THE GOOD FOOD GUIDE

BERKSHIRE

2010

The best restaurants in the UK reviewed by which?

About The Good Food Guide

The Good Food Guide is Britain's longest-running restaurant guide. Since 1951, it has cast a critical eye over cafés, pubs, bistros and restaurants throughout the UK.

Each year the Guide is completely rewritten and compiled from scratch. Our research list is based on the huge volume of feedback that we receive from readers (the list of contributors at the back of the book is testimony to this). This feedback, together with anonymous inspections, ensures that every entry is assessed afresh. We believe that the restaurants included in this Guide are the very best in the UK.

Although much has changed since Raymond Postgate founded *The Good Food Guide*, the ethos of the original book remains: we do not accept any sponsorship, advertising or free meals. It is because of this, and because the Guide will always be the voice of the consumer, not the catering industry, that *The Good Food Guide* remains the UK's most trusted, best-selling and best-loved restaurant bible.

Please send us your recommendations and feedback by visiting **www.which.co.uk/gfgfeedback**
You can order a copy of The Good Food Guide 2010 by visiting **www.which.co.uk/gfgbook** and find out more about The Good Food Guide iPhone application at **www.thegoodfoodguide.com**

Scoring

We should begin by saying that a score of 1 is actually a significant achievement. We reject many restaurants during the compilation of the Guide. Obviously, there are always subjective aspects to rating systems, but our inspectors are equipped with extensive scoring guidelines, so that restaurant bench-marking around the UK is accurate. We also take into account the reader feedback that we receive for each restaurant, so that any given review is based on several meals.

1/10 Capable cooking, with simple food combinations and clear flavours, but some inconsistencies.

2/10 Decent cooking, displaying good basic technical skills and interesting combinations and flavours. Occasional inconsistencies.

3/10 Good cooking, showing sound technical skills and using quality ingredients.

4/10 Dedicated, focused approach to cooking; good classical skills and high-quality ingredients.

5/10 Exact cooking techniques and a degree of ambition; showing balance and depth of flavour in dishes, while using quality ingredients.

6/10 Exemplary cooking skills, innovative ideas, impeccable ingredients and an element of excitement.

7/10 High level of ambition and individuality, attention to the smallest detail, accurate and vibrant dishes.

8/10 A kitchen cooking close to or at the top of its game – highly individual, showing faultless technique and impressive artistry in dishes that are perfectly balanced for flavour, combination and texture. There is little room for disappointment here.

9/10 This mark is for cooking that has reached a pinnacle of achievement, making it a hugely memorable experience for the diner.

10/10 It is extremely rare that a restaurant can achieve perfect dishes on a consistent basis. We have awarded this mark for the second time in two years.

Symbols

Restaurants that may be given main entry status are contacted ahead of publication and asked to provide key information about their opening hours and facilities. They are also invited to participate in the £5 voucher scheme. The symbols on these entries are therefore based on this feedback from restaurants, and are intended for quick, at-a-glance identification.
This year we have changed the criteria for the vegetarian symbol so that the symbol now indicates where more than three vegetarian main courses are available. The wine bottle symbol is an accolade assigned by the Guide's team, based on their judgement of the wine list available.

Accommodation is available.

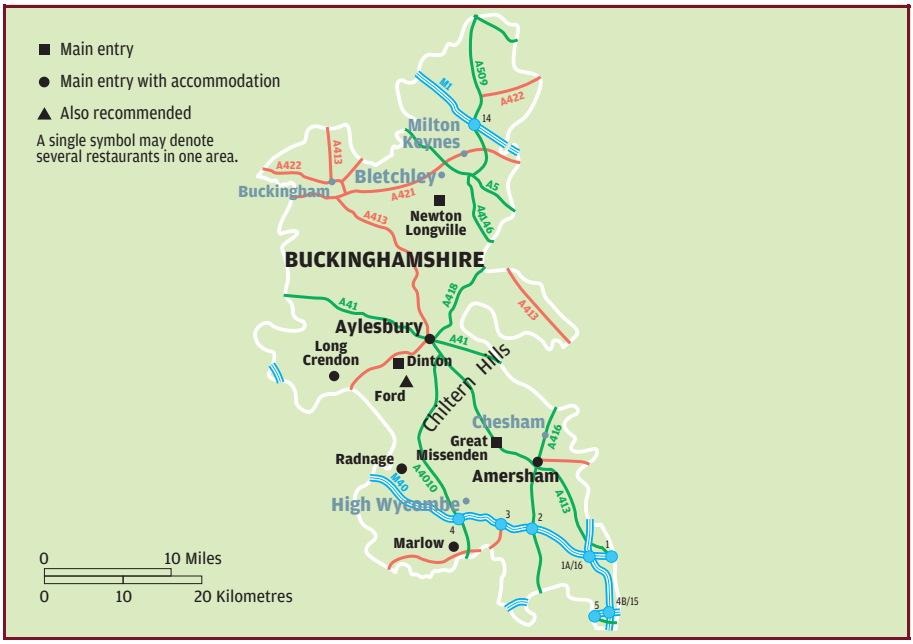
£30 It is possible to have three courses at the restaurant for less than £30.

V There are more than three vegetarian main courses on the menu.

£5 OFF The restaurant is participating in The Good Food Guide 2010 £5 voucher scheme. Vouchers are available in printed editions of the Guide - to buy a copy go to www.which.co.uk/gfgbook

The restaurant has a wine list that our inspector and wine expert have deemed to be exceptional.

£XX The price indicated on each review represents the average price of a three-course dinner, excluding wine.



Amersham

NEW ENTRY

The Crown Inn

Rustic chic and unfussy food

16 High Street, Amersham, HP7 0DH
Tel no: (01494) 721541
www.thecrownamersham.co.uk
Gastropub | £25
Cooking score: 2

The Crown's brushed-up brick frontage dominates Old Amersham's main drag, and it chimes perfectly with the town's affluent demeanour. Its cheery feel, rustic chic interior (courtesy of Ilse Crawford) and unfussy food also provide a refreshing antidote to prissy Home Counties' posturing. Rosie Sykes cut her teeth with Joyce Molyneux and Shaun Hill, so it's no surprise that her cooking goes for natural flavour in a big way – pigeon with quince and watercress, grilled lemon sole with purple sprouting broccoli, and duck leg with carrots (plus a helping of 'healthily invigorating' spring greens) are typical of her daily menu. After all that generosity, refresh with a seasonal rhubarb sorbet – served intriguingly in a little pewter vessel. 'Slap Bang' lunches are a snip. Wines start at £15.

Chef/s: Rosie Sykes and Mark Briston. **Open:** all week L 12.30 to 3 (4 Sun), Mon to Sat D 6 to 10. **Meals:** alc (main courses £10 to £18). Set L Mon to Sat £9.90 (2 courses) to £12.90. **Service:** 12.5% (optional). **Details:** Cards accepted. 80 seats. 60 seats outside. Separate bar. Music. Children allowed. Car parking.

Symbols

- Accommodation is available
- £30 Three courses for less than £30
- V More than three vegetarian main courses
- £5 OFF £5-off voucher scheme
- Notable wine list

Aylesbury

Hartwell House

Country house splendour in the Chilterns
Oxford Road, Aylesbury, HP17 8NR
Tel no: (01296) 747444
www.hartwell-house.com
Modern European | £40
Cooking score: 4

£5 OFF

Set in 90 acres of landscaped parkland, Hartwell is an elegant country house hotel in the contemporary style, right down to the spa treatments, themed evenings and even the odd piano recital. Since September 2008, it has been owned by the National Trust, along with its siblings, Bodysgallen Hall at Llandudno and Middlethorpe Hall, York (see entries). The primrose dining room is the scene for some vibrant modern cooking, along the lines of wood pigeon and leek cannelloni with shallots and figs, and fillet of sea bass with potato confit, Jerusalem artichoke purée and a port and truffle butter sauce. Menu descriptions are on the wordy side, but no less alluring for that, when the temptation might be loin of venison with Lapsang Souchong, braised kale, honey-roast parsnip purée and a blackberry jus. Desserts might be as traditional as treacle tart with clotted-cream ice cream, and there are some fabulous cheeses. If you haven't had this year's bonus stopped, a luxurious wine list awaits you, with roll calls of the great and good in profusion. House blends, a Spanish white and a French red, are £17.95.
Chef/s: Daniel Richardson. **Open:** all week L 12.30 to 1.45, D 7.30 to 9.45. **Meals:** alc (main courses £23 to £28). Set L £22.95 (2 courses) to £29.95. Set D £39 (3 courses). Sun L £32.95. **Service:** not inc. **Details:** Cards accepted. 60 seats. Separate bar. No music. No mobile phones. Wheelchair access. Children allowed. Car parking.

Average price

The average price listed in main-entry reviews denotes the price of a three-course meal, without wine.

Dinton

La Chouette

Inn with a taste of Belgium
Westlington Green, Dinton, HP17 8UW
Tel no: (01296) 747422
Belgian | £35
Cooking score: 4

The sixteenth-century, creeper-covered inn opposite the village green is a singular testament to the enterprising Frédéric Desmette. He is coming up to 20 years at the helm, and is as tireless as the day he opened. His menu is influenced by the culinary traditions of his native Belgium, but it goes way beyond the usual mussels and chips; witness main-course game birds – pheasant with chicory, partridge with cabbage – and Scottish salmon served with bacon in the Ardennes fashion. As a curtain-raiser you might consider shrimps or smoked eel in salads, and there is, naturally, Belgian chocolate to finish in some form or other. Not the least delight, and certainly worth the detour, is an unexpectedly stunning wine list, which wouldn't look out of place in the kind of hotel where they make you wear a tie. It's all French, and it's all good. If the spirit of adventure fails you, house wines are £14.
Chef/s: Frédéric Desmette. **Open:** Mon to Fri L 12 to 2, Mon to Sat D 7 to 9. **Closed:** Sun. **Meals:** alc (main courses £15 to £17). Set L £14.50. Set D £30 (2 courses) to £40. **Service:** 12.5% (optional). **Details:** Cards accepted. 35 seats. Separate bar. Music. Children allowed. Car parking.

Ford

ALSO RECOMMENDED

▲ Dinton Hermit

Water Lane, Ford, HP17 8XH
Tel no: (01296) 747473
www.dintonhermit.co.uk
Gastropub

Impressively thick walls testify to the age of this carefully extended 400-year-old inn deep in the Aylesbury Vale. The kitchen deals

INDEPENDENT, EXPERT OPINION YOU CAN TRUST

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All entries are based on reader feedback and inspections are carried out anonymously. Unlike other guides, we do not accept sponsorship, advertising or freebies and we pay for every meal we review.

In this special Berkshire edition, you will find reviews of all the leading restaurants, pubs and cafés plus some new and hidden gems that we think are 'ones to watch'.

Whether you're looking for a great value pub for Sunday lunch with friends or a once-in-a-lifetime blow-out meal, *The Good Food Guide* is bound to have the perfect venue.