-of-year pre-tax profits of £1.5bn, up from £1.12bn from the previous year, and a new record for the business. Strong international sales, particularly from emerging markets such as China, where sales have risen 76%, help explain the revival in fortunes of the once ailing company. Also, newly launched models, such as the Range Rover Evoque and the Jaguar XF (pictured), have boosted the company's overall appeal.

"The announcement of JLR's financial results is a positive reflection of the continued level of consumer confidence in both of our brands," said Ralf Speth, chief executive of JLR. "These record earnings, driven by strong product demand and operating efficiencies, give JLR the financial impetus to sustain its ongoing investment programme."

ASTON STUDENTS POWER AHEAD WITH HYDROGEN CAR

A TEAM of students from Aston University has won a prestigious award for the creation of a hydrogen-powered car.

Aston's engineers beat 200 other student teams from 24 countries, including one from Oxford University, to win the 2012 Shell Eco Marathon Europe challenge.

Under the rules of the competition, which was held Rotterdam, Netherlands, the students' vehicles had travel as far as possible on just 1 kWh or 1 litre of fuel.

Aston's winning car has a body made from cardboard, sandwiched between plywood, and tyres made from bio-resin infused with hessian fibres.



The 10-strong team, lead by Masters student Ian Sleeman, has spent over 18 months working on the car. Professor Robert Berry of Aston University said: "We're delighted that Aston students have had an opportunity to showcase their unique car concept on the international stage. We are all very proud of their achievement."