

## The new George Hotel menu emulates national restaurant trends

The George Hotel may be one of the oldest establishments in Penrith, but the staff are keen to bring it up to date with the launch of a new, more flexible menu focusing on local ingredients and versatility of dishes to suit all diners' pockets. The change in format is proving popular with diners and the menu is right on trend with the latest UK market report on UK Restaurants launched last week.

When Head Chef Chris Melaugh sat down with General Manager Wayne Bartholemew to review the menu, they were both clear about what they aimed to achieve: a new menu based on local ingredients, giving customers the flexibility to choose from a single dish to a three course meal at any time of day.

General Manager Wayne Bartholemew said "Our diners vary from ladies lunching in the window seats and business people staying over for meetings, to holiday guests staying longer. People prefer less formal dining and we wanted to create a menu that would be more modern and versatile enough to allow diners to eat in our lounge, the Devonshire Restaurant or in the Oak Bar. With the change in the economy, diners are more prudent so our pick and mix menu was created to suit all pockets. The menu is still very new but we are seeing more meals being served in all areas and have had some great feedback."

The other key criteria for developing the new menu was to include as much locally sourced produce as possible – something that Head Chef Chris Melaugh continually focuses on: "Using local ingredients became popular with celebrity chefs and the media, but it's something we have been do for a long time. For the new menu we added more local ingredients and are being more informative about where our ingredients come from. It also meant I had the chance to taste some new Cumbrian products too"

Chef sources his fish from Fleetwood and uses local Lakeland Beef. New local relishes and cheeses have also been added to the ingredients list. "We have created a new Lakeland Entrecote Steak dish – you will find it filled with Blue Whinnow Cheese and served with a Damson sauce - a dish with few food miles and a low carbon footprint, which represents what we are trying to achieve."

The menu certainly has a local feel, with starters like Allerdale Goats Cheese Salad and Fleetwood Fish & Prawn Chowder; dishes that could easily be enjoyed as a light lunch on their own – or even skipping main course and enjoying as a precursor to a sweet of Strawberries in Champagne Jelly!

Extracts from the latest Mintel Report on the UK restaurant market were highlighted in the Caterer last week, indicating that despite the current economic climate, the UK restaurant market is still seeing healthy growth (£1.2 billion in the last 5 years). British cuisine has seen strong renaissance because of the focus on local produce and analysts are predicting a massive 21% growth in the next 5 years – something the George Hotel is keen to be part of!

The Report also highlights changing trends in eating: Helena Spicer, Leisure Analyst for Mintel said "People are likely to be more prudent about the amount they spend on dining and will be looking at different sized meals and platters they can share". At the George Hotel, platters to share were already included on the new menu before the report was finished: there's a Whitehaven Fish Platter which includes potted local shrimp and a platter gladdened with local cheeses like Cumberland Kelthwaite and Lake District Mature Cheddar.

The imposing sandstone façade and traditional revolving doors will always remain part of the hotel's charm, as will enjoying coffee or lunch in the window. All that has changed is an up to date versatile menu focusing on local ingredients, with the flexibility to suit pockets and appetites large and small.



Anyone interested in finding out more about the new menu should contact the George Hotel on 01768 862696 or email [georgehotel@lakedistricthotels.net](mailto:georgehotel@lakedistricthotels.net).

**Pic: Head Chef Chris Melaugh with General manager Wayne Bartholemew and one of the new local dishes**

For more information or high resolution picture relating to this press release please contact Tracey Errington on 01768 895 964 (mob 07799 640 290) or email [tracey@marketsense.net](mailto:tracey@marketsense.net).