

PUB SPY

LAZY JACQUES BREAD AND CAFE Brynmor Road Swansea

STAFF: Incredibly friendly and helpful, keen to suggest local ales and ciders, even offering a free sample first. Lazy Jacques has only been open for two months and staff are obviously keen to keep customers happy. Thrills quenched and stomachs full. They even threw in an extra free fishcake with my meal as the chef wasn't happy with the offering (I could find no fault however).

DRINK: As well as your usual mix of commercial branded alcohol the bar has local lager, beer and cider on the shelves. Bottles including a highly recommended pint of tuffy Apple Cider which is produced by the Tomos Wadlin brewery just a few miles away. You would also struggle to bamboozle them with a request for an unusual spirit and there is a very good selection of wines.

18/20

ATMOSPHERE: Warm, friendly and chilled out. The place is small and cosy but with plenty of seating inside and out. Live music in the form of one man and his guitar can be found on a Friday evening with people singing along by the end of the night. A great bar to sit with friends and reminisce or gossip for hours.

12/20

DECOR: Big wooden tables and sturdy benches give the place a nautical feel, as a throwback to the sort of pub I'd imagine sailors singing sea shanties back in the good old days. It is homely but with touches of modern, contemporary design.

18/20

CLIENTELE: The Brynmor area of Swansea is student central and you'd be hard pushed not to find a couple of them sipping on pints in the beer garden. However, it really caters for everyone and I'm told even a few of the Osprey players have visited in the weeks since it opened. I saw people from 18 to their mid-sixties drinking together.

18/20

TOTAL: 90/100

Style, comfort and fine food

PENMAENUCHAF Hall Hotel occupies an enviable position on the fringes of Swansea, overlooking the spectacular Mawddach Estuary close to Bwllyfenni.

The manor house was built in 1860 by a wealthy cotton magnate who fell in love with the stunning view. More recently, owners Mark Watson and Lorraine Fielding have spared no expense in restoring the place, which is steeped in luxury, style and comfort – but without affectation.

There are blazing log fires and opulent furnishings, but Penmaenuchaf knows that the key to keeping the guests coming back time after time is an outstanding chef.

Head chef Justin Pilkington cut his teeth at the well-regarded Holford Ghyll Hotel, which is situated in an idyllic location on the shores of Lake Windermere.

Justin has now been delighting guests at Penmaenuchaf Hall Hotel with his flair and flourish for eight years. Originally from Merseyside, Justin now sees this magnificent part of Wales as a home from home.

"My style is light, fresh and contemporary. I take European influences and translate them into different forms for my own dishes," he says.

Justin is also a firm believer in buying local.

"It makes no sense to get beef from Scotland, let's say, when we have fine beef on our doorstep. The same thing with vegetables – why fly them in when the flavour of our own vegetables in their season is unparalleled? I use what's in season when it's at the top of its game in terms of flavour, and it works perfectly."

We have lobster and sea bass coming in from Aberdeeny now, and we buy our smoked haddock and smoked salmon from the smokery in Llanidni.

Penmaenuchaf Hall Hotel is part of Welsh Rarebits – boutique and luxury hotels in Wales. For bookings, free guide book and gift vouchers please visit www.rarebits.co.uk or call 01686 660908.



STUFFED FILLET OF NANT HIR PORK WITH CREAMED SAVOY CABBAGE

- Ingredients**
1 pork fillet
3oz black pudding
2oz foie gras
Half savoy cabbage
1 carrot finely diced
1 sweet potato finely diced
Half butternut squash finely diced
1 parsnip finely diced
Quarter celery finely diced
100ml double cream
foie butter
Quarter bottle of Madeira
300ml good beef stock
2 shallots
2 cloves of garlic
4 mushrooms chopped

Method
Trim off the fat from the pork fillet and brown in a heavy pan.
Add the shallots, garlic and mushrooms, once brown add the Madeira and reduce by two-thirds. Add the stock and reduce until thick.

Dice the black pudding and add the foie gras, mixing together. Take the pork fillet and make a hole all the way through from one end to the other. Use a wooden spoon to enlarge the hole. Place the black pudding mix in to a piping bag, then fill the fillet. Chill.

Cook the diced vegetables in a frying pan with the butter until soft, put to one side. Finely slice the cabbage and boil until cooked. Refresh in cold water, then squeeze out all the liquid.

Reduce the cream in a pan, then add the cabbage and diced vegetables. Heat two tablespoons of oil in a pan and add the pork fillet. Colour on all sides.

Place in a hot oven for 10 mins. Once cooked remove and rest.

Place the cabbage mixture on the centre of the plate. Cut the pork into 3cm thick slices and place on top of the cabbage mixture. Pass the sauce through a sieve, heat and pour round the cabbage mixture.



PENMAENUCHAF CURED SALMON GRAVADLAX

- Ingredients**
550g salmon fillet, in one piece, trimmed to an even thickness
100g coarse sea salt
80g castor sugar
1 tsp yellow mustard seeds
Small bunch of finely chopped dill
1 tsp ground white pepper
Additional finely chopped dill to serve

Method
Cut the salmon laterally in half and put to one side. In a bowl mix together all the other ingredients, except the additional dill. Cover a plate with clingfilm and put a quarter of the mixture on the plate. Then one of the salmon pieces, skin side down, then half the mixture, then the other piece of salmon, skin side up, and then the final quarter of the mixture.

Cover very tightly with several layers of clingfilm. Place in a high sided plastic tub with another tub of the same size on top and weigh it down – four tins of tomatoes, for example, would be good. Leave for 48 hours to cure.

To serve, unwrap the salmon and carefully brush off the cure with a paper towel. Press the remaining dill into the fillets, then thinly slice the gravadlax at a 45-degree angle leaving the skin behind – the skin can be folded back over the salmon to help keep it fresh.

PERL LAS ICE CREAM

- Ingredients**
420ml double cream
420 ml milk
10 egg yolks
6oz castor sugar
8oz cream cheese
6oz Perl Las cheese

Method
Place the cream and milk in a heavy-based pan and gently bring to the boil. Mix the egg yolks and sugar

together. Slowly pour the cream mixture over the yolk mixture, whisking continually. Return the pan to heat and cook the egg out. Add the Perl Las cheese and cream cheese.

Once the cheeses have dissolved pass through a sieve, place in a plastic container and put in the freezer, mixing every 20 minutes until set or use an ice cream maker.

This is a great accompaniment to a selection of Welsh cheeses.



THIRSTY

Sam Wylie-Harris joins the cocktail circuit and suggests some creative infusions to impress your friends at home

In my little black book of cocktails is a selection of irresistible recipes for smart, summer soirees to create a flight of drinks for fashion-conscious dippers, while also paying tribute to classics such as martini.

Perfecting your mixologist skills with different flavour profiles and mapping the spirit of adventure with a delectable line-up of colourful concoctions will not only raise the bar, but keep things cool when the temperature rises.

Shaken or stirred, tricks of the trade include a Boston shaker, strainer, long bar spoon and a jigger for measuring alcohol – so your friends don't get that guilty feeling before the night is through!

Bourbon (America for whisky) is making a comeback and Jim Beam has launched Red Stag by Jim Beam (£21.75, 70cl, Asda, pictured below), a black cherry-infused bourbon, and the first flavoured bourbon to hit our shores. Here's its wicked take on the classic whiskey sour.

RED STAG CHERRY SMASH SOUR
50ml Red Stag, drop of Angostura bitters, 4 cherries.
Muddle four cherries with a dash of lemon juice in a cocktail shaker. Add a scoop of ice, then the Red Stag and a drop of Angostura bitters. Shake vigorously and strain into a chilled tumbler. Garnish with a fresh cherry and an onion snap.

For a taste of the Caribbean, rum lovers partail to a dark and stormy (apple should try Kraken Black Spiced Rum (£22.99, 70cl, Majestic) – the Victorian flagon-style bottle even has a heavy history on the front. A must for rum-dos, this tasty long drink will quench the biggest thirst.

THE PERFECT STORM
50ml Kraken Black Spiced Rum, 25ml freshly squeezed lime juice, 5ml sugar syrup, 2 dashes Angostura bitters.
Half fill a tall glass with ice. Add the ingredients and stir well to combine. Top up with ginger beer and garnish with a lime wedge.

Style hunters who can't tear themselves away from a classic mojito should check out the new crystal clear rum from Ron Barcelo – Ron Barcelo Gran Platinum Rum (£19.29, 70cl, www.theshop.com), Dominican Republic. Unlike most white rums which are aged up to three years, this is a blend of rums averaging six years, and aged in bourbon barrels. Exceptionally crisp and clean, it's the perfect summer pour.

MOJITO
50ml Barcelo Gran Platinum, Juice from half a lime, 8 fresh mint leaves, 2 teaspoons of sugar, soda water.
Muddle the mint and lime with the sugar in a cocktail shaker. Add a scoop of ice, then the rum. Shake vigorously and strain into a chilled tumbler. Top up with soda water and stir. Garnish with a full mint sprig.

One peek at the new limited edition Bee-feaster London Market Gin (£17.99, 70cl, Solfridges nationwide) will encourage keen mixologists to start polishing the punch bowl. Added botanicals include pomegranate for that straight-from-the-orchard taste, and cardamom for a hint of spice.

PORTOBELLO PUNCH (serves 6)
500ml Bee-feaster Market Edition Gin, 500ml good quality cider, 500ml cloudy apple juice, 300ml lime juice, 1 tin of fruit cocktail with syrup, 2 green apples (sliced), 2 limes (sliced).

Place the sliced apple and limes in a large bowl. Cover with a tin of fruit cocktail and pour over lime juice and gin. Leave ingredients to steep in a cool place for a while. When ready to serve, add blocks of ice and top with cider, apple juice and stir.

A breakfast martini doesn't sound like a sandwicheer, but this delicious infusion definitely fits the bill. New into Waitrose, Chase Marmalade Volcan (£11.95, 70cl, Waitrose) has put an orange twist on the king of cocktails.



Good quality French cuisine served up with

EATING OUT: Bouchon De Rossi, Oxford Street, Swansea

Arriving at this cosy and well regarded French bistro near Swansea's Grand Theatre, I realised with alarm that I had forgotten my spectacles.

Having settled down at table number six, which was close to a tempting display of cakes and desserts, the waitress brought the menu, not one word of which could I read.

"Pas de probleme," as the French might say. Realising

my embarrassment, the waitress brought the restaurant's selection of reading glasses, explaining that I was not the first diner to have been so forgetful.

Choosing a pale I was able to see that while the menu was not particularly extensive it offered an impressively varied selection of French

cuisine to suit most tastes. We chose a bottle of the house red wine, a Vin de Pays de Vaucluse, to go with our shared starter of king prawn tails Provencal with a wildie wine, garlic mushroom and tomato sauce.

As with all the dishes we were to be served, it was a generous portion that was

spendidly cooked and attractively presented.

The blend of garlic mushrooms and tomato sauce really brought the tasty prawns alive in a dish that would be perfectly suitable as a light lunch.

My wife was a little surprised at the generous size of the poached salmon she

chose for her main course. I think French bistro food and one often expects non-vue cuisine-style small portions. But not in this French restaurant where one should have a healthy appetite before entering.

The fish was, however, delicate in texture and beautifully cooked and was com-

a generous dollop of Gallic flair

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plemented well by a flavoured lobster sauce and prawns.

My tornade au poivre was, again, generous in size, tender and juicy.

The pan-fried fillet was topped with just enough crushed black pepper to give it a lively kick.

Both dishes came with,

surprise, surprise, a very generous selection of vegetables, including carrots and saute potatoes that were among the best I've ever tasted.

My steak came with home-made chips.

Now let's be clear. These were not the thin and unexceptional "French

fries" one has come to expect at too many restaurants, but proper chunky chips that were truly excellent.

We could probably have passed on dessert. But having sat next to that tempting display all evening we couldn't resist sharing a raspberry roulade with

chocolate sponge cream. Being in Swansea, we asked for a dollop of Joe's ice cream, which made the whole thing delicious and a fine end to a most enjoyable meal.

The bill came at a very reasonable £38.65

Peter Collins