



Where classic pub grub meets the finest à la carte

LAST year I was asked to judge the best restaurant category in the Suffolk Magazine's Food and Drink awards. One of my fellow judges was Neil Mason, Patron of The Sibton White Horse. Twice winner in the Best Food Pub category in 2009 and 2008, this success meant he was exempt from the 2010 competition.

Neil and Gill Mason, *pictured right*, have only been at the White Horse for five years, in that time they have achieved much. To add to their Best Food Pub awards they've received an AA rosette for their culinary excellence, been recognised by both Visit Britain and the AA as a 4-star place to stay and was a finalist in the Tourism in Suffolk Awards 2010, not forgetting numerous mentions in national guides such as Sawday's and the Good Pub Guide. The Sibton White Horse is fast becoming one of Suffolk's most delightful places to eat and stay and there can be no doubt their deserved achievements are helping to put the pub on the local as well as the nation map. With family in tow, I decided to pay them a visit.

We arrived to a charming welcome, regulars were

Emma Crowhurst drops in at the Sibton White Horse

lining the bar and a stream of customers were checking out their menus. You could sense a happy feeling about the place, a nice convivial atmosphere, this was testament to what Neil and Gill set out for: a traditional welcoming country pub that provides great food and drink in a relaxing atmosphere.

A glance at the menu and it was clear the food was taken seriously; local produce is widely seen on menus but not usually to this extent. The menu was littered with local provenance; oozing meat and poultry from local farms and fish from the nearby waters. Their passion for local didn't end there, seasonal salads, vegetables, herbs and fruits come from their own kitchen garden, all grown from seed in an impressive large modern greenhouse. If

that wasn't enough, a family of hybrid chickens supply daily fresh eggs, we were fortunate, they had just laid, and so still warm we collected some to take home.

The food emphasis was very clear, fresh and local ingredients creating for ever changing seasonal menus that reflect the very best of British food. Head chef Michael McMullen shares the same vision as Neil and Gill and loves to embrace the local stuff into his cooking. His dishes are not over complicated, simply prepared with plenty of thought and presented with passion and care. Michael is supported by sous chef James Finch and together they take care of everything in house, from various daily made breads to unusual flavours of ice cream, from smoking duck breasts to butchering venison.

Neil talks to his customers and really cares about what they think. When he asked about menus, some said they would like to see other than just à la carte in the evening; he came up with a 'pub classics' menu. Super retro, certainly no reduction in quality and absolutely the type of dish you want after a hard day.

In addition to the pub classics and à la carte menu, blackboards show the daily fresh fish, there was three on our visit and the chef's specials. I recall pan seared loin of wild Dennington venison served with dauphinoise potato, braised red cabbage and redcurrant jus.

Using their homemade bread, sandwiches are available Monday to Friday lunchtime and at least three traditional roasts are served on Sundays.

Our Sunday lunch was fabulous, to start we had the fish cake with a nicoise salad and smoked salmon with a celeriac remoulade, very simple and delicious. To follow we had roast sirloin of Red Poll beef from the local Emmerdale farm and I had the lamb shank with roasted vegetables and champ potato. Deep and intense flavours, rich and succulent meat, two really wonderful plates of food!

The Sibton White Horse is a wonky wall type of place, small and intimate with low beamed ceilings, you can choose to eat in the bar with its raised gallery or in the more elegant dining room. With the warm weather in mind, there is



contact

As well as hosting the Cookery Rooms in Ipswich, Emma is also available for private dining/catering, for businesses or at home, Emma can also arrange private/corporate group cookery days tailored to suit your requirements. Visit her web site www.emmacrowhurst.co.uk She also teaches cookery classes regularly at Fermyn Woods Hall which is near Northampton. www.fermywoodshall.co.uk

Apple and Blackberry Crumble

by Michael McMullan of
The Sibton White Horse Inn



This recipe feeds six and takes approximately 45 minutes to prepare.

INGREDIENTS

For the fruit filling

900g Bramley apples
400g Blackberries
175g castor sugar
Juice from 2 lemons

METHOD

Peel, core and chop the apples into small pieces. Add apples, sugar and lemon juice into a small sauce pan and cook on a low heat until the apples are soft, add blackberries and cook for a further 2-3 minutes.

INGREDIENTS

For the crumble topping

225g plain flour
175g butter
60g Demerara sugar
125g mixture of nuts, seeds and oats

METHOD

In a mixing bowl rub the flour and butter until it breaks down into small particles and resembles bread crumbs, add the sugar and nut mixture and mix through. Spread the crumble mixture evenly over a baking tray and roast in the oven (gas 3 or electric 140) for approximately 30 minutes until golden brown, stirring occasionally.

Gently reheat the fruit filling, spoon into chef's display ring and press down until ¾ full, spoon crumble mixture on top and press down until the ring is full. Carefully remove the ring and serve with vanilla ice cream or custard.

INTIMATE: The dining room at the Sibton White Horse. It is best to book.



Cookery Rooms

Join Emma at The Cookery Rooms or at Helmingham Hall. Perhaps you know someone who would be thrilled to receive the day as a present. All the planned courses are booking up fast, so hurry if you are looking for that special present.

Vouchers for birthdays and Father's Day are also available.

More courses are soon to be announced, including some evening classes with supper, perfect to come to on your own as a social occasion and a chance to learn some new recipes and skills.

Friday 10th June
Summer Party Food- fully booked

Friday 15th July
Easy Dinner Party Cooking
Discover how to deliver fantastic dinner parties every time with Emma's professional tips and fool proof, impressive menus.

The Helmingham Hall Cookery Experience

Emma is also hosting courses at Helmingham Hall, one date each month with 12 places on each course. The day starts at 10am with welcome coffee in the Great Hall, followed by a short walk to the famous kitchen garden to select some seasonal produce for the day's menu. It is a unique insight in to one of our counties great houses and the chance to cook in an historic kitchen, as well as all the skills, tips and fun of a cooking session with me! Look out for us in the June Suffolk magazine!

■ Booking and information
www.helmingham.com 01473 890799.

■ Follow Emma on Twitter @ Emma_Crowhurst and on Face book.
■ www.emmacrowhurst.co.uk

a secluded courtyard with plenty of shade and ample seating, just the ticket for those who enjoy eating in the open air.

The bedrooms are situated in a separate building, a hop and a tiny skip way from the 16th century pub. The six rooms are tastefully decorated and rather restful, luxurious and so quiet. They totally revamped the rooms when they took over and Neil tells me that the rooms are usually booked well in advance and sometimes taken by groups of friends.

Neil thinks the awards they have received have had a snowball effect, the more you are locally recognised, the more you are likely to receive national recognition. Taking the time to enter the Suffolk magazine's Food and Drink awards have improved their business no end.

The Sibton White Horse is open for lunch and dinner every day, however if you are thinking of driving out you might want to book first, it's by no means a big place and not surprising can be popular. Available also, are their gift vouchers. They make for perfect presents and can be redeemed against some wonderful food and drink or for an overnight stay in one of the mentioned rooms.

■ The Sibton White Horse Inn, Halesworth Road, Sibton, Nr Saxmundham, Suffolk. IP17 2JJ.
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Food and Drink Awards 2011

SUFFOLK magazine will again be celebrating many of the great things about the producers, retailers and restaurateurs in Suffolk.

As seen from the last few years, Suffolk businesses involved in food and drink gain considerable attention on the national stage and it's not just the larger companies – there are a multitude of smaller producers and retailers for whom quality, value and localism are at the core of all that they achieve. Then there are the county's pubs, restaurants and hotels from fine dining at Le Talbooth and our winner of the restaurant category last year, the Bildeston Crown to the more informal pleasures of a pint of local beer with a home cooked meal in places like the dining pub winner, The White Horse at Wepstead.

Once again Adnams are the main sponsor and The West Wing at Ickworth have agreed to host the entertaining awards lunch.

This year the EADT Suffolk magazine want you to help them locate the businesses that champion local food, that offer quality and variety and bundle it all with great service.

Use the link below, it will take you to the nominations page and you can give the details of your favourite places to eat and shop. They'll do the rest along with the sponsors and judges and on 5th October they'll reveal the 2011 winners of the EADT Suffolk Food & Drink awards.



The closing date for entries for this year's awards is Friday May 27th 2011

<http://www.archantsuffolk.net/food-and-drink/>

Categories for the Food awards are

Best Baker
Best Delicatessen
Best Farm Shop
Best Food Pub
Best Informal Dining
Best Producer
Best Restaurant
Best Suffolk Drink
Best Tea/Coffee Shop
Food Hero of the Year

Celebrate the best of Suffolk



Suffolk Show

1st & 2nd June 2011

Amazing ring displays, action packed exhibits, Olympic sports, vast array of animals, racing Shetlands, Titan the Robot, thrilling military display, stunning floral displays, livestock and equine champions, tasty local food produce – celebrate the best of Suffolk at the Suffolk Show!

There's something for everyone at the Suffolk Show!

For advance discounted tickets, visit www.suffolkshow.co.uk or call 01473 707117

See us at Trinity Park, Ipswich IP3 8UH

