



HOME EPICUREAN > FOR WINNING VIEWS OF THE GOLF, ST ANDREWS' ROAD HOLE RESTAURANT AT THE OLD COURSE HOTEL IS HARD TO BEAT



EPICUREAN

For winning views of the golf, St Andrews' Road Hole Restaurant at The Old Course Hotel is hard to beat

3.00

By Caroline Phillips

If you want to dine looking over one of the most famous golf courses in the world and, beyond that, to the wide-open skies and blue-grey of the sea, this ticks the boxes. It's the Road Hole restaurant in St Andrews, the home of golf and of Scotland's oldest university, overlooking the undulating green of The Old Course golf course (the oldest in the world). It's also bordering the North Sea, the Fife coastline and the golden sands on which they filmed *Chariots of Fire*, and found on the fourth floor of the five-star Old Course Hotel.



The eatery is named after the legendary number 17 hole on the golf course, the one that's considered the most difficult, with a blind tee shot over buildings. It has an open kitchen (with an impressive 30-ish-foot extractor hood made of copper), to provide additional theatre if you're not watching the golf.



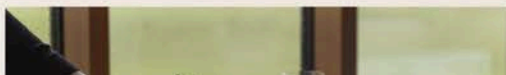
The restaurant is owned by David Kohler, son of American buhzillaire, Herbert, of the eponymous upmarket sanitary ware company. A business that grew from providing loos and bath tubs, then self-cleaning lavs and cast-iron sinks to owning golf courses, spas with a water theme (Kohler Waters Spas, natch) and the Old Course Hotel. Not to mention St Andrews' Hamilton Grand (formerly Hamilton Hall and one of sport's most famous buildings), which Kohler converted into apartments and private residences, and on which Donald Trump was the underbidder.



The Road Hole restaurant is a 3AA rosette fine dining establishment that specialises in seasonality and local ingredients; if you're after almost-zero food miles, their sausages come from the Balgove estate 0.2 miles away (which also has its own atmospheric, rustic Steak Barn that's very well worth a meal too) and you don't have to look far to see where the fish comes from.



The restaurant lighting isn't quiet, the tone isn't hushed, and the atmosphere is bustling. But it still retains some of those fine dining flouncy bits, such as white linen table cloths, wood panelling, chandeliers and wall sconces. Plus, long-stemmed crystal glasses. Then there are purple thistles on the table and pheasants in the carpet design for that added Scottish touch. As for the diners, they are garbed in the almost-smart outfits of the American golfer abroad. Plus, there are a few Japanese and local guests, including ones in the occasional kilt.

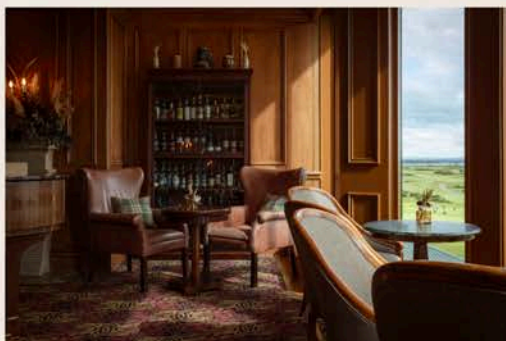




So, to the food. You might select, say, Orkney scallop carpaccio and loin of Aberdeenshire lamb with foie gras, from a choice of four dishes in each of the starter, main and pudding sections. Some find the new executive chef Kristofer Currie's culinary approach to be too fussy, while others enjoy his inventiveness. If you follow the so-called "chef of the century" Joël Robuchon and his school of thought – that three flavours are enough, because you don't want to mask the taste of quality ingredients and have them vying for attention – Currie's may not be your kind of food. His Scrabster Crab salad starter, for example, has apple, fennel, nectarine, micro lemon sorrel leaves, cucumber jelly, chicory, and an orange-flavoured sauce; all light and summery flavours but which make it difficult to identify anything about the crab beyond its texture.



The food presentation is Insta-perfect and the main course of truffle chicken with peas, mushy (rather than meaty) morel mushrooms, tarragon, and a potato crisp – sculpted into a serpentine shape – is enjoyable and the chicken succulent. And the Guanaja 70% Delice pud, with its base of chocolate biscuits, dark chocolate mousse centre with a chocolate mirror glaze on the top, plus pistachio cream, roasted pistachios and compressed apricots on top, hits the chocaholic spot and is supplemented with amaretto ice-cream on the side. (But the chocolate pud is not dark and sophisticated enough and is also too sweet).



The service (for a group of media folk on a press trip) is super solicitous and accommodating, apparently with backup from a few smiley undergraduates during university term time. Another plus is that you can arrive in this restaurant at 6pm and leave at 11pm, if you wish. They don't have formal sittings, so a big thumbs up to that after the hurry of the city: they'll never ask for your table back. Such a leisurely approach to dining may also be helped by some of their Macallan M whisky at £2,400 for a wee 50ml shot, plus a bottle (or two) of 2014 Château Latour for £998, or a more modest Picnoul de

Pinet for £45. Or some interesting mocktails.



The Road Hole may be a difficult one to play on the golf course. Up there on the hotel's fourth floor, Chef Currie is trying his hardest to get a hole-in-one. It's just a notoriously tough thing to achieve.



The Road Hole restaurant seats 100, is open seven days a week and offers set lunches and dinners, with three courses —the dinner courses priced individually or set at £65 for three. For more information, go to: www.oldcoursehotel.co.uk.

Caroline Phillips is an award-winning freelance journalist who contributes to publications from Sunday and daily newspapers to glossy magazines and various luxury websites. To see more of her work, go to www.carolinephillips.net.

GASTRONOMY

GOLF

OLD COURSE

RESTAURANT

SCOTLAND

ST ANDREWS

THE ROAD HOLE



Ready for more?

