



THE GOOD FOOD GUIDE

DEVON

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.



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



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



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.



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



Ashburton

Agaric

‘Real food’ and pleasing vibes

30 North Street, Ashburton, TQ13 7QD

Tel no: (01364) 654478

www.agaricrestaurant.co.uk

Modern British | £35

Cooking score: 4



Nick and Sophie Coiley’s converted shop in the centre of Ashburton is an unprepossessing little gem, unstuffily informal, good-humoured and dedicated to the principles of ‘real food’. There is serious domestic enterprise at work here, and a crusading loyalty to Devon’s larder that pays dividends on the plate. Nick’s cooking gets straight to the point: starters such as a warm salad of pigeon breast with quince, beetroot, smoked bacon and raspberry vinegar come with home-baked focaccia bread, while mains plunder the region for brill with grilled fennel and Seville orange hollandaise or herb-crusted best end of

lamb with Jerusalem artichoke purée and rosemary gravy. To finish, follow the calendar with forced rhubarb soufflé, rhubarb sauce and Pernod ice cream. This is genuine, unaffected cooking and it’s backed by personable vibes and a wine list that offers sound drinking at easy prices (from £15.95). The Coileys also run a seasonal cookery school and offer charming accommodation in a nearby Georgian townhouse.

Chef/s: Nick Coiley. **Open:** Wed to Fri L 10 to 2, Wed to Sat D 7 to 9. **Closed:** Mon, Tue, Sun, 2 weeks Aug, 2 weeks Christmas. **Meals:** alc (main courses £15 to £19). Set L £14.95. **Service:** not inc. **Details:** Cards accepted. 28 seats. 14 seats outside. Separate bar. No music. No mobile phones. Wheelchair access. Children allowed.

Average price

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

Ashwater

Blagdon Manor

In a glorious rural setting

Ashwater, EX21 5DF

Tel no: (01409) 211224

www.blagdon.com

Modern British | £35

Cooking score: 2



The Moreys' seventeenth-century hotel to the north-west of Dartmoor offers a nice balance of country house comfort and a homely approach, right down to the resident pair of chocolate Labradors. With its primrose walls and garden views, the dining room makes a relaxing setting for Steve Morey's cooking, which adds a modern flourish to some traditional pairings. That might translate as skate tempura with mushy peas, onion gravy and tomato relish to open, then braised lamb shoulder with haggis, a steamed kidney pudding, liver and bacon. Passion fruit pannacotta with pineapple, coconut sorbet and chilli syrup is one of the lighter desserts. Wines start at £14 (£4 a glass) for Australian blends.

Chef/s: Steve Morey. **Open:** Fri to Sun L 12 to 2, all week D 7 to 9. **Closed:** Jan. **Meals:** Set L £17 (2 courses) to £20. Set D £31 (2 courses) to £35. Sun L £23.50. **Service:** not inc. **Details:** Cards accepted. 28 seats. Separate bar. No music. No mobile phones. Wheelchair access. Car parking.

Bampton

ALSO RECOMMENDED

▲ The Quarryman's Rest

Briton Street, Bampton, EX16 9LN

Tel no: (01398) 331480

www.thequarrymansrest.co.uk

Modern British

Paul and Donna Berry continue to feed Bampton locals and incomers at their unpretentious old coaching inn off the main street. Much of the produce comes from within 25 miles of the pub, with fish delivered from Brixham day boats and all cheeses

coming from the South West. Potted salt beef (£4.95), braised lamb shank with rosemary gravy (£11.50), or halibut with bubble and squeak and pea sauce are typical choices, and there could be banana and toffee crumble to finish. House wine £11.95. Closed Sun D.

Barnstaple

NEW ENTRY

James Duckett at the Old Custom House

A godsend for the neighbourhood

9 The Strand, Barnstaple, EX31 1EU

Tel no: (01271) 370123

www.jamesduckett.co.uk

Modern European | £30

Cooking score: 2

£5
OFF

'This restaurant is the best thing to happen to Barnstaple for years', enthuses one regular. James Duckett's 'smallest restaurant' extends to a courtyard and private dining room and has a light feel, with polished oak floors, beams and simply laid tables. Menus change daily, with a set lunch offered alongside some dozen tapas-style dishes (venison with pickled walnuts and spiced port wine sauce, and risotto of crab with basil and lemon oil have been well-reported) and a short-choice set dinner. Highlights at inspection were an excellent butter-poached cod with samphire, squid ink risotto, carrot and clams, and a well-made lemon tart (though let down by clumsy rhubarb tempura and grainy sorbet). The wine list is a creditable list of affordable bottles from £14.

Chef/s: James Duckett. **Open:** Tue to Sat L 12 to 2.30, D 7 to 10.30. **Closed:** Sun, Mon, 26 Dec, first 2 weeks Jan. **Meals:** Tapas-style set L £8 (2 courses) to £12. Set D £24 (2 courses) to £29. Tasting menu £50. **Service:** not inc. **Details:** Cards accepted. 48 seats. 36 seats outside. Wheelchair access. Music. Children allowed.

INDEPENDENT, EXPERT OPINION YOU CAN TRUST

The Good Food Guide is Britain's best-selling restaurant guide. First published in 1951 and written and compiled from scratch every year, it reviews the best establishments in the UK.

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 Devon 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.