

Bell Hotel in Saxmundham

On a grey, wet and windy day, the cheery interior of the elegant, and extensively refurbished Grade II listed Bell Hotel in Saxmundham provided respite from the elements and the ideal place for a relaxed lunch.

My husband enjoyed a perfectly kept pint of Adnams Southwold bitter and I sampled a cold crisp Pinot Grigio while perusing the extensive menu.

The focus is on what's local and seasonal; not only from the enticing array of dishes on offer under the 'Autumn Restaurant Menu' but under the classics too, with a choice of 8oz Emmerdale Farm Darsham steak burger (with all the trimmings) or Adnams Ghost Ship Battered Cod with triple cooked chips.

We opted to share a starter which didn't disappoint. The Darsham Game Terrine was a rich and sumptuous slice wrapped in bacon, offset by a slightly tart blackberry compote and served with radicchio, a confit fig and rounds of sourdough toast with a satisfying snap. The presentation was beautiful - with tiny sprigs of lemon thyme to add colour and flavour.

Our mains comprised the Sous Vide Panko Plaice with Smoked Mash Potato, Veronique Sauce with White Grapes, Tarragon and Cavolo Nero. This complex French classic was cooked to perfection with the crisp coating on the fish complemented by the silky cream sauce and smooth, smokily enhanced potato mash.

Equally impressive in terms of flavour and texture combinations and gorgeous optics was the Braised Ox Cheek. Meltingly soft with real depth of flavour, it was served with an unctuous burnt onion and potato purée,

along with pickled celery, radish and grilled chicory to cut through with pleasantly sharp but subtle notes. To cap it all we couldn't resist a dessert and shared the seasonally



apt Autumn Mess. Far from messy, this was an exquisite balance of zingy citrus curd, slices of perfectly poached pear, blackberry and ginger syrup, glazed fig and heavenly meringue.

This was topped off with an espresso, served of course with a buttery shortbread treat to round out a really excellent lunch. With starters priced from £9.75 and mains from £17.50 to £31.95 (Emmerdale Farm Darsham Rib-Eye steal with Jerusalem artichoke purée, sous vide egg yolk, confit shallots, wilted spinach, hand-cut triple cut chips with red wine jus), the Bell has a chef who knows how to provide a high quality fine-dining experience.

It also offers a very tempting and affordable two courses for £20 or three courses for £25 menu served at lunchtimes and early evenings between Monday and Saturday. I would thoroughly recommend the Bell for a delicious and refined meal with friends, family or colleagues, particularly as the festive season approaches.

Karen Hubbard

Aldeburgh Tide Timetable: 10 November - 7 December 2023

FRIDAY 10	Low tide 17h31 0.47m	Low tide 10h25 0.48m	MONDAY 27	High tide 14h18 2.05m
Low tide 02h06 1.00m	High tide 23h31 2.41m	High tide 17h51 2.19m	Low tide 03h39 0.53m	Low tide 19h21 1.01m
High tide 08h05 2.34m	THURSDAY 16	Low tide 22h58 1.19m	High tide 09h50 2.58m	SUNDAY 3
Low tide 14h35 0.50m	Low tide 05h47 0.43m	WEDNESDAY 22	Low tide 16h08 0.24m	Low tide 08h07 0.55m
High tide 21h04 2.27m	High tide 11h58 2.43m	High tide 05h07 2.28m	High tide 22h32 2.47m	High tide 15h18 1.98m
SATURDAY 11	Low tide 18h10 0.58m	Low tide 11h41 0.42m	TUESDAY 28	Low tide 20h03 1.13m
Low tide 02h43 0.86m	FRIDAY 17	High tide 18h55 2.25m	Low tide 04h24 0.42m	MONDAY 4
High tide 08h45 2.42m	High tide 00h03 2.39m	THURSDAY 23	High tide 10h40 2.52m	High tide 02h24 2.25m
Low tide 15h10 0.43m	Low tide 06h30 0.41m	Low tide 00h14 1.12m	Low tide 16h48 0.36m	Low tide 08h57 0.65m
High tide 21h35 2.33m	High tide 12h52 2.33m	High tide 06h13 2.37m	High tide 23h04 2.48m	High tide 16h17 1.94m
SUNDAY 12	Low tide 18h52 0.73m	Low tide 12h48 0.32m	WEDNESDAY 29	Low tide 20h54 1.22m
Low tide 03h18 0.74m	SATURDAY 18	High tide 19h50 2.31m	Low tide 05h08 0.36m	TUESDAY 5
High tide 09h22 2.49m	High tide 00h41 2.35m	FRIDAY 24	High tide 11h31 2.42m	High tide 03h26 2.19m
Low tide 15h44 0.38m	Low tide 07h18 0.43m	Low tide 01h18 0.99m	Low tide 17h26 0.52m	Low tide 09h56 0.72m
High tide 22h05 2.38m	High tide 14h00 2.24m	High tide 07h12 2.47m	High tide 23h35 2.48m	High tide 17h13 1.93m
MONDAY 13	Low tide 19h39 0.89m	Low tide 13h51 0.22m	THURSDAY 30	Low tide 21h57 1.27m
Low tide 03h53 0.63m	SUNDAY 19	High tide 20h38 2.37m	Low tide 05h51 0.34m	WEDNESDAY 6
High tide 09h58 2.53m	High tide 01h29 2.29m	SATURDAY 25	High tide 12h24 2.29m	High tide 04h30 2.16m
Low tide 16h19 0.36m	Low tide 08h11 0.46m	Low tide 02h05 0.83m	Low tide 18h04 0.69m	Low tide 11h02 0.76m
High tide 22h33 2.41m	High tide 15h21 2.17m	High tide 08h07 2.55m	FRIDAY 1 DECEMBER	High tide 18h06 1.96m
TUESDAY 14	Low tide 20h34 1.04m	Low tide 14h41 0.16m	High tide 00h09 2.45m	Low tide 23h13 1.27m
Low tide 04h29 0.54m	MONDAY 20	High tide 21h21 2.42m	Low tide 06h35 0.38m	THURSDAY 7
High tide 10h35 2.53m	High tide 02h34 2.24m	SUNDAY 26	High tide 13h20 2.16m	High tide 05h29 2.16m
Low tide 16h54 0.39m	Low tide 09h13 0.49m	Low tide 02h54 0.67m	Low tide 18h42 0.86m	Low tide 12h07 0.73m
High tide 23h01 2.42m	High tide 16h40 2.16m	High tide 08h59 2.59m	SATURDAY 2	High tide 18h55 2.02m
WEDNESDAY 15	Low tide 21h40 1.15m	Low tide 15h26 0.17m	High tide 00h46 2.40m	
Low tide 05h07 0.47m	TUESDAY 21	High tide 21h58 2.45m	Low tide 07h20 0.45m	
High tide 11h14 2.49m	High tide 03h52 2.23m			