



7th November 2010

McAleer's of Dungannon has been crowned the winner of the Sunday Life's Readers' Choice award at the Pub of the Year Awards 2010 gala event in Belfast's City Hall.

The owners of the Co Tyrone family-run pub were delighted with the accolade as voted for by Sunday Life readers, as Rosemary McAleer explained that out of all the awards handed out on Wednesday evening this is the one the family wanted most.

"It means so much to win an award based on what your customers think. It is a lovely achievement and I think everyone there would have loved to have taken away this award," she said.

The first day after the event, which was attended by 500 publicans and industry professionals, the McAleers were besieged with congratulatory phone calls.

Rosemary's son and bar manager Connor McAleer said it was a "fantastic result" and thanked his customers for their support.

"We had such a great night and we were completely and utterly delighted. I want to thank our customer base young and old and all the Sunday Life readers who voted for us. To go out of their way to fill in the entry form meant a lot and we are very appreciative."

And just hours after accepting their award on stage, McAleers' Facebook wall was awash with comments left by well wishers, all of whom believed in one thing — McAleers was completely deserving of its new title.

Sunday Life visited the rural pub in September to see why it was a finalist in the Readers' Choice category — and it was plain to see.

Just fresh from a revamp, the pub is a spectacular three-in-one 'destination' venue. The brand new, striking club is reminiscent of a smart celebrity hangout you would find in any big city, while the relaxed cocktail area and expansive outdoor smoking veranda provide alternative settings for the glamorous clientele who frequent this establishment.

At the front of McAleers there is a strong, traditional pub element which is a favourite with the hardcore regulars who have been drinking here since the family took over in 1978.

The more we discovered about McAleers the easier it was to see why its customers put the effort in to vote for their favourite watering hole.

While many other pubs made cutbacks during the recession, to survive in an ever-challenging industry McAleers invested heavily in turning this pub around.

Connor and his family, who are all very hands-on in running this venue, are always seeking ways to give back to their punters too. Playing host to some top class events such as its very own 'Macsfactor', reputable tribute acts and showing all the big sports games on its 3D flatscreens sees this pub entertain the masses and all is free.

"We don't go down that line of charging people. It's about keeping high standards for us more than what we get out of it. We're perceived as offering serious value whilst retaining class," explained Connor.

The family also operates a 'get home safe' policy, which ensures young punters are taken home by reputable taxi companies.

The pub which came a super second in the Sunday Life Readers' Choice category was the Derg Arms in Castlederg, while the historic Hole in the Wall bar in Armagh notched up an impressive third place, having been ran close by the Necarne Arms in Irvinestown, Co Fermanagh.

McAleers was among 10 winners who walked away with coveted titles at this top event for the pub trade hosted by Pubs of Ulster.

Presenters Emma-Louise Johnston and the Europa Hotel's James McGinn applauded the publicans in attendance for setting standards high during what has been an extremely tough trading period.