

## Entrepreneur of the year

### Alastair Beardsall

**Emerald Energy**  
Alastair Beardsall has been involved in the oil industry since 1981. His first 12 years were on international assignments with Schlumberger, and in 1992 he started to work for small independent operators. He is now executive chairman of Emerald Energy, a UK based company engaged in the exploration and production of hydrocarbons.

[www.emeraldenergy.com](http://www.emeraldenergy.com)

### Chris Aspinwall

**Fidessa Group**  
Chris Aspinwall joined the trading technology group in August 1986 as a software engineer and was appointed to the board in 1992. He became chief executive of the Fidessa business in 1992 and in July 2001 he became group chief executive. Fidessa is one of the UK software sector's most admired companies, but has warned it would not be immune from the crisis affecting its financial services clients.

[www.fidessa.com](http://www.fidessa.com)

### Robert Watson

**Hilton Food Group**  
Robert Watson joined Hilton as chief executive in 2002 and has overseen the successful growth of the group to date. Prior to this, he worked for the Foyle Food Group, which he founded with his father and partner in 1977. Hilton is a leading specialist meat-packing business supplying major international food retailers from facilities across Europe.

[www.hiltonfoodgroupplc.com](http://www.hiltonfoodgroupplc.com)

### Simon Rigby

**Spice**  
Simon Rigby led the 1996 management buy-out of the Freedom Maintenance business from the former Yorkshire Electricity. He has been chief executive of Spice since its formation and has been instrumental in its growth through the development of niche outsourcing operations as well as complementary acquisitions.

[www.spiceplc.com](http://www.spiceplc.com)



Simon Rigby of Spice

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	Turnover (£m)	Pre-tax profit (£m)	Market cap* (£m)
<b>Emerald Energy</b>			
2005	18	4.4	
2006	25	1.0	
2007	22	4.3	119
<b>Fidessa</b>			
2005	74	11.3	
2006	95	14.3	
2007	135	17.1	287
<b>Hilton Food</b>			
2005	448	13.6	
2006	527	15.5	
2007	578	13.7	129
<b>Spice</b>			
2006	133	7.4	
2007	229	10.1	
2008	312	17.1	290

\* Last day of the year

Source: Thomson Datastream