

# Georgian glory

**P**AUL Davies and Andrew Hetherington have been running Fairyhill restaurant with rooms for almost 20 years.

They fell in love with the grand old house at Reynoldston on the Gower peninsula during their hunt for a larger property to expand into.

"We ran a restaurant in Mumbles prior to Fairyhill, and needed somewhere bigger," says Andrew. "Fairyhill looked idyllic, set in 24 acres of grounds, and the building itself, which was built in 1720, is wonderful."

Although Fairyhill looks grand, Andrew stresses that it's an everyday place, not just somewhere for a special occasion.

"We keep the prices as keen as possible to make things affordable, and we don't stand on ceremony, we like people to feel at

home, so guests don't have to wear a jacket for dinner or anything like that."

Fairyhill has a large walled garden which supplies the restaurant with fresh vegetables and herbs, while as much produce as possible – salt-marsh Welsh lamb, lobsters and sea bass for example – comes from within a 10-mile radius.

The next big event is Christmas, so Andrew is stocking up on logs to keep the fires blazing over the festive period.

"There's nothing like a relaxing drink by the fire on Christmas Day," he says.

■ **Fairyhill is part of Welsh Rarebits, a collection of handpicked, top quality, independently-owned hotels. Order your free brochure online – [www.rarebits.co.uk](http://www.rarebits.co.uk) – or call 01686 668030. Gift vouchers available.**



## Steamed cockles and mussels

### INGREDIENTS – SERVES 2

- 400g live mussels
- 200g live cockles
- 1 shallot, diced
- 1 leek, finely chopped
- Squeeze of lemon juice
- Chopped parsley and chives (handful of each)
- 50ml white wine, 50ml water, 50ml cream

### METHOD

Heat the white wine and water in a

large saucepan, add the leek and shallot.

Then add the live cockles and mussels and put a lid on the pan. Steam for roughly 5 minutes then add the lemon juice, herbs and cream, season with salt.

Steam for another minute, spoon the shellfish into a large bowl and pour the sauce left in the pan over the dish. Check all mussels and cockles have opened, discard any closed ones.

## Christmas pudding baked Alaska

### INGREDIENTS – SERVES 2

■ Your favourite ice cream, we use our home made Christmas pudding ice cream

### SPONGE:

- 140g butter
- 120g sugar
- 140g whole egg
- 120g flour

### BRANDY MERINGUE

- 200ml brandy
- 30g sugar
- 3 egg whites
- 150g sugar

### METHOD

Whisk the 3 egg whites for the meringue until stiff, then slowly add the sugar

whisking constantly until silky smooth.

Boil the brandy and sugar in a pan and reduce to a syrup trying not to ignite the brandy, then stir into the whisked egg whites.

For the sponge, beat together the butter and sugar, add eggs slowly while whisking and then fold in the flour. Spread out on a shallow tray lined with greaseproof paper and bake at 180°C for 13 minutes, cool and cut into 3 inch circles.

To make the Alaska, place a sponge circle on a baking tray, add a scoop of ice cream on top and spoon or pipe the meringue all around, it is important there are no holes. Bake at 220°C for 5 minutes and enjoy with a glass of brandy.



## Pan roasted partridge with herb polenta and spinach puree

### INGREDIENTS – SERVES 2

- 2 partridges
- 1 clove garlic chopped
- 1 sprig thyme
- Olive oil

### POLENTA

- 250g precooked polenta flour
- 1 litre chicken stock
- 150g butter
- 100g grated parmesan
- 20g mixed dried herbs

### SPINACH PUREE

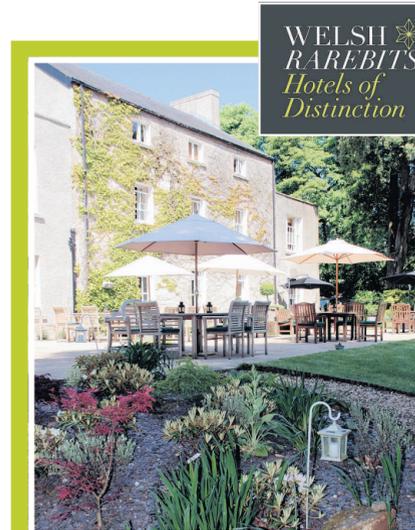
- 200g spinach
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 50g mashed potato

### METHOD

Take two partridges, place garlic and thyme inside the birds, season and sear on all sides in a hot pan, then place the partridge in oven 180°C, Gas 4 for 10-12 minutes or until cooked through. Remove from oven and rest for 5 minutes. Cut off the legs and carve off the breasts.

For the polenta bring the chicken stock to the boil, whisk in polenta flour and simmer for 5 minutes, add butter, parmesan and herbs and season. Simmer for a further 5 minutes. Pour into a shallow tray and put aside to set.

For the spinach puree, blanch the spinach for 1 minute in boiling water, then plunge into very cold water. Drain then blitz in a food processor adding the olive oil, when smooth add the mash and blitz for 1 minute adding water if too thick.



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## Win a night for two and dinner at Fairyhill

Just go to the Welsh Rarebits web site [www.rarebits.co.uk](http://www.rarebits.co.uk), go to the competition tab on the left, enter the code WOS65F and follow the simple instructions.

# SEVEN TO LUST AFTER

## RETRO-TASTIC

■ Almost everyone will have a memory of this remarkable time-teller donning the wall of a relative. Well, now it's a classic and is available at an absolute steal. Starburst '60s Wall Clock, £29.95, from [www.houseofbath.co.uk](http://www.houseofbath.co.uk)



## GRASS ROOTS

■ As richly coloured as the Cotswolds' leaves, fiery orange cushions such as Clarissa Hulse's contemporary design will help build a wall of colour to sofas and armchairs. Grasses Silk Cushion, £49, from [www.darissahulse.com](http://www.darissahulse.com)

## MOODY HUES

■ Replace boring lamp or overhead light fittings with one of these multi-colour bulbs. With a remote control included, you can choose from four lighting effects, from party strobe to plain illuminate, and then from one of 16 colour combinations to match your mood. LED Colour-changing Bulb, £24.95, from [www.red5.co.uk](http://www.red5.co.uk)



## STAY UPRIGHT

■ Slipping on the snow and ice might make for some amusing video footage, but it really is a pain in the posterior. To ensure you're not a victim of a seasonal trip, use these grippers on the front of your shoes; each one has a pair of metal studs to help you walk on slippery surfaces more safely. They're available in four colours, so you should find a pair to match your footwear. Nordic Mini Ice Grippers, £7.99, from [www.iwantoneofthose.com](http://www.iwantoneofthose.com)



## DRESSED TO THRILL

■ Bond may be licensed to kill, but he'll also look drop-dead gorgeous wearing this piece of art at the next premiere. Embellished with a sterling silver gun, this silk bow tie is red carpet material. Title of Work Sterling Silver Gun Bowtie, £240, from [www.giftvault.com](http://www.giftvault.com)



## SADDLE UP

■ Cross-body bags can take the strain out of carrying a heavy load and the leopard print on Boden's satchel is right on trend. Richmond Bag in tan leopard, £129, from [www.boden.co.uk](http://www.boden.co.uk)



## SNUGGLE UP

■ Made from the kindest and most natural material, this 100% wool throw is perfect for keeping you warm as toast in front of the telly. Avoca Pioneer Throw in purple, £80, from [www.johnlewis.com](http://www.johnlewis.com)



# PUB SPY

## THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

HIGH STREET,  
COWBRIDGE  
CF71 7AG

01446 773592

**STAFF:** A young, friendly crew who have built up a good rapport with the locals. Service is always with a smile and they offer advice without prompting. When a guest ale that was up on the chalkboard had finished, they had enough knowledge

about their ales to suggest a close alternative. Brains beers are to the fore, but they do cater for the real ale buff with regular guest ales.

16/20

**DECOR:** When Brains moved the builders in last year to 'transform' the Duke into one of their 'gastropubs', there was a fear that this local would lose its way. Happily, it was done in the best possible taste, and both locals and a new clientele have made the Duke a favourite in this popular market town. A roaring fire in the front room, a refurbished modern

'snug' to the left as you enter off the High Street and a large eating area to the back are complemented by a huge revamped conservatory and outdoor patio area. This is backed up by a medieval-style galleried events room with its own bar, which caters for weddings and other functions.

19/20

**FOOD & DRINK:** Like many of the new-wave Brains pubs, the menu is rather formulaic but is hard to fault in taste, quantity and presentation, with many pub food regulars but cooked with considerable

flair. And unlike some gastropubs which saw a revamp as an invitation to overprice, the Duke has pitched it right, attracting families and couples who frequent it on a regular basis.

16/20

**CLIENTELE:** It used to be renowned for its great early morning fry-ups, ordered by red-shirted Welshmen and woman clamouring for a glimpse of a big screen, either upstairs, in the back room or at the front bars to cheer on Wales around Six Nations, World Cup or Autumn International games. Now it is a little

bit more upmarket but still has that feel of a Welsh rugby fans' pub. More than that, though, it attracts the after-work business crowd and the younger audience who have outgrown the Groom and spread their time between the Vale, Bar 44, the Bear Hotel and the Duke.

17/20

**ATMOSPHERE:** On a rainy day – therefore most days this summer and autumn – the Duke is a happy and warm haven with a real chatty buzz, particularly the front bar. There's always a dash for the window seats

and the quirky high seats alongside the high 'butcher-block' table, where the conversation inevitably switches to Wales' woes on the rugby field. And while 'ladies who lunch' are more likely to be seen gracing the lounge of the Bear or Quarter Penny Cafe, the revamped Duke has cast off its 'flat-cap' image to lure a more sophisticated audience.

18/20  
TOTAL: 86/100

