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VERY BEST PLACES

greatfood *Club*

www.greatfoodclub.co.uk

The Handbook 2017

£4.95



**YOUR GUIDE TO BRILLIANT
FOOD & DRINK INDEPENDENTS**

Welcome



Welcome to the Great Food Club Handbook 2017. The last 12 months have been a whirlwind! Since the last Handbook came out at the end of 2015 we've recruited an editing team (see opposite), expanded into new areas of the UK, and launched a fantastic new version of our website (www.greatfoodclub.co.uk). But because we still love good old print

we've also made time to create this handbook. Within its pages you'll find some of the best, most characterful restaurants, pubs, food shops and producers that we've discovered so far. Each has been chosen on merit.

Hopefully you are already a member of Great Food Club but if you haven't joined... well, you should! It's free - you just need to fill in the brief form on our website - and the membership card we'll post to you will get you more than 250 amazing deals at handpicked places, from a free round of cocktails at one of Britain's best pubs, to 10% off at several award-winning farm shops. And as a member we will stay in touch to guide you to more superb places. Over the past year we've gone past the 9,500 member mark - the big 10K is firmly in sight!

Finally, huge thanks to those who have supported Great Food Club since its inception in 2010 - notably Everards Brewery of Leicestershire, who are great brewers and have a fantastic ethos of backing local business.

I hope you enjoy - and use - this handbook...

matt.wright@greatfoodclub.co.uk



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THE GREAT FOOD CLUB HANDBOOK 2018 – OUT AUTUMN 2017



MEET THE TEAM...

Great Food Club is growing. In early 2016 we started our search for a team of regional editors to help with our mission to seek out and shout about the best independent food and drink businesses. More than 150 applications flooded in and after a lengthy selection process we now have 16 new editors on the ground. They are busy searching out gems in their home counties of Leicestershire, Rutland, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Northamptonshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, Yorkshire, Herefordshire & Worcestershire and Bristol & Bath.

Our new editors are passionate about locally produced food and drink, have great local knowledge, and are constantly adding their recommendations to our website and to this annual handbook. As a result, GFC now consists of over 350 recommended pubs, restaurants, producers and food shops, many of which run exclusive offers to our 9,500+ members. The club is growing by around two new businesses per day and 50 new members per week.

If you think you could be a Great Food Club editor in your county, or if you'd just like to recommend somewhere near you, please email info@greatfoodclub.co.uk

FAQ'S

What's your criteria for selecting businesses to add to Great Food Club's recommended network?

A We ask ourselves one question: would we recommend this independent food or drink business to a discerning friend? If it's a yes, we invite them to join. By 'independent', we mean a business that is not a large chain and not run from an HQ based miles away.

Why do some businesses run offers (see website) for GFC members and others don't?

A After selecting them on merit, we invite every business to run a member offer of their choice to GFC members. Some jump at the chance to run an offer, others do not wish to. We leave it up to them. All our member offers are listed on our website but not in this handbook.

Why do you recommend lots of businesses in the Midlands but fewer elsewhere?

A Because we started out as a printed magazine focused on food and drink producers within a 50-mile radius of our HQ in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. We now have a growing team of editors further afield so our list of recommendations and offers outside the Midlands is growing fast.

How do I get involved in writing for GFC?

A Email us at info@greatfoodclub.co.uk. We already have a team of editors covering some parts of the UK but are looking for high-quality contributors in new regions, particularly in the West Country, the South East and the North of England.

How do I recommend a food or drink business to Great Food Club?

A Please visit our website, scroll down and look for the 'Quicklinks' at the bottom of the page. Click on the 'recommend a great place' link.

How do I share the fact that I've had a not so good experience at one of the places you recommend?

A Please visit our website, locate the page of the recommended business in question and leave a comment. We will publish your feedback where we feel it is appropriate and after we've shared it with the business owner to get their response. If you'd prefer to keep your feedback private, please email it info@greatfoodclub.co.uk and we will open dialogue with the business. Our aim is to celebrate and promote good food and drink independents and help them to thrive and get better. Anyone can have an off day but if we see a pattern we may remove the business from our website.

HOW IT WORKS...

1 Go to greatfoodclub.co.uk, click 'join' and fill in the short form (it's free)



2 Receive your membership card in the post, free of charge

3 Explore this handbook and greatfoodclub.co.uk to discover the best handpicked local independent restaurants, pubs, farm shops, producers, delis and cookery schools

4 Use your free card to claim the exclusive member offers that many choose to run - all offers are shown at greatfoodclub.co.uk: search by place or postcode to find recommendations and deals nearby

NB The businesses we add to the Great Food Club network are all carefully chosen: we visit each restaurant, pub, food shop or cookery school before adding them to our recommended list. When we visit we're looking for independent businesses that we'd be happy to recommend to discerning friends.

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Turn over to discover great places...

GREAT FOOD CLUB

LEICESTERSHIRE

Your guide to 46 of the best in Leicestershire...



The Old John Tower in Bradgate Park, situated in the heart of Leicestershire's Charnwood Forest

Great Food Club's hometown is Melton Mowbray - the capital of pork pies and Stilton cheese. This inspired us to launch Great Food Club in 2011. Leicestershire is the heart of rural England and contains a wealth of wonderful food and drink. Led by our Leicestershire editor Tim, who lives in Leicester, Great Food Club aims to guide you to the county's best independent restaurants, pubs, producers and food shops. And many of them are running superb member offers - to see them all, take a look on our website.



Meet our
Leicestershire
editor...

Tim Burke has been a journalist for 30 years, including restaurant critic for Metro. He is also author of *The Leicestershire & Rutland Cookbook*.
tim@greatfoodclub.co.uk

45 West Bottle Shop and Bar

4a Hotel Street, Leicester, LE1 5AW

Leicestershire-based artisan distiller 45 West, producer of Burleighs London Dry Gin, launched the 45 West Bottle Shop & Bar in Leicester city centre at the end of 2015.

It is a shop and bar situated near Leicester's vibrant St Martin's Square, specialising in high quality wines, spirits and craft beers. It is primarily a premium retail outlet, and the bottle shop stocks Burleighs Gin plus a range of top quality spirits and craft beers. It is also home to a specialist wine department.

The 45 West bar showcases a wonderful cocktail menu with an eclectic selection of fine wines, craft beers and, of course, Burleighs Gin. Elegantly decorated with a great atmosphere, the venue offers a private function room for hire too, which hosts some highly recommended gin, wine and spirits tastings throughout the year.



CONTACT: 0116 251 9360
WEB: 45west.co.uk



45 West Distillery & Gin School

The Collection Yard, Bawdon Lodge Farm, Nanpantan Road, Nanpantan, Leicestershire, LE12 9YE

The 45 West Distillery is a craft gin distillery situated in the heart of Leicestershire's Charnwood Forest. It is the home of both Burleighs Dry London Gin and the '45 Gin School Experience', where students learn how to make their own gin in mini copper stills at weekly classes.

Burleighs Dry London Gin is made by world-renowned master distiller Jamie Baxter, who produces Burleighs gin in 'Messy Bessy', a 450-litre copper pot still.

45 Gin School runs weekly three-hour courses where you create your own unique gin using botanicals of your choice, such as silver birch, iris, dandelion, burdock, angelica root and elderberry, before bottling and sealing your own 70cl bottle and adding a personalised label.

BOOK ON: 0116 278 8492
WEB: 45ginschool.com

Baker's Arms

The Green, Blaby, Leicestershire, LE8 4FQ

The thatched Baker's Arms is believed to date back to 1485, the year Richard III died on Bosworth field. The pub contains Blaby's old village bakehouse, so can justifiably claim to be one of the region's most historic pubs.

The interior of the Baker's Arms reflects its age: it feels ancient, with low-beamed ceilings, exposed brickwork and plenty of cosy nooks. This all combines to create a pleasant atmosphere. Outside there is a fine beer garden.

Today 'The Baker's', which is owned by Leicestershire's Everards Brewery, has gained a good reputation for its local



sourcing policy. "We call The Baker's an artisan pub," says landlord Chris Smart, "which to us means working closely with good local tradespeople, whether they're food and drink producers or other suppliers. We put that approach at the heart of everything we do."

BOOK ON: 0116 2787 253 **WEB:** thebakersarms.com

Bewicke Arms & Hare Pie Café

1 Eastgate, Hallaton, Leics, LE16 8UB

The Bewicke Arms is a classic English country pub in the charming village of Hallaton. The focus is on locally sourced, seasonal pub classics served in a relaxed environment.

The pub and the adjacent Hare Pie Café are popular stop-offs for walkers and cyclists exploring the rolling hills of south Leicestershire. Owners Simon and Claire Tait took the two venues on in 2015 and have now opened three stunning guest rooms for overnight stays. A function room above the pub is available for parties and corporate meetings, too.



Every Easter bank holiday, masses of people descend on the village and the Bewicke for the annual 'Bottle Kicking' - an ancient tradition not to be missed!

BOOK ON: 01858 555734 **WEB:** thebewicke.com

The Black Horse

65 Narrow Lane, Aylestone,
Leicester, LE2 8NA

The Black Horse is the sort of pub you'd love as your local. It's a back-street boozier that's warm, welcoming and comfortable. Stepping inside feels like you're being transported into a restful world miles from the stresses of work. Antique hardbacks sit next to a sign for the monthly book club, polished brass glints at you from the bar, and the Chesterfield-style bench seats and dark wood create an unusually opulent atmosphere for a traditional pub.



The Black Horse serves traditional pub fare: homemade pies, fish and chips, and burgers freshly made in the kitchen. And it's with the burgers that this pub is making a name for itself. There are many varieties on the menu, each made using steak mince supplied by a local butcher.

BOOK ON: 0116 283 7225 **WEB:** blackhorse-aylestone.co.uk

Boboli

88 Main Street, Kibworth Harcourt,
Leicestershire, LE8 0NQ

Italian restaurant Boboli in Kibworth Harcourt near Market Harborough is bright, modern and airy, and it's open seven days a week.

Boboli was launched by Lino and Sarah Poli in 2007 with the aim of creating a stylish pizzeria, based on Lino's experiences of living in Italy and Sarah's knowledge of the British (and south Leicestershire) markets.

As well as homemade pizzas, Boboli serves fresh seafood and local meats, seasonal vegetables and traditional Italian favourites. Our reviewer noted: "This was



one of the best, if not the best, spaghetti bolognese we have eaten. The flavour was intense, the beef succulent and the pasta perfectly cooked. The staff were charming and professional and we found Boboli's atmosphere laid-back but with a sense of occasion."

BOOK ON: 0116 279 3303 **WEB:** bobolirestaurant.co.uk

GREAT FOOD CLUB

RUTLAND

Your guide to 18 of the best in Rutland...

Normanton Church is a Rutland landmark, sitting on the south-eastern shore of Rutland Water



Rutland is home to some brilliant country pubs, wonderful restaurants and high-quality producers. '*Multum in parvo*' is the county motto, meaning 'much in little', and rural Rutland indeed packs a mighty punch when it comes to food and drink. Led by Rutland editor Anna, Great Food Club aims to guide you to the very best independent restaurants, pubs, producers, farm shops and delis in the county, with some fantastic member offers thrown in - to see the offers, just take a look on our website.



Meet our
Rutland
editor...

Anna Forgaard lives in King's Cliffe, "the best village in England" (her words!) with her husband, two boys and four chickens. She is passionate about local food and drink.

anna@greatfoodclub.co.uk

Bat & Bottle

Unit 18D, Oakham Enterprise Park,
Ashwell Road, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 7TU

Bat & Bottle specialises in importing Italian wines made by small, independent growers. A small but sassy business, don't expect to see Bat & Bottle wines on the supermarket shelves. Ben and Emma Robson, the co-founders, have spent over 20 years seeking out artisan producers, small-scale wineries, oddities and surprises, to offer wine drinkers truly individual wines: "Our policy is to find customers for our wines rather than wines for our customers," says Ben. "The result is a very personal wine selection, a



genuine reflection of our tastes." All other efforts made at Bat & Bottle are put into bringing customers these extraordinary wines at reasonable prices.

CONTACT: 01572 759735 or 07809 828662 **WEB:** batwine.uk

The Fox & Hounds

19 The Green, Exton, Rutland, LE15 8AP

Dominating the village green, the frontage of the three-storey Fox & Hounds lends this pub a proud and aristocratic air. It looks a picture in its classically English setting, partially hidden by the foliage of Exton's ancient trees.

A recent full refurbishment has given the interior a luxurious quality. The two AA Rosette restaurant, which has recently been awarded a listing in the *Good Food Guide 2017*, offers desirable dishes that come across as grown-up comfort food, presented with delicacy, a little theatre and created with a passion for flavour. The



four AA Gold Star rooms are elegant, romantic and eclectic. The restaurant is open Mon to Sat, 12-2.30pm and 6.30-9.30pm, and Sun 12-3pm and 5pm-7.30pm.

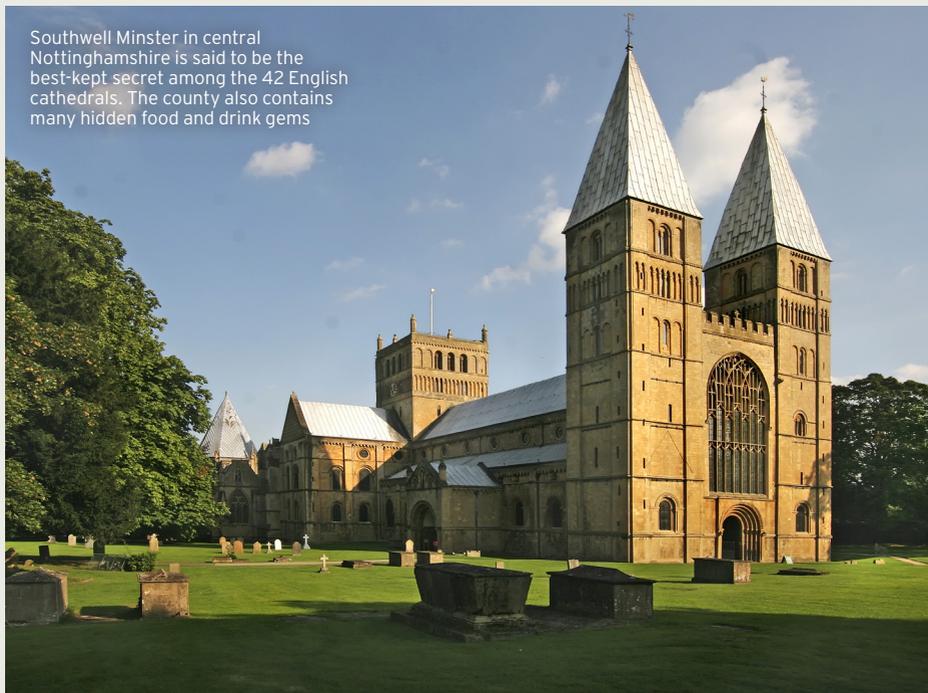
BOOK ON: 01572 812403 **WEB:** facebook.com/foxandhoundsexton

GREAT FOOD CLUB

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Your guide to 28 of the best in Notts...

Southwell Minster in central Nottinghamshire is said to be the best-kept secret among the 42 English cathedrals. The county also contains many hidden food and drink gems



Nottinghamshire is full of top-quality food and drink independents, from buzzing Nottingham restaurants to delightful rural farm shops and beautiful village pubs hidden away from well-trodden paths. Overseen by our Notts editor Abby, who lives near Nottingham, Great Food Club will guide you to the county's best restaurants, pubs, producers, delis and farm shops, with some great member offers thrown in - to see all offers in Nottinghamshire, search on our website.



Meet our
Nottinghamshire
editor...

Abby Brennan lives in Radcliffe on Trent. A former restaurant owner, she mentors food start-ups and blogs at The Fishwife's Kitchen.
abby@greatfoodclub.co.uk

200 Degrees Café

16 Flying Horse Walk, Nottingham, NG1 2HN

This independent coffee shop and barista school provides a warm and stylish environment where you can enjoy top quality coffee and freshly prepared food, from buttermilk bacon muffins for breakfast, through to freshly baked breads, sandwiches, quiches and salads for lunch.

Pride of place behind the counter is what the 200 Degrees team describe as “the best espresso kit in the world today”. These machines create excellent coffee



from Rainforest Alliance Certified beans roasted at the 200 Degrees Roastery on Meadow Lane.

Upstairs is the barista school, where 200 Degrees' experts teach everything there is to know about being a barista.

CONTACT: 0115 837 3150 **WEB:** 200degs.com

The Black Bull

Main Street, Blidworth, Mansfield,
Nottinghamshire, NG21 0QH

The Black Bull re-opened its doors in June 2013 after an extensive refurbishment. The 17th century family-owned pub has retained a traditional bar area serving a range of world beers, wines and spirits alongside local real ales. You can always expect something out of the ordinary in the restaurant. Breakfast, lunch and evening menus change regularly to reflect the seasons - the kitchen works on the simple ethos of making the very best of local produce. Great Food Club reviewer



Sarah McDonald wrote: “I would heartily recommend the Black Bull for formal family meals, a pleasant Sunday lunch or a real treat for a traditionalist foodie.”

Guest rooms are a recent addition, with double, twin and family rooms available.

BOOK ON: 01623 490222 **WEB:** blackbullblidworth.co.uk