

### What the experts recommend: meaty dinners, warm welcomes

#### The Guinea Grill

30 Bruton Place, London W1  
(020-7499 1210)

Now is not the time for novelty, says Giles Coren in *The Times*. Now is the time for a “congenial” old pub down a “pretty cobbled lane” serving good ales. The Guinea Grill is such a place, and what’s more, it has a small, secret dining room, a smoking-hot grill and a counter of wonderful dry-aged beef joints. So “shout for oysters, native, by the dozen”, and “terrific” Mâreson chardonnay from Franschhoek, followed by steaks, the Guinea’s famous pies and a second 2004 bottle of claret from “somewhere famous in Margaux”. The oysters are “small, sweet, firm, ochre, like little caramels”. Steak and kidney pie is “sticky with cow fat”, with thick gravy, lean meat and “hefty” kidneys to give it depth. The sirloin is “charred black” outside, “hunting pink” within. It is “grass-fed, proper, British, grainy and sweet”, and delicious washed down with “clear and pale old claret”. *Dinner around £50 a head without wine and service.*

#### The Foxhunter

Nantyderry, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire  
(01873-881101)

If you like your Michelin restaurants to be hushed and formal, I cannot in good conscience recommend The Foxhunter, says Matthew Norman in *The Daily*



Hawksmoor: “stonkingly good”

Telegraph. But those who favour relaxed warmth, and even a “slightly startling intimacy” from the waiting staff, are urged to book a table at once. The restaurant is located in a handsome stone-clad building nestled in the Brecon Beacons, but inside, the flagstoned room has a “vaguely Tuscan farmhouse” feel, as does the food. From a menu built on superb local ingredients we ate pappardelle with wild rabbit and smoked pancetta, and an “alluringly russet-coloured” Cornish crab risotto. Main courses – a vast and hugely flavoursome rack of lamb, and poached brill with tomato-braised octopus – were

similarly impressive. For pudding, hot figs with honey, lavender and Greek yogurt made for a “fresh, gorgeously Aegean ending”. Overall, the meal was “exceedingly difficult to fault”. And if along the way we learned a surprising amount about Auntie Jo’s hot flushes, it was all part of the Foxhunter experience. *£60-£70 a head with wine and service; set lunch: £22.95 for two courses.*

#### Hawksmoor

Sa Air Street, London W1  
(020-7406 3980)

The Hawksmoor team clearly know what they’re doing, says Jay Rayner in *The Observer*. As with their other restaurants, this latest opening shows “there really is such a thing as a British steak house” – but this time they’ve added fish. The restaurant is on the first floor of a Regent Street terrace, and the interior is “pure Art Deco”, from the parquet floor to the banquettes. As you’d expect, the steaks are superb, with the added “glories” of bone-marrow gravy, and a “proper frothy” Béarnaise. Triple-cooked chips are “all snap and crunch and sigh”. And the “fishy element” exceeds expectations: Queenie scallops from the Isle of Man, Brixham crab on toast, and a “stonkingly good tranche” of roast turbot. Dinner here is expensive, but “save up, for as long as it takes”. It’s worth it. *Dinner with wine around £75 a head.*

### Recipe of the week

The ranchers are the guardians of the black bulls of the Camargue, a breed prized for their meat and for their bravery in the *course de taureaux*, says Caroline Conran in her new book. This dish is traditionally eaten with Camargue rice.

#### Rancher's Beef (Gardiane de taureau)

Serves 4

800g shin of beef 1 litre red wine 3 onions, sliced 2 tbsp vinegar 3 cloves  
3 sprigs of thyme 3 bay leaves 3 sprigs rosemary 2 strips of orange peel  
3-4 tbsp olive oil 2 tbsp flour 12 green and 12 black olives  
salt and coarsely ground black pepper

- Cut the beef into large (5cm) pieces, place in a dish and cover with red wine, onions, vinegar, spices, herbs, orange peel and a tbsp of olive oil. Mix around and marinate for 24hrs to tenderize and flavour the beef. Drain off the liquid, keeping the marinade for cooking the beef. Pat meat dry.



dust meat with flour and brown thoroughly in batches, adding a tbsp of oil after each. Pour the marinade over the meat; add the olives and masses of pepper. Simmer gently for 2-3hrs. If it's too wet, remove the lid and

simmer for a further 15-20mins. Like all daubes, this one will taste better if kept for a day or two.

- Heat remaining oil in a casserole;

*Taken from Sud de France: The Food and Cooking of the Languedoc by Caroline Conran, published by Prospect Books at £20. To buy from The Week bookshop for £18, call 0843-060 0020 or visit [www.theweek.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.theweek.co.uk/bookshop).*

### Wine choice



During a recent marathon tasting of supermarket wines, says Fiona Beckett in *The Guardian*, one country stood out for producing “characterful wines at a fair price” – Portugal. Try these:

**Marco de Pegões Terras do Sado Tinto 2010** (£7.49, or £6.49 if you buy 2 or more bottles;

Majestic). It’s “exuberant, brambly” – a “cracking deal”.

**Waitrose F’OZ** (£9.99). From Alentejo comes this “sexy blend” of aragonez, trincadeira and castelão. It tastes more like £15.

**Tanners Douro Red** (£7.90; [www.tanners-wines.co.uk](http://www.tanners-wines.co.uk)). A “handsomely labelled, juicy” red that is great winter drinking with stews (see recipe, left).

**Quinta de Santana’s Sant’ana Tinto 2011** (£7.99; The Real Wine Company). This blend of touriga nacional and aragonez drinks like a more expensive Italian red.

**Marks & Spencer’s Tercius Alvarinho 2011** (£9.99). A “delicious, crisp, citrusy white”: the “ideal” partner to seafood.

The Week’s own selection of excellent wines is available at [www.theweekwines.com](http://www.theweekwines.com).