



The White Hart



Bishops Caundle, Sherborne, Dorset, DT9 5ND.
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THERE ARE INTERESTING TIMES ahead for a Grade II-listed pub in the centre of a little village, just six miles from the Dorset town of Sherborne.

A gourmet evening at The White Hart in Bishops Caundle this month will showcase 21-year-old head chef Sam Day's culinary talent. Sam's arrival at the pub has given owner Gale Jenkinson the opportunity to forge ahead with a plan to reinvigorate and promote its fine dining offering.

The pub is spacious, so great for families, and it has an intriguing history – it was a former monks' brewing house and has its own resident ghost. Its garden offers views across the Dorset hills and inside there's a cosy bar area and the more formal, but unpretentious, Monks Restaurant.

Starters are light and fresh, a perfect foil to the substantial main courses. An oven baked field mushroom sitting on a crisp granary bun has a tang of onion marmalade and gorgonzola, counteracting the rich, smoky flavours of the mushroom. Delicate Thai crab cakes have a gentle spicy heat and are topped by beautiful red Dorset watercress.

By all accounts Sam's slow roasted belly pork is becoming a local legend, no doubt due to the care taken in both sourcing good quality meat and the ample time given to cooking it. The dinner menu has various other meat options, including steak, lamb, duck and roast chicken – which comes with an excellent pea risotto and courgette, lightly cooked to keep its colour and crunch. The

watercress appears again as part of the vegetarian option, a generous amount topping a goat's cheese and spinach tatin which is accompanied by a rich, flavour-packed tomato sauce.

Leave room for one of the indulgent desserts.

Chocolate fans will savour sous chef Dave Williams' hot chocolate fondant, which is counterbalanced by a white chocolate ice cream with generous amounts of choc chunks.

Gale's an attentive, involved host – she's clearly taken great delight in drawing up a list of recommended wines for each dish, and her drive and commitment to creating a special dining pub, combined with the talent and energy of her young chef looks to set reap rewards. *CJ*

EAT

Sample menu

STARTER

Chicken liver parfait with a rocket and cucumber salad and toasted granary bread, £5.95

MAIN

Rolled and pressed shoulder of lamb with roasted garlic puree, dauphinoise potato and rosemary jus, £14.95

PUD

Treacle tart with Devonshire clotted cream and salted caramel sauce, £6.95