

Britain's Top Tradesperson 2019 - The top 10

MEET our top 10 - the finalists in Screwfix's Britain's Top Tradesperson competition 2019. The contest, run by Screwfix and supported by the Daily Star, is celebrating a decade discovering the very finest workers in the land.

And these 10 finalists were chosen from thousands of other entries thanks to their outstanding work, professionalism and dedication to customer care.

They will battle it out at Screwfix LIVE in Farnborough, Hants, in front of a panel of judges this week.

And not only will the winner walk away with the most coveted title in trade, he or she will bag a £20,000 trade bundle prize.

That's a whopping £10,000 of tools, £5,000 of tech and £5,000 to go towards future training.

Caroline Welsh, Director of Brand and Marketing at Screwfix, said: "Over the past decade, previous winners of this prestigious award have seen their company go from strength to strength.

"Tradespeople are the heart of our business and we are always on the lookout for those who can demonstrate how they go that extra mile for their customers, champions their trade, acts as an ambassador to help futureproof the industry and encourages future generations. I'd like to congratulate all the finalists for getting to the final and wish all of our top 10 the best of luck!"

Here NADINE LINGE profiles the hopefuls vying to become Britain's Top Tradesperson 2019.

Athaur Raman, Oakmont Electrical & Security

The electrician from Romford, east London, prides himself on providing exceptional customer service and always includes a one-year free servicing and maintenance agreement with every installation.

Athaur, 43, who has run his company for more than seven years, is also passionate about staying ahead of the game and regularly invests in training to develop his skills.

He says: "To win Britain's Top Tradesperson would be unbelievable. It would show the commitment I make to my customers and how I always strive to deliver the very best work possible. I would also use the prize money to invest in further training and grow my trade knowledge."

Adam Nott, AIO Electrical Services

Adam, from Wallsend, Tyne and Wear, only set up his company 18 months ago after working in the sector for 14 years. He has grown his business to have five employees, including two apprentices, and Adam is helping them develop their skills.

The 34-year-old says: "I am really pleased to have made it through to the final of Britain's Top Tradesperson.

"Having been in the trade for more than 16 years, I have learned how to keep customer satisfaction as the highest priority. "It's great to be recognised in this way, having set my own business up only 18 months ago."

Karen Boom, She's Electric

Karen already had a successful career as a global IT manager before she decided to break into trade aged 40.

Now the electrician, from Billericay, Essex, wants to inspire other people who may be considering a similar switch.

“It was quite the career change,” says Karen, 49. “As a female in a traditionally male environment, I’m passionate about being a role model for other women who are thinking of entering the trades. I also believe a career in the trade is one that all school leavers should consider and I try to encourage people whenever I can.”

Robbie Hawkins, Hawkins Heating

He already has one title to his name - Wales Plumber of the Year 2018 - but Robbie, 33, is hoping to add to that tally. Self-employed since the age of 19, he has a huge passion for all things plumbing, heating and gas and always goes the extra mile to help out his customers.

Robbie, from the Brecon Beacons in mid Wales, says: “I live and breathe my trade and am exceptionally proud of how I have helped so many customers when they are in need. “I am also passionate about helping my apprentice grow into a talented engineer and I can’t wait to share these experiences at the final.”

Scott Clarke, Upsher Heating + Plumbing

Plumber Scott has grown his family-run business steadily over the last three years and a particular highlight was when his apprentice took home his own title. The 32-year-old from Hook, Hants, says: “I love the industry I work in and starting my business three years ago was the best decision I ever made.

“I’m really proud of the things I have achieved - in particular when my apprentice completed his Level 2 in Plumbing and also won Apprentice of the Year at his college. It’s a real family business, my mum is employed as part time admin so if I win this award, it’ll be a real celebration!”

Phil Houlder, Glenfield Electrical

Leicester sparky Phil has made it his mission to train up a string of apprentices in the hope of safeguarding the future of the electrical industry. And after starting his own business six years ago, he has worked tirelessly to grow it from just three employees to a family of 18.

And don’t expect him to slow down any time soon. “Seeing each of my apprentices grown into a skilled electrician, sharing the same desire and passion as the rest of the team has been more rewarding than I could ever have imagined,” reveals Phil, 40.

Lindsey Meadows, Lindsey’s Female Plumbing Services.

Scouser Lindsey, 32, is committed to encouraging young people to get into plumbing. She even visits schools to talk about what an exciting and rewarding career it can be. The mum-of-one is thrilled to have made the final and hopes it will inspire others to succeed.

Lindsey says: “To win Britain’s Top Tradesperson would help support my efforts to get more young people into plumbing. “I want to be a role model to my four-year-old daughter and other youngsters, proving that if you put the hard work in, you can achieve your dreams.”

Darren McGhee, DMG Roofing & Building

Roof tiler Darren, 38, set up his own care package initiative to protect homeowners and change negative impressions of the industry. After hearing heart-breaking stories from customers about work that had gone wrong in their homes, Darren came up with his

MyRoofCare scheme, which allows users to pay a monthly fee and receive services including a twice-yearly maintenance inspection and gutter clean.

“Words cannot express how happy I feel to have reached the final of Britain’s Top Tradesperson,” says Darren, from North Lanarkshire. “I have worked so hard to make a difference to the roof tiling trade and to win this competition would be the seal of approval to show it was all worth it.”

Ben East, Earthwise Construction Ltd

Bristolian Ben is a carpenter who is making real strides in his work using sustainable building materials to help fight climate change. He has already worked on a number of interesting projects and is keen to share his experiences with the BTT judges.

Ben, 35, says: “To win Britain’s Top Tradesperson would help Earthwise Construction Ltd take our cause to the next level. My team and I work tirelessly to try to combat climate change through the projects we undertake and it would be fantastic to encourage others to do the same.”

Christina Valentine, Christina Valentine Restoration & Decorating Services

The determined multi-tradeswoman made it to the final last year - and now she’s hoping to go one better in 2019. Since last year’s competition, Christina has continued her mission to set up a mentoring program, helping other tradeswomen become self-employed like her.

The 53-year-old from Epsom, Surrey, says: “I cannot wait to share my plans to bring a better gender balance to the industry. “I have seen many women complete their training, then struggle to gain employment. They may not be ready to go self-employed which means opportunities are limited. I want to help to make a difference and provide support to those talented individuals.”

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