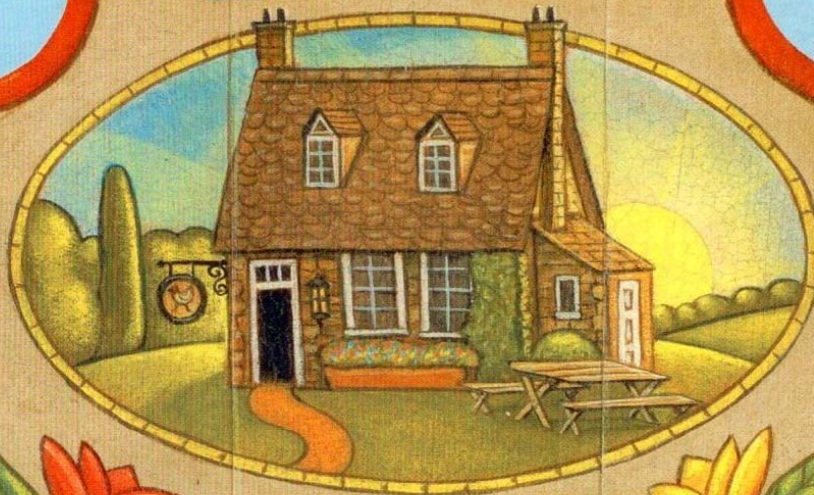


The Guardian and Observer guides to

Summer pubs



Part 1
Country

Part 2
free with
the Observer
tomorrow

theguardian | June 2009

Norfolk pheasant. Here too are old-fashioned desserts at £5.25 a pop: bread and butter pudding, treacle tart. Local beers are also available.

We love the landlord because ...

Robert Dawson-Smith has made any visit to his pub a truly individual experience. Extracurricular activities include local art exhibitions and a retro and rustic furniture workshop, run by his daughter, Rachel.

Meet the locals

You may spot a genuine local or two but most people will be staying in one of the six rooms available.

Pub trivia

A bit of local gossip: the pub is up for sale, although, until they find the right buyer, the owners are "very much still here, with as much enthusiasm as ever". **SE**



Open Wed-Sat 11.30am-3pm, 6-11.30pm, Sun 12-3pm, 7-10.30pm, closed from Mon until 6pm Tue - Food 12.30-2pm, 7.30-9pm - Six rooms from £90 - Nr Wolteron Hall, NR11 7LZ - 01263 768909, saracenshead-norfolk.co.uk



**80 The Olde Bell
Hurley, Berkshire**

Why it makes the grade

The coaching inn reinvented for today, 500 metres from an achingly pretty stretch of the Thames. A delicious welcome; an acre of wild garden with its outside kitchen, settles and chunky tables; some new bedrooms you'd want to take

home with you; and a nooky bar you'll never want to leave.

Signature fare

Famous for its beef - pinkly, juicily roasted on Sundays and always in rich pies, braises or steaks (mains £9-16). Chef Tony's family are from Calabria, so there's often homemade pasta on the menu. Barsnacks include a stellar rarebit. Weekday set lunches £12 for two courses. Up to six well-kept regional ales (Rebellion's Mutiny and IPA £3.10 a pint and perfect with one of legendary Tony's pork pies), homemade lemonade and rhubarb fizz.

We love the landlady because ... Innkeeper Florence Fowler runs the place with verve, efficiency and hilarious humanity.

Meet the locals

Boaties, super-famous musicians, walkers and cyclists, dog lovers and young lovers.

Pub trivia

Reputed to be the oldest inn in England, The Olde Bell was sensitively reimagined last year by Ilse Crawford (Babbington House, Soho House etc). **KG**



Open 10am-10pm - Food 12-3pm (Sun 4pm), 6-10pm - 47 rooms from £95 - High Street, SL6 5LX - 01628 825881, theoldebell.co.uk

GUY BROWNING'S GUIDE TO PUB ETIQUETTE

8. Where to sit

It's entirely up to you where you sit in a pub as long as you don't sit where any of the regulars sit. If you enter a strange pub early on a Tuesday night and sit at a large table where four men usually play cribbage slightly later on a Tuesday night, while you won't receive any overt hostility, you will be aware of a strange feeling that four people are constantly walking over your grave. Never, ever sit at the end of the bar with your back to the wall. If you turn around and look at the wall behind you, there will be a photo of the man who's place you are now sitting in.