



THE GOOD FOOD GUIDE

HEREFORDSHIRE

2010

The best restaurants in the UK reviewed by



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.



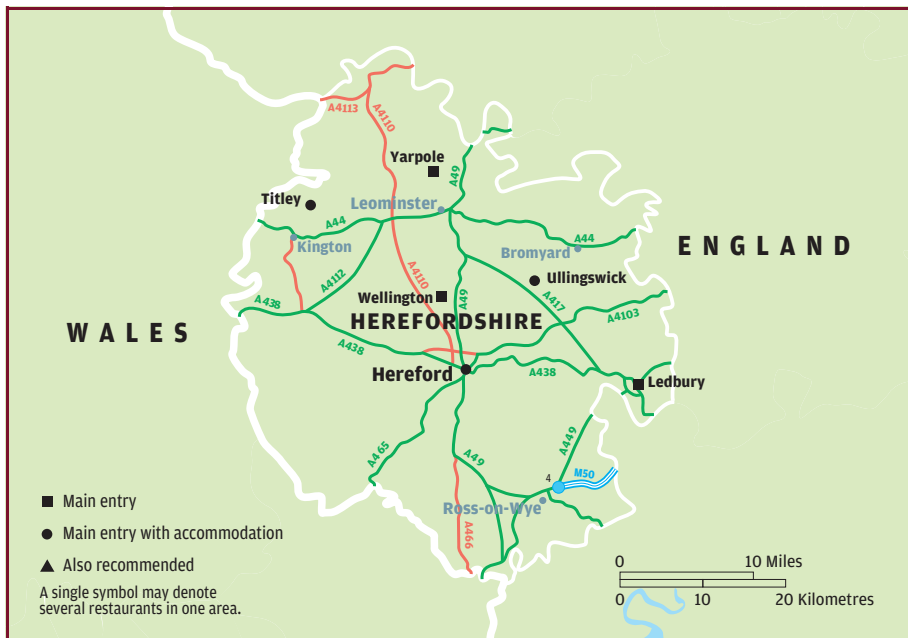
The restaurant is participating in The Good Food Guide 2010 £5 voucher scheme. Vouchers are available in printed editions of the Guide - to buy a copy go to www.which.co.uk/gfgbook



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.



Hereford

Castle House

Swish food in a swanky setting

Castle Street, Hereford, HR1 2NW

Tel no: (01432) 356321

www.castlehouse.co.uk

Modern British | £32

Cooking score: 5

£5 OFF  

A good-looking Regency townhouse in a prime spot not far from Hereford Cathedral, the Castle House stakes its claim as one of the city's prime hotel destinations. It is also home to a formally appointed restaurant with views over the remains of the castle moat. This provides a swanky setting for Claire Nicholls' open-minded take on contemporary cuisine. To start, a tian of crab and avocado mousse with a pesto wafer might share the bill with an oriental salad of shiitake mushrooms, baby corn and water chestnuts with soy dressing. Mains are equally vigorous assemblages ranging from herb-crusted sea trout with

summer-tinged roast fennel, pea and mint casserole to no-frills ribeye with home-cut chips. Apple and blackberry steamed pudding with vanilla custard is one way to finish, otherwise go for something more upbeat such as chocolate and Amaretto parfait with cherry and yoghurt ice and marinated cherries. Lunch is a lighter proposition that moves into the brasserie zone for the likes of Spanish cured meats, open steak sandwiches or pan-fried cod cheeks with Serrano ham and pesto salad. Big-name Bordeaux and Burgundies are the main contenders on the helpfully annotated wine list, although coverage from Italy and the New World should also get the juices flowing. Prices start at £15.50.

Chef/s: Claire Nicholls. **Open:** all week L 12 to 2, D 7 to 10. **Meals:** alc (main courses £11 to £19). Sun L £24. **Tasting menu** £49 (7 courses). **Service:** not inc. **Details:** Cards accepted. 38 seats. 20 seats outside. Air-con. Separate bar. No mobile phones. Wheelchair access. Music. Children allowed. Car parking.

Ledbury

The Malthouse

Inspired and intricate food

Church Lane, Ledbury, HR8 1DW

Tel no: (01531) 634443

www.malthouse-ledbury.co.uk

Modern British | £27

Cooking score: 3



Make your way up a cobbled lane just off Ledbury's market square to find this atmospheric restaurant spread over two floors of a converted barn, with a delightful walled courtyard out front. Exposed beams, pictures and mirrors provide the backdrop to Ken Wilson's food, which is 'both inspired and inspiring', according to one reporter. Intricacy is his culinary hallmark, and there's always a great deal happening on the plate, whether it's Japanese crispy pork belly with smoked eel, mushrooms, pea shoots and soy broth or Madgetts Farm duck breast with duck hash, sweet potatoes, turnips and orange pepper sauce. Menus are short, but specials widen the choice – spiced baked cod with couscous, chickpeas and baby tomato stew, say. To finish, consider iced tiramisu parfait with marzipan ice cream and chocolate syrup. House wines are £13.

Chef/s: Ken Wilson. **Open:** Sat L 12 to 1.30, Tue to Sat D 7 to 9 (9.30 Fri and Sat). **Closed:** Sun, Mon, 25 Dec, 1 to 5 Jan, 1 week Nov. **Meals:** alc (main courses £15 to £17). **Service:** not inc. **Details:** Cards accepted. 30 seats. 16 seats outside. No mobile phones. Wheelchair access. Music. Children allowed.

Titley

The Stag Inn

Herefordshire pub star

Titley, HR5 3RL

Tel no: (01544) 230221

www.thestagg.co.uk

Modern British | £30

Cooking score: 5



Steve and Nicola Reynolds have done Herefordshire proud during their 10 years in residence at this handsome country inn, which stands at the junction of several ancient drovers' roads. They have retained the feel of the place as a genuine hostelry, while serving top-drawer food. Precise, uncluttered cooking is the deal, and it comes with bright ideas, assured style and honest endeavour in abundance. As you might expect, Steve taps into Herefordshire's rich larder, although he looks to Cornwall for fish specials (perhaps seared scallops on celeriac and cumin purée). Domestic enterprise also shows up across the board, from home-baked breads to home-cured chorizo (perhaps served in a pasta dish with squid, tomato and chilli). Herefordshire beef is given full rein (rump steak with red wine sauce and chips), and other big local names also figure prominently: Madgett's Farm duck breast is pointed up with a complex, sweet and spicy sauce of ginger, mustard and Sauternes. To finish, crème brûlée is subjected to all sorts of twists; otherwise, the kitchen might send out lemon tart with Cassis sorbet. The cracking cheeseboard features a prodigious array from England and Wales, while the 100-bin wine list offers an intelligent choice, with a broad sweep of grape varieties and regions, keen prices and plentiful half-bottles; it even finds room for a local representative from Broadfield Court. House selections start at £13.50 (£2.35 a glass).

Chef/s: Steve Reynolds. **Open:** Tue to Sun L 12 to 2, Tue to Sat D 6.30 to 9. **Closed:** Mon, 2 weeks Nov, 2 weeks Jan/Feb. **Meals:** alc (main courses £15 to £18). **Service:** not inc. **Details:** Cards accepted. 70 seats. 16 seats outside. Separate bar. No music. No mobile phones. Children allowed. Car parking.

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 Herefordshire 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.