



# Hand Picked

Born under a wandering star, The Pheasant Hotel is the ultimate mini break destination tucked away in the sleepy village of Harome.

**I** love the feeling of peace and calm when you take a deep breath and exhale. Well, that's exactly how I felt simply setting foot in The Pheasant Hotel. The welcome was warm and friendly, and the bedroom large and contemporary with fantastic views over the garden and distant duck pond. I couldn't help but notice all the lovely touches from the welcome letter and classical music playing quietly in the background to the complimentary ground coffee, handmade biscuits and a bowl of fresh fruit.

It's hard to believe The Pheasant Hotel was once a blacksmith's shop, which has been carefully converted into a chic boutique country house hotel. It is owned by Andrew and Jacquie Pern and their former head chef, Peter Neville. The couple also own the highly regarded Star Inn which is just a stone's throw away.

After quickly unpacking, and brewing an aromatic coffee, I decided to run a bubble bath: bliss. One of the main reasons for my long soak was because my partner was ignoring me – he had found an out-of-print cookery book on the coffee table and I think he wished he was spending the weekend with it and not me. After carefully hiding the book when he was getting ready I persuaded him to join me for a pre-dinner drink.

We enjoyed a glass of champagne in the stylish and relaxing sitting room in front of the fire. I was so at home I nearly put my feet up. The interior is luxurious yet comforting with a country house theme throughout: beautiful antique furniture, a mix of rural art lining the walls and an array of books and board games to keep everyone happy. Perfectly positioned in the corner was a vintage trunk filled with cushions for those cosy afternoon naps. During the summer months you can enjoy afternoon tea on the stone-flagged terrace overlooking the well kept gardens.

Whilst relaxing we were presented with the evening menus – you can choose between the daily evening market menu or, for the foodie, the Tasting Menu. After skipping lunch we decided to go 'all out' and enjoy the inventive seven course Tasting Menu with matching wines as recommended by the chef. Head Chef Peter Neville is well known for his fresh, clean flavours and the use of home grown, local, seasonal and foraged ingredients. The dining room is elegant, intimate and romantic. To whet our appetites we were presented with an amuse bouche taster of butternut squash soup with blue cheese froth, which was divine. To our surprise Peter personally presented us with our first dish and courses thereafter to ensure they were fully explained and perfectly presented.



## ‘The dining room is elegant, intimate and romantic’

For some reason we are always the last ones to leave any restaurant but we eventually made our way to bed. Lining the walls on the way are menus from Michelin and cult restaurants from all over the world, it took us half an hour to walk back to the room, we were so engrossed in them.

The next morning we enjoyed a leisurely breakfast in the light and airy conservatory and discussed the day's plans. We could help ourselves to local fish and meats, farmhouse cheeses, fresh fruit and juices, pastries, cereals, homemade jams and Harome honey. The Full English breakfast includes Pern's of Helmsley bacon or grilled Whitby kippers with fresh parsley and lemon butter sauce.

We decided upon a trip to the coast and we weren't going to let the windy weather change our plans. The Pheasant Hotel is perfectly situated close to a number of picturesque market towns, such as Malton and Helmsley, if you enjoy a spot of shopping, or you can take a trip into the North Yorkshire Moors and discover a castle or the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. Alternatively, you can simply soak in the restful and rural surroundings of cosy Harome with plenty of walks, or just stay put, and doze off in the relaxing sitting room or cosy bar in front of the roaring fires.

After a long walk along the vast beach at Filey Bay and fish and chips at Scarborough we headed back to Harome for a dip in the kidney-shaped heated swimming pool which is situated in the small outbuildings just across the courtyard. Feeling refreshed we stopped off at the Pheasant's rustic bar for a quick half of local real ale before dinner at the local, The Star Inn.

From its idyllic location to its sensational food, The Pheasant Hotel is perfect for anyone looking for a romantic getaway, a gourmet experience or simply a place to unwind. Hopefully next time I can treat myself to a massage or therapy from the onsite beautician Expectations Holistic & Beauty. Peter Neville also offers a handful of foraging courses throughout the year held at the Star Inn – the next date is the 28th March.

The first course was lightly smoked lobster served with fresh sweetcorn, a light artichoke fritter with an elegant scattering of foraged wood sorrel which had a naturally sharp lemony flavour. It was pretty and moreish and was perfectly matched with a mellow Soave with sweet floral scents of elder and pear trees.

In between each course the friendly sommelier introduced us to the next wine. A well balanced Bourgogne Chardonnay arrived to enjoy alongside the ravioli of cep mushrooms, salsify puree, confit lemon and lemon thyme which helped to cut through the rich ingredients. The dish expressed what Peter does best, an eclectic mix of ingredients which work tremendously. He even shared a secret about storing his ceps, and if you know any foragers they don't usually share their prize secrets. I certainly don't.

To the fish course: salmon, poached in brown butter accompanied by roasted squash, baby leeks, sea buckthorn puree and tangy purslane leaves decorating the plate. Shortly afterwards and much to my partner's delight the meat arrived, roast sirloin accompanied by button mushroom duxelle, perfect pommes Anna and an intensely colourful spinach puree. This dish was simple yet probably one of the best.

The three puddings... yes, three, were all delicious. My favourite was The Pheasant Megabar which was in fact not on the original menu but an idea Peter had come up with that day and insisted we must try. It was a combination of his favourite chocolate bars, we gave it our thumbs up. After a short rest the cheese trolley arrived with an array of exciting and unusual cheeses to tempt – after much deliberation we selected the Harbourne Blue, Tunworth, Flower Marie, and Cardo all served with a selection of homemade crackers and delicious baby pickled poached pears from the garden.

The Pheasant Hotel  
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