



THE GOOD FOOD GUIDE

OXFORDSHIRE

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.



Ardington

The Boar's Head

Pretty timber-framed all-rounder

Church Street, Ardington, OX12 8QA

Tel no: (01235) 833254

www.boarsheadardington.co.uk

Modern British | £28

Cooking score: 3



Happily straddling the roles of pub and restaurant-with-rooms, this pretty timber-framed building is something of an all-rounder and the menus reflect this, ranging from bar snacks to a seven-course tasting menu. Choices from the carte might include scallops with black pudding and roasted foie gras, poached fillet of roe deer with sweet-and-sour celery and port sauce, British farmhouse cheeses with fruit cake or a pastry puff of apricots in rum with vanilla ice cream. One visitor noted that 'even the bread is baked on the premises', but there have also been reports of poor service. The interesting wine

list comes down on the side of 'restaurant', but you can expect decent real ales in the bar.

Wines start at £14.50.

Chef/s: Bruce Buchan. **Open:** all week L 12 to 2.15, D 7 to 9.30. **Closed:** 25 and 26 Dec, 1 Jan. **Meals:** alc (main courses £17 to £24). Set L £15 (2 courses) to £18.50. Sun L £23.50. Tasting menu £39.50.

Service: not inc. **Details:** Cards accepted. 40 seats. 30 seats outside. Separate bar. Wheelchair access. Music. Children allowed. Car parking.

Symbols



Accommodation is available



Three courses for less than £30



More than three vegetarian main courses



£5-off voucher scheme



Notable wine list

Bledington

NEW ENTRY

The Kings Head Inn

Sensitive cooking in an idyllic spot

The Green, Bledington, OX7 6XQ

Tel no: (01608) 658365

www.thekingsheadinn.net

Modern British | £25

Cooking score: 2



Honey-hued Cotswold buildings line Bledington's lovely green, among them this sixteenth-century former cider house. Inside, a rare balance is struck between food and drink. The bar remains the village boozer, with benches, flagstone floors, local ales and local drinkers, while two dining rooms – one smart, the other pubby – cater for an appreciative clientele. Food relies on prime, often local, ingredients with Aberdeen Angus beef (chargrilled rump and fillet or 'a juicy sirloin') coming from the owner's uncle's herd. Seafood such as tender mussels in a curry sauce hails from Cornwall and rhubarb crème brûlée makes a good finish. Wines from £13.95.

Chef/s: Charlie Loader. **Open:** all week L 12 to 2 (2.30 Sat and Sun), D 7 to 9 (9.30 Fri and Sat).

Closed: 25 and 26 Dec. **Meals:** alc (main courses £10 to £19). **Service:** not inc. **Details:** Cards accepted. 70 seats. 45 seats outside. Wheelchair access. Music. Children allowed. Car parking.

Britwell Salome

★ BEST UP-AND-COMING CHEF ★

NEW ENTRY

The Goose

Goose with the golden egg

Britwell Salome, OX49 5LG

Tel no: (01491) 612304

www.gooserestaurant.com

Modern French | £75

Cooking score: 5

The Goose keeps its golden egg well hidden: the modest brick and flint exterior of this former pub scarcely hints at the delights

within. Inside, a comfy new lounge bar has an adjacent space for eating, and there's a slightly larger dining room behind, plus tables outside. Furnishings are classy yet subdued, with walls of bare brick or pastel shades. Staff are young and well-drilled. Ryan Simpson has created a menu in the modern British mould, with French flourishes and well-sourced (often local) ingredients. Readers have praised 'consistently excellent' cooking that's 'just the right side of adventurous': à la carte first courses include an innovative dish of crab paired with grapefruit, as well as scallops with veal sweetbreads. A superb-value set lunch began with an amuse-bouche of vichyssoise topped with smoked salmon and (unnecessary) truffle oil. Next, warm duck rillettes came in an intense reduction, tempered by a perfectly poached duck egg, pea foam, pea shoots and peas – a rich, memorable dish. Main course of gorgeously succulent salmon with crushed potatoes, green beans and sauce vierge was followed by decadent, dark chocolate tart with tonka bean ice cream. The adequate wine list starts at £14.50.

Chef/s: Ryan Simpson. **Open:** Wed to Sun L 12 to 3 (8 Sun), Wed to Sat D 7 to 9 (6.30 to 9.30 Fri and Sat). **Closed:** Mon, Tue, 26 to 14 Jan (except 31 Dec), last week Aug, first week Sept. **Meals:** alc (main courses £14 to £22). Set L £14.95 (2 courses) to £17.95. **Service:** not inc. **Details:** Cards accepted. 40 seats. 20 seats outside. Air-con. Wheelchair access. Music. Children allowed. Car parking.

Chinnor

The Sir Charles Napier

Irresistible and original old charmer

Sprigg's Alley, Chinnor, OX39 4BX

Tel no: (01494) 483011

www.sircharlesnapier.co.uk

Modern European | £34

Cooking score: 4



'If ever there was a place that regenerated the spirit, it's the Napier – a deliciously irresistible, quirky piece of gloryland high up in the Chilterns', enthused one fan about this consistent *Guide* veteran. Its lovable

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 Oxfordshire 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.