

Hertfordshire Life
**FOOD
 & DRINK**
 AWARDS 2017

The
FINALISTS

Our independent panel of 12 judges has examined hundreds of entries in this year's food and drink awards to create its shortlist in 12 categories. Discover who has made the finals at Hatfield House in July overleaf



RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR

Auberge du Lac, Brocket Hall, nr Welwyn

In the beautiful 543-acre grounds of the Brocket Hall Estate, Auberge du Lac was re-launched at the beginning of 2017 with a new team and reinvigorated passion. Head chef Matthew Edmonds has curated a series of seasonal menus that feature ingredients he hand-picks from in and around the estate and sources from local producers – all to be enjoyed in the most idyllic of settings, right on the lake's edge.

Bricklayers Arms, Flaunden

In beautiful surroundings down leafy country lanes between Latimer and Chipperfield you'll find the award-winning, flint and ivy-clad Bricklayers Arms. This 18th century pub and restaurant is a destination-led eatery offering locally-sourced dishes with an English-French fusion menu with wines to match. Bon appétit!

Dylans – The Kings Arms, St Albans

On George Street in the heart of the cathedral quarter in St Albans (below), we offer a snacking menu in the front room and an a la carte casual fine dining menu in the back room. Our bar stocks craft beers and over 50 gins.



INDEPENDENT CAFÉ/TEA ROOM OF THE YEAR

Rosey Lea Cafe & Tearooms, Bishop's Stortford

At Rosey Lea the traditional ambience is complemented by delicious food and drink, all served on English bone china. All of our ingredients are locally sourced and presented to the highest standards. We also now have our own exclusive blend of tea and coffee.

Laura Kate, Welwyn

Laura Kate is all the things I love in life under one roof in a pretty setting – afternoon tea, cake and a lovely cup of tea. I'm lucky to call this my job.



Beechwood Fine Foods, Tring

Beechwood Fine Foods is a multi-award winning independent cafe-feria in the heart of Tring. We offer an extensive range of British and local produce as well as our own homemade cakes and chutneys and preserves. We serve Fairtrade coffee, light lunches and afternoon teas.

BEST INDEPENDENT RETAILER

Bellalicious Cake Company

I'm a self-taught baker with passion for all things cake. I love to try new techniques and flavours and learn new skills. I bake for different budgets and dietary requirements and offer refined sugar-free options. I source local fruit for my homemade jam used in some of my cakes.

Brewery Tearooms, Walkern

As an independent family owned business, our success is measured by the feedback of our customers - our most important critics. At Brewery Tearooms you're always assured of a warm welcome and we are proud to be serving our community and county.



Sarah's Simple Cakes, Hoddesdon

Sarah's Simple Cakes was founded in 2015. Having more than 25 years behind me in baking, the natural step was to follow my creative streak and develop my passion for creating exquisite and bespoke wedding and celebration cakes. I create nothing but the very best and concentrate on providing a very high standard while maintaining a personal and reliable service.

Parker & Vine, Harpenden

Jane Parker and Sue Vine had an idea to bring the London food scene to Harpenden. Parker and Vine is the result, selling freshly made vibrant salads and cakes, plus a handpicked range of continental pantry items.

PUB OF THE YEAR

Alford Arms, Frithsden

In a secluded wooded valley, award-winning Alford Arms is a classic country pub that serves great food. Our seasonal menu and daily specials balance originality with more traditional fare using fresh, local produce wherever possible.

Golden Fleece, Braughing

An old English pub with a contemporary twist set in the charming village of Braughing. We serve modern British dishes and our goal is to exceed customer expectations with friendly customer service and excellent food and drink.



Great Northern, St Albans

An independent pub and restaurant (above) serving seasonal dishes made from locally-sourced ingredients. We offer an extensive range of ales and wine to be enjoyed inside or out. We were awarded CAMRA's Most Improved Pub Award in 2016 and have been under new ownership since 2015.

King's Arms, Tring

The King's Arms is a family run 200-year-old coaching inn. The pub is still very traditional, serving great

quality fresh food and well-kept local real ales, good wines and a large gin collection. There's plenty for everyone to be enjoyed in the main pub, the large cobbled courtyard or the new Coach House dining/function room.

OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE

Brewery Tearooms, Walkern

Since winning this category in these prestigious awards last year, we have been working hard to maintain and exceed customers' expectations. Our team is therefore particularly thrilled to have made it to the finals again.



Alford Arms, Frithsden

From terrace to bar to dining room, guests can enjoy the same menu and great service throughout. Whether it's an impromptu pint or a more formal dining occasion (or maybe a bit of both) the Alford takes it all in its stride.

Auberge du Lac, nr Welwyn

The idyllic setting on the water's edge and the contemporary and carefully curated menus are reason enough to visit Auberge du Lac – but the service guests receive when they arrive and throughout their visit, takes the experience to another level. Restaurant manager Pedro Miramon and his team are knowledgeable, friendly and attentive, and head chef Matthew Edmonds is always keen to meet his guests, often explaining the inspiration behind dishes and providing recommendations.

PRODUCER PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

Bridget B's, Watton-at-Stone

Our family-run business at Sacombe Hill Farm is committed to producing sustainable quality meat with passion and a personal service. You'll recognise the quality of the meats our butchery has to offer from your very first bite.

Farr Brew, Wheathampstead

Farr Brew is a traditional brewery supplying beer to around 100 pubs throughout Hertfordshire. We produce award-winning beers and have community concerns at our core – everything we do is dedicated to minimising our impact on the environment while ensuring our customers are engaged with the process.

Puddingstone Distillery, Wilstone

Founded by husband and wife team, Ben and Kate Marston, Puddingstone Distillery is Hertfordshire's first gin distillery. Our award-winning Campfire Gin is available in three different expressions – London Dry, Cask Aged and Navy Strength.





NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR

Three Piece Bar, Kings Langley

Three Piece Bar is a professional, mobile bartending service established by Alexander Legret and Daniel Twine to raise the standard of cocktails in Hertfordshire. They create bespoke drinks menus and custom graphic designs that are uniquely tailored to match any event theme.

Hampson Park Coffee Shop

Our friendly coffee shop is run by the Pin Green Community Association, staffed by local people for the community of Pin Green, Hampson Park and surrounding areas. We offer good quality food and drinks at affordable prices.



Puddingstone Distillery, Wilstone

Puddingstone Distillery officially launched in November 2016. Founded by husband and wife team, Ben and Kate Marston (above), it is Hertfordshire's first gin distillery and home of award-winning Campfire Gin – Spirit of the Outdoors.

The Oak, Stanstead Abbots

The Oak is a fish-led gastro pub. We also offer a range of cocktails, fine wines and craft beers. We are hugely passionate about sustainability and local produce which is reflected in our menus.

FOOD & DRINK HERO OF THE YEAR

Bridget B's, Watton-at-Stone

Owned and operated by Bridget Borlase, the fifth-generation of farmers, Bridget

FAMILY DINING AWARD

Cricketers, Redbourn

At the Cricketers you can be assured of a warm welcome, great service and excellent food for all the family. Whether enjoying a meal out, light-bites in our outside seating area or one of our popular desserts, there is something for everyone. When the sun is out there's also a bouncy castle for the kids.

Fox & Duck, Therfield

Set in the beautiful village of Therfield, the Fox and Duck provides fun for all the family. From an expansive village green, children's play area and dog-friendly bar, there's something for everyone.

Golden Fleece, Braughing

As a family business we take pride in welcoming children to the Golden Fleece. All our food is home cooked and as well as a children's menu, many of the dishes on our a la carte menu are available as smaller portions.

Matthew Edmonds, Auberge du Lac, nr Welwyn

A keen forager and passionate supporter of local producers, Matthew was the perfect choice for head chef when Auberge du Lac relaunched at the beginning of this year. His previous head chef roles at Searcy's at The Gherkin and The Grantley Arms have given him the experience to hit the ground running and put many exciting plans in place for the future of Auberge du Lac.



Matthew Hill, The Grill Room

Chad Rahman, Chez Mumtaj, St Albans

Award-winning executive chef Chad Rahman pushes the boundaries of modern French-Asian cuisine at his boutique-style restaurant in St Albans. His cuisine is unique, based on the Asian philosophy of natural seasonal flavours.

CHEF OF THE YEAR

Matthew Hill, The Grill Room, Down Hall, Bishop's Stortford

As Down Hall's head chef, Matthew oversees all food and beverage operations at the country house hotel and runs the 66-cover restaurant, The Grill Room. The restaurant specialises in Anglo-French cuisine with signature dishes of salt baked beetroot, goats curd and candied walnuts and panfried salmon with Down Hall garden salad.

B's supplies quality meat from two retail shops – one on site at Sacombe Hill Farm and the other in the village of Watton-at-Stone. Bridget employs four master butchers who possess a wealth of experience within the field of butchery, while the team has the expertise and knowledge needed to deliver impeccable customer service.

Jess Tatlow, Golden Fleece, Braughing

I am very passionate about creating exciting, flavourful seasonal dishes and am continually developing the art of vegetarian and special dietary requirement cuisine for our discerning clientele.



The Golden Fleece's smoked salmon and crab cheesecake

Brewery Tearooms, Walkern

We are hugely passionate about food and drink and are proud to be a finalist in this category. Our aim is to provide a quality and honest menu, with the emphasis on fresh and homemade food that reflects the changing seasons.

BEST LOCAL INDUSTRY SUPPLIER

Hessian Coffee

Neil Clark and Niall McCrae, partners at The Hessian Coffee Company, have years of experience in providing the best in coffees, teas, equipment, training and products to the hot beverage local industry. Their family ethos is passion, honesty, customer focus and fun.



Hedges Farm Shop

Hedges Farm (above) is family-run and dedicated to providing produce that's grown here, not flown here. Our aim has always been supplying quality home-produced and locally-sourced meat.



Bridget Borlase, Bridget B's

Bridget B's, Watton-at-Stone

We have grown and diversified into supplying many of Hertfordshire's top eateries with an extensive range of top quality meats, much of which is born and reared on our own farms and all prepared by our master butchers. We go the extra mile to keep our customers, and most importantly their customers, happy.

SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

Brewery Tearooms, Walkern

At Brewery Tearooms it is not just about great coffee and cake. We love what we do, and with our business ethos being to make a responsible profit, we can donate to local community charities and invest in fundraising.

Cookery Eatery, Hitchin

Cookery Eatery is the brainchild of Emma Goulding. It offers cookery experiences to adults and children of all ages. The clubs aren't simply cookery classes, children learn about food, kitchen processes, cook lovely food and then sit and eat it together.

Coffee Ethic

Druglink's social enterprise is operated by volunteers from our recovery service and vulnerable people from the local community. It offers them the opportunity to learn new skills and build confidence – paving the path to paid employment and independence.

