On the 7th of December 2012, cleaning industry professionals will be gathering for the 25th anniversary of one of Britain’s quirkiest competitions for the industry: the Loo of the Year award. This annual award was inaugurated in 1987 with the aim of finding the best toilets in the UK – public toilets, that is.

The organisers of Loo of the Year have a team of inspectors who visit thousands of toilets annually to decide the winners of the different categories of award. There are awards for the Loo of the Year for each of the members of the UK and Eire (England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales) and 13 awards in different categories that consider the UK as a whole. The judges visit (and presumably use) toilets of all types, including luxury portaloos and “eco-loos” that do not use running water or electricity.

A selection of last year’s Loo of the Year winners include:

- UK Overall Winners Trophy: Ceredigion County Council
- ECO friendly toilets: The Phoenix Centre Sandwich
- accessible facilities: Asda Galashiels
- baby change facilities: Highland Council for Changing Places Toilets, Tesco Omagh – TC Contractors

Other past winners of the overall UK award have included the Eurotunnel at Folkestone (1998), the Eagle and Child, Gwaensgor, N. Wales (1990), Trafford Centre, Manchester (2007) and McDonalds (2009).

As well as honouring the winners of the Loo of the Year categories, the award ceremony also awards the Attendant of the Year. This year, a new category has been introduced for the silver anniversary of Loo of the Year: the “Home Throne” award, where private individuals can nominate the toilet from their own home. Entries in this category will be judged on décor, cleanliness, fixtures and fittings and quirkiness.

A representative from the London-based cleaning company CarpetFirst is excited about the upcoming awards and is particularly happy about the Home Throne category. “Our professional cleaners see a lot of very interesting domestic toilets and we would love to see some of our clients entering this competition. The Loo of the Year award is a bit of a highlight for all cleaning professionals – it’s a great chance for networking and meeting others in the industry, but it’s got that quirky, earthy, offbeat side to it that makes it different from all other industry conferences and meetings.”

This year’s 25th anniversary Loo of the Year awards will be held at the St Johns Hotel at Solihull. The celebrity guest presenter will be comedian Shappi Khorsandi of Have I Got News For You, Question Time and other popular comedy TV shows.