



THE GOOD FOOD GUIDE

KENT

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.



Alkham

NEW ENTRY

The Marquis at Alkham

Triumphant food in an elegant ex-pub

Alkham Valley Road, Alkham, CT15 7DF

Tel no: (01304) 873410

www.themarquisatalkham.co.uk

Gastropub | £23

Cooking score: 4

£5 OFF  £30 

This former village pub in the lovely Alkham Valley between Dover and Folkestone has been extensively converted to give an elegant dining room and a spacious bar lounge; it ‘hits all the spots’, according to one reader. Charlie Lakin (formerly at the Star at Harome, Yorkshire, see entry) heads the kitchen. His menus make the most of local ingredients and seasonal produce: beetroot-marinated Kentish trout with watercress mousse and confit of lemon, for example, makes a triumphant start. A trio of Chilton Farm chicken (butter-roast breast, chicken liver and spinach pie,

ballottine of leg with wild mushroom stuffing) vies for flavour with duck (roast breast, confit of duck hash) served with choucroute, turnips and thyme-scented liquor. The cooking of fish, from scallops to turbot, has also spawned good reports. Pear tarte Tatin is the dessert of choice. The wine list delivers a sound international selection at sensible prices from £15.

Chef/s: Charles Lakin. **Open:** Tue to Sun L 12 to 2.30 (6 Sun), Tue to Sat D 6.30 to 9.30. Bar food only Mon 12 to 9, Sun 6 to 9. **Meals:** alc (main courses £11 to £27). Set L £15.50 (2 courses) to £18.50. Set D £17.95 (2 courses) to £22.95. Sun L £19.50.

Details: Cards accepted. 65 seats. 30 seats outside. Separate bar. Wheelchair access. Music. Children allowed. Car parking.

Average price

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

Ash, Sevenoaks

READERS RECOMMEND

Twig & Spoon

Modern British

Woodlands Garden Centre, Ash Lane, Ash, Sevenoaks, TN15 7EG

Tel no: (01474) 852788

www.twigandspoon.co.uk

'Nice, simple selection of seasonal, locally sourced dishes'

Aylesford

Hengist

Modern French cooking in chic surroundings

7-9 High Street, Aylesford, ME20 7AX

Tel no: (01622) 719273

www.hengistrestaurant.co.uk

Modern European | £30

Cooking score: 4

£5
OFF

Hengist is named after the first King of Kent (449AD) and is tucked away in one of England's oldest villages. But step inside this sixteenth-century building and you enter a cool, modern restaurant where beams, brick and stone fuse with sophisticated smoked glass and bronze taffeta curtains. The cooking has moved up a notch since chef Daniel Hatton joined Richard Phillips's culinary empire (see entries for Thackeray's and Richard Phillips at Chapel Down). While classic French ideas are bolstered by contemporary touches, it is the careful sourcing of local and seasonal materials, innovative combinations and attention to detail that are key to this shift in gear. Rich chicken liver parfait with mango may kick off proceedings, followed by succulent fat scallops teamed with crab and fennel risotto, then roast duck breast with confit leg, pommes Anna and infused sweet grapes, with an impressive assiette of Yorkshire rhubarb bringing up the rear. A well-composed, French-dominated wine list starts at £15.

Chef/s: Daniel Hatton. **Open:** Tue to Sun L 12 to 2.30, Tue to Sat D 6 to 10.30. **Closed:** Mon, 25 Dec, 1 Jan. **Meals:** Set L £10.95 (2 courses) to £12.95. Set D £16.95 (2 courses) to £19.95. Set Sun L £18.50.

Service: 11% (optional). **Details:** Cards accepted. 74 seats. 25 seats outside. Air-con. Separate bar. No mobile phones. Wheelchair access. Music. Children allowed. Car parking.

Barfreston

The Yew Tree

Secret hideaway with good-value meals

Barfreston, CT15 7JH

Tel no: (01304) 831000

www.yewtree.info

Modern British | £25

Cooking score: 2



The winter 2008 departure of chef Ben Williams and front-of-house Lisa Wealleans left this 'secret hideaway' rudderless for a time, but a new team is pulling it back on course with welcoming service, an enlarged terrace that looks onto one of the best preserved Norman churches in England, and a menu that stays faithful to local and regional produce. Fried Sussex halloumi with chickpea and red pepper salsa, cider-braised pork belly with 'perfect crackling', and dark chocolate and hazelnut brownie have all been praised, as have good-value meal deals, local ales and a wine list offering tantalising drinking at ungreedy prices (from £13).

Chef/s: Craig Mather. **Open:** all week L 12 to 2 (3 Sun), Mon to Sat D 7 to 9. **Meals:** alc (main courses £13 to £18). Set L £9.95 (2 courses) to £12.95. Set D £16 (2 courses) to £19. Sun L £13. **Service:** 10%.

Details: Cards accepted. 44 seats. 24 seats outside. Separate bar. No music. 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 Kent 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.