

# Soul Tree branches out

**S**oul Tree Wines, which won the “Most Promising New Business” accolade at this year’s Birmingham Chamber Awards, has received another award.

The Solihull-based Indian wine company has been named on the Startups 100 list as one of the UK’s most creative, original and innovative new companies.

The firm, co-founded by Alok Mathur and Melvin D’Souza, is determined to put Indian wines firmly on the global map.

In less than 18 months since the company was formed it has placed Indian wines in over 225 restaurants across England, and has initiated distribution in France, Germany, and Ireland. Talks are also on with potential partners in Spain and Canada.

Soul Tree Wines has also appointed Birmingham company Connolly’s Wine Merchants as its distributors for the region.

Mr Mathur said at the time: “It is the classic case of a



new market being created where none existed, perhaps like what Cobra and Kingfisher have done for Indian beers.”

With more than 10,000 Indian restaurants operating in the UK, serving £180m of wine a year, the potential is clear. In addition, the wine is now being distributed in France.

Soul Tree produces five wines, two reds, two whites and a rose. The first four are a Sauvignon blanc,

Chenin blanc, Cabernet sauvignon and Zinfandel. The rose is a blend of the Chenin and Cabernet.

The grapes for the company’s wines are grown in Nasik Valley, which is 100 miles from India’s western coast.

The wines are made locally to Soul Tree’s specification, and labelled and shipped to the UK, where they are typically sold to mid- to up-market Indian restaurants.

“It’s primarily Indian restaurants, as the wines complement the cuisine, but we also have some hotels and a few pubs as well,” said Mr Mathur.



**Colin McKenzie from PPDG stocks up leaders Vicky Ryan and Dan Smith with treats for the young adventurers**

## Pertemps rolls up to fund circus day

**Twenty inner city children will enjoy the thrills of the big top on an adventure holiday thanks to a Birmingham firm.**

Edgbaston based Pertemps People Development Group (PPDG) has sponsored a day of circus skills through its payroll giving scheme ensuring a holiday for 14-16 year old children from inner-city areas ends on a high note.

Community fundraising manager for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People Vicky Ryan is a volunteer for Birmingham PHAB Camps who organise the holidays each year. She approached the company to ask if they could support this year’s trip to the Lake District after hearing about the scheme.

“PPDG has supported Hearing Dogs for several years now,” said Vicky. “They provide help for many charities and when I mentioned my voluntary role with PHAB the staff decided to get involved. The camps offer an opportunity for children from more deprived backgrounds to enjoy an activity holiday away from the city. We desperately need additional funding so that we can make the experience one to remember and the £280 donation to pay for a circus performer was top of our wish list.”

PPDG’s Phil Pemble said: “Our payroll giving scheme was the perfect vehicle to provide support.” We’ve also donated a supply of chocolates and sweets to help keep energy levels up.”



**L-R: Frank McCarron (leisure area), Oliver Weaver (wildlife), Josh Jones (wildlife), Emily Goodwin, Brogan Cullen, Ben Trinham, Dan Moran, Christina Burt, Alex Hunt, Shaun Lillis (all leisure area)**

## A wild way to raise money

**Staff from West Midland Safari Park donned a variety of fancy dress costumes and regalia during a fun run and despite the awful weather conditions raised £2,000 for animals in the wild that are facing extinction.**

Of the 29 contestants, Oli Butler, who works in the food and beverage department, ran the fastest time (6.48mins) over the 1.6km course. Rich Arnold, from the leisure area, won the prize for the best costume and Kathleen Glover, from the learning department ran away with the prize for the most sponsorship raised by an individual, totalling £600.



## Assay Office hosts hallmark event

**Have you ever wanted to go behind the scenes at the Birmingham Assay Office and see how the hallmarks on your jewellery and precious metals are applied? Or even have a go at striking a hallmark yourself?**

The Assay Office is pleased to announce a series of new Understanding Hallmarking events, which will be the first time in the Assay Office’s 239 year history that members of the public will be able to see inside the hallmarking operation. The events will take place on 12 September and 31 October.

Participants will take part in a special guided tour of the hallmarking floor and will also be given the chance to ‘have a go’ at Hallmarking themselves.

Michael Allchin, chief executive and assay master, said: “We have been welcoming visitors to our silver collection and library for some time, however we felt that we wanted to offer our visitors more and take them on a behind the scenes tour of the Hallmarking floor.”

**To book, visit [www.theassayoffice.co.uk/understanding\\_hallmarking.html](http://www.theassayoffice.co.uk/understanding_hallmarking.html)**