

Food & Travel  
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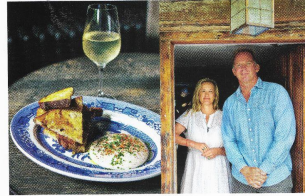
13th December 2024



## NOTEBOOK

### RESTAURANT *reviews*

Olde-worlde meets modern flair, a special place in the country and heritage Mayfair



#### CUT ABOVE IN THE COTSWOLDS

A gothic font is a bold choice for any new opening, but **The Mason's Arms** has so perfectly captured olde-worlde pub spirit and wrapped it up in a modern package that it has breathed new life into a classic. This is what a pub-doing-grub should be: great Guinness, an oyster bar and a menu that's everything you want to eat. Across the road from the equally perfect Double Red Duke in Banington, The Mason's Arms has character pouring out of every nook. Chef Chris Lindsay – once of Pierre Koffmann's pub Muddy Duck – knows how to roast a chicken (juicy with onion and big lumps of bacon); curate a blackboard (venison sausage Tails, whole crabs, ox cheek pie); and finish with a single offering that everyone loves, a sticky toffee sundae with plentiful chunks of sweet, chewy toffee. As I said, exactly what you want. [masonsarmsinn.com](http://masonsarmsinn.com)

#### FRIENDLY FINESSE

Tea rooms, medieval castle ruins and the beautiful wilds of the moors are reason enough to head to Helmsley, North Yorks, but now it's got a seriously good restaurant in **Pignut**. A handful of tables in an intimate setting with living-room vibes and a creative wine menu – look out for some exceptional orange, and Yorkshire sparklers – set the tone for an experience that, wrongly or rightly, you don't expect to find outside the city. It's a considered hand in the kitchen, for tasters where local pork belly, apple and cider-brained onions bathe in a decadent soup, rich duck is expertly matched with cicely, and meaty scallops are given a delicate kick with curry oil and mustard seeds. It's big-city, big-talent cooking in quaint surroundings. –and, if you're looking for somewhere to stay, Cliff Stud Retreat [cliffstudretreat.co.uk](http://cliffstudretreat.co.uk) has well-priced lodges on the doorstep. [restaurantpignut.co.uk](http://restaurantpignut.co.uk)



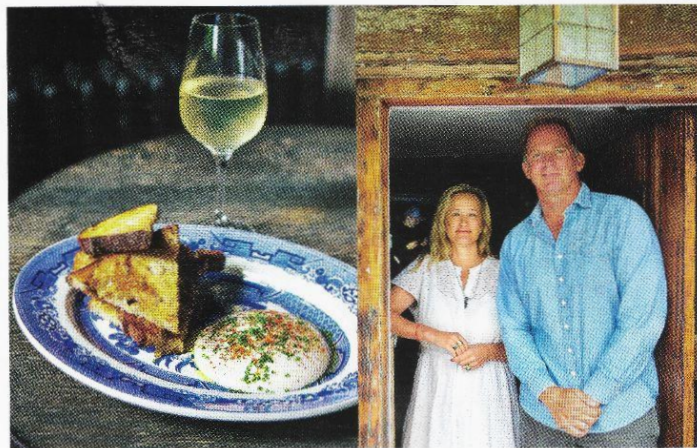
#### HEARTY HERITAGE

A heritage dating back 600 years isn't to be sniffed at, and **The Guinea Grill** remains firmly part of the Mayfair dining scene (an inn has been on the site since 1423). The restaurant opened in 1952 and the era's etiquette survives. Even when it's wondrously boisterous, the staff are so considerate and attentive, you'll be focusing on the finest cut of meat, from the same butcher they've used for 60 years, or a pie so laden they must have struggled to get the top on, served with an equally chunky red. Here, service matters, meat matters, drinks matter, and a bustling atmosphere only makes it better. [theguineagrill.com](http://theguineagrill.com)

Clockwise from top left: pub-grub talent at The Mason's Arms, in the capable hands of Chris Lindsay; from a tasting menu at Pignut; served in an intimate setting, expect classics done brilliantly at The Guinea Grill

Words by Alex Mead. Photos by Mollie Rose Photography and Matt Austin

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