

THE CROSS

Adam Bennett Continues in the Right Direction at The Cross

The former Grade II 19th-century inn, now a celebrated gastropub overseen by Executive Chef Adam Bennett boasts a Michelin star, three AA rosettes and a Good Food Award Gold Seal. It's little surprise that this cosy Kenilworth haven, refurbished and relaunched in 2013, offers one of the region's finest gourmet dining experiences.

Former Dorchester chef Adam and his team delight diners by working their magic in the pub's open kitchen. The space once served as a schoolroom, while a butcher's shop stood in the smaller adjoining bar area. Regulars at this beautifully presented gastropub ensure that favourites such as Cornish crab soup, dry-aged beef with pickled walnut, glacé carrots and Bordelaise sauce remain fixtures on the menu, while the hazelnut soufflé is practically immovable.

Crispy Duck Egg Remains the Most-Requested Dish

Adam explains: "Our most requested dish, by far, is the Crispy Duck Egg in its various seasonal variations. This is served with Wye Valley asparagus in the spring, white beans, peppers and chorizo in the summer, celeriac, mushrooms and truffle in the autumn and smoked haddock, leeks and potatoes in the winter."

The Cross relies on the team at local Mill Piece Gardens for exceptional vegetables, salads and fruits - all grown using the 'no-dig' organic method. Just a 10-minute drive away, produce ordered at 11pm can be picked and delivered by 10am the next morning, and on the plate from midday.

Despite its Michelin distinction, Adam insists that The Cross remains a relaxed dining experience, albeit one defined by first-class attention to detail in both service and food.

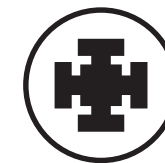
And the Guinea Fowl Isn't bad either...

One of Adam's favourite dishes is guinea fowl. "This is in respect of our collaboration with Laurent Perrier and their Grand Siècle 26. We cook the guinea fowl on the bone gently, then grill to crisp the skin, or serve it with a croquette of the leg, crispy potato terrine, butternut squash and a sauce with white pepper, winter truffle and redcurrants," he says.

The Cross may be renowned and in high demand, but it is not immune to economic pressures. Adam explains: "The current economic climate has become very difficult for hospitality in general, but small, independent restaurants have found it particularly challenging. Our aim has been to make savings through improved organisation and staff reduction; it's helped ensure any belt-tightening goes unnoticed by our guests."

Adam believes government support could play a role in helping restaurants navigate today's economic headwinds, particularly through reducing VAT for the hospitality industry and easing the process of employing staff from the EU.

With unwavering dedication to quality ingredients, thoughtful cooking and warm hospitality, Adam Bennett continues to guide The Cross with confidence and creativity. Even in challenging times, his commitment to consistency and excellence ensures the restaurant remains a cherished destination for diners from across the Midlands and beyond.



For the sea trout & cure

- A 350g piece of skinless, boneless sea trout (or salmon as a substitute)
- 100g coarse sea salt
- 100g granulated sugar
- 10g juniper berries - chopped
- 6g white peppercorns - crushed
- ½ bunch dill coarsely chopped
- 1 tsp each finely grated zest of lemon and bergamot (or lime as a substitute)
- 100ml approximately of aromatic gin

1. Combine the salt, sugar, dill and spices in a bowl. Add the gin little by little to give a texture a bit like wet sand.
2. Lay half the mixture on a stainless steel or glass tray, place the sea trout on top and cover with the rest of the mixture. Cover with cling film and leave in the fridge to cure for around 12 to 16 hours or until firm to the touch. Turn the fish over after 6 hours.
3. Remove from the salt mixture & rinse briefly under cold water. Dry well and reserve in the fridge, covered.

For the smoked baby beets

- 2 bunches of mixed colour baby beets
- Salt and pepper
- 100ml virgin rapeseed oil
- A sprig of thyme
- 1 clove garlic – peeled and cut into 3
- 2 tbsp wood chippings – beech for preference

1. Trim the leaves from the beets, wash thoroughly and package them in foil with salt, pepper, a piece of garlic, sprig of thyme and a little rapeseed oil. Bake in a preheated 170c oven until the beets are tender when tested with the point of a knife.
2. Remove from the oven, when cool enough to handle rub the skins off with your fingertips.
3. Then rinse beets briefly under cold water, arrange them on a wire rack to fit over a deep roasting tray. Place the chippings in the tray and heat on the hob until smoke rises. Place the rack of beets over the smoking tray and cover with foil.
4. Allow to smoke for a few minutes depending on the smoke density. When you are happy with the level of smoke remove and chill the beets. Turn off the heat source under the tray and carefully pour in some cold water, leave to cool down.

Gin Cured Sea Trout, Smoked Baby Beets, Horseradish Sorbet & Watercress

For the horseradish sorbet

- 150g water
- 50g sugar
- 100g liquid glucose
- 100g Colman's horseradish sauce
- 6g sorbet stabiliser (optional)
- 250g yoghurt
- 250g soured cream
- Pinch of salt
- 20g lemon juice

1. Mix the sugar with the sorbet stabiliser (if using).
2. Place the water, sugar mixture and glucose in a pan & bring to the boil. Remove from the heat and cool.
3. Add the rest of the ingredients to the cold syrup, leave to stand for 20 minutes then pass through a fine sieve.
4. Churn in an ice cream machine and reserve in the freezer.

To Serve

- 1 small shallot – finely diced, rinsed in cold water and squeezed dry
- A handful of washed watercress sprigs
- Some shredded raw candy stripe beetroot
- Extra virgin rapeseed oil
- Calamansi vinegar (or cider vinegar as an alternative)
- A sprinkle of sourdough crumbs toasted with rapeseed oil

1. Cut the sea trout into a 3mm dice then mix with a little diced shallot and rapeseed oil. Cut the baby beets into quarters, season and dress with calamansi vinegar and rapeseed oil.
2. Arrange the diced sea trout on each plate, add the beets then a scoop of sorbet. Finish with the shredded beetroot, sourdough crumbs and the watercress



Serves 4

