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BLUNSDON HOUSE TO LAUNCH NEW RESTAURANT IN HSBC BACKED UPGRADE

Blunsdon House Hotel, Wiltshire's first four star hotel which dates back to the 1950s, has secured a £500,000 finance package from HSBC to support the renovation of its main restaurant, as well as other areas of the property.

Located just north of Swindon, the hotel is launching a new restaurant, in September, replacing Christopher's Carvery, which will close in August. Entitled Flame, it will offer a modern menu based on a charcoal grill style of cooking, although it will continue to offer a carvery service during the day. A new kitchen will be installed as part of the renovation work, whilst new furniture and decoration will be introduced front of house.

HSBC's Wiltshire Commercial Centre provided the finance package in a deal managed by Senior Commercial Manager Kevin Willcox. The finance was allocated from HSBC's £600 million fund for South West SMEs, £100 million of which has been earmarked specifically for Wiltshire businesses.

Blunsdon House Hotel, which is part of the Best Western network of hotels, is a third generation family business that was founded by Peter and Zan Clifford in 1957 after the landlord of the local Mason's Arms pub asked whether they could house guests of the Bath and West Show in their farmhouse.

The couple agreed and it set them on their path to developing the 108 bedroom hotel, which includes 2 restaurants, three bars, 11 meeting rooms, a health and leisure centre, conference centre, an indoor pool, tennis courts and a nine-hole golf course. The hotel is now run by their son, Managing Director John Clifford, as well as John's wife Carrie and sons Ben and Christopher, who are all company directors.

In addition to the renovation of the restaurant, the hotel management is also using the finance to upgrade other areas, including the tennis court, bar area, outside dining area and the swimming pool boiler.

Managing Director John Clifford said: “We have started to see certain markets pick up following the recession and we want to invest to ensure our facilities stay modern and meet customer demand. Christopher’s was built in 2000 and was looking a bit tired, so we think now is the right time to make this major investment, which will widen its appeal. HSBC has been a long-term supporter of our business, so I am pleased we have secured this latest finance package from the bank.”

Paul Maddison, HSBC Wiltshire Area Commercial Director, added: “Blunsdon House Hotel is a fantastic hotel in a great location, but as with all areas of the hospitality industry, it is important to stay relevant to your customer base. We are seeing many of our customers investing now to capitalise on the growth of the economy because failure to do so could result in being left behind.”

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For further information please contact:

Steve Gracey
HSBC Commercial Bank Media Relations Manager
Direct: 020 7991 4118
Email: steve.gracey@hsbc.com
Twitter: [@HSBCUKBusiness](https://twitter.com/HSBCUKBusiness)

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