

Catering for Sustainability

There is no doubt that good food can make a holiday truly memorable and that has got to be good for business! Many Welsh catering businesses are now serving local produce, cooked well and are conscious of the environmental sustainability of what they do. Read on to find out what this means for three, very different businesses, in three very different corners of Wales.

Sustaining the wider community: The Felin Fach Griffin, Brecon

www.eatdrinksleep.ltd.uk

The Felin Fach Griffin is a dining pub with rooms situated near Hay-on-Wye. This modern take on the traditional Inn was refurbished in 2000 and is run by Eatdrinksleep.

The team at the Griffin believe that any decent inn should reflect the land that surrounds it and so they have worked hard to establish close links with the small, local producers, suppliers and tradesmen. They believe that they have a role to play in the sustainability of the wider community and so the Griffin remains a locals' pub at heart. The beers and fixed price menu are priced well for the local eating market, they welcome families and the doors are open all day. The Griffin tries to be a hub of the community, hosting beer and wine tastings, fireworks parties and local show meetings, and supporting local charities.

At the Felin Fach Griffin sustainability and quality are inextricably linked. Their website (eatdrinksleep.ltd.uk) clearly states their ethos and commitment to sustainability, leaving the browser with a strong impression that this is a company that cares about the environment, the community and also takes great care of its guests. The quality of their product has led to recognition by many independent guides and websites, and many awards. In 2013 the Griffin received a Cesar from The 2013 Good Hotel Guide, was Welsh Inn of the Year, and was listed as Dining Pub of the Year and Inn of the Year in the 2013 Good Pub Guide.

The menus at the Griffin change daily and seasonally, food is cooked to order and the menu changes a little every day depending on what their suppliers deliver. One look at the menu leaves the guest with no doubt about where they are, in winter venison from the nearby Welsh Venison Centre might be on offer, or in summer Welsh lamb with peas from the Griffin's kitchen garden. This is "Food that you look forward to eating. Surprisingly refined but doing justice to the Welsh larder."

The Griffin's business model successfully links and sustains landscape, environment, economy, community and guests.

The Felin Fach Griffin is one of the founding members of the [Sustainable Restaurant Association](#) (SRA). The SRA is a not for profit membership organisation helping restaurants become more sustainable and diners make more sustainable choices when dining out. Its independently verified Sustainability Rating system means diners can choose a restaurant that matches their sustainability priorities. It recognises restaurants as One, Two or Three star sustainability champions depending on how they rate against a wide range of criteria covering 14 areas of sustainability.

Supporting good causes: Alpine Coffee Shop, Betws Y Coed

www.alpinecoffeeshop.net

The Alpine Coffee Shop opened in 1973 and specialises in loose teas, award winning coffee and good quality homemade food. The coffee shop has a welcoming friendly atmosphere, with an interesting menu which caters for all dietary requirements, including vegan, vegetarian and gluten free, a takeaway Hiker's Pack is available for walkers and climbers. The coffee shop prides itself on using fair trade, free range and locally sourced products. Their meat and egg suppliers are clearly stated on their menu.

The menu at the Alpine clearly demonstrates a recognition of the wider environmental impacts of the ingredients used. A good example of this is Palm Oil. Orang-utans' habitat in Borneo and Sumatra is being cleared for palm oil plantations. The Alpine has a strong commitment to the conservation of the Orang-utan and therefore the coffee shop is palm oil free. An explanation for

customers, including a list of ingredients to look out for if you wish to avoid using palm oil, is included at the beginning of their menu. The Alpine hosts a permanent exhibition of paintings, prints and photographs to help raise awareness of apes in crisis.

In 2009 a number of independent businesses in Wales, including the Alpine Coffee Shop came together to promote the quality tea market and to build a positive relationship with tea growing communities around the world, the organisation is called 'Cilydd' (Welsh for together). Out of this has come a close link with Don Bosco School in Marik in Darjeeling. This is a multi-racial, multi-faith school dedicated to providing a good education especially for children from very poor families and orphans. The Alpine Coffee Shop sponsors 10 children. £42.50 pays for a child's school fees for a year and provides a mid-day meal.

The sustainability journey, one step at a time: Carluccios, The Library, Cardiff

www.carluccios.com

Carluccios is a nationwide chain of restaurants, which includes a restaurant in the St David's area of Cardiff. Carluccios was a founding member of the Sustainable Restaurant Association and in December 2012 was rated as a Two Star Sustainability Champion. They recognise that the journey to becoming a sustainable business takes time and effort and are committed to addressing sustainability actions across all aspects of sourcing and environmental practices. In addition they are working to ensure good conditions for their staff and a strong connection with the restaurants' surrounding communities.

Sustainable policies can be a big challenge for businesses like Carluccios. Their brand is inextricably linked to sourcing authentic Italian products from Italy, so they are looking at all the areas where they can improve without compromising who they are.

Initially they have looked at three areas; waste management, sourcing sustainable fish and the cycle to work scheme.

- **Waste Management:** Carluccios are committed to reducing the tonnage they send to landfill. Achieving a zero to landfill target will be difficult to

achieve because they don't always have control over how waste is managed, particularly where branches are located in shopping centres. However they are making progress, over the last year as a group they recycled 78.3% of their waste. That means around 3,400 fewer tonnes of waste to landfill, which is equivalent to 1,000 fully loaded double decker buses.

They have also concluded an agreement with Convert2Green for all of their waste cooking oil to be converted to bio fuel, this should achieve a carbon saving of 92.7 tonnes in the first year.

- Sourcing sustainable fish: In close consultation with the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) and their fish supplier, they have removed fish from the menu which the MCS rates as 5, and concluded an agreement with our seafood supplier that focuses on fish rated 1-3 for the future. As an example this means no more swordfish, and whitebait has been replaced with Sprattus Sprattus, which has been approved by the MCS. For more information on the MCS rating scheme, visit their website at www.fishonline.org. Carluccios have also signed up to the Sustainable Fish City pledge that is aiming for London to become the first ever sustainable fish city.
- Cycle to work scheme: In April 2011 Carluccios launched a Cycle to Work scheme to encourage all salaried staff to get on their bikes. They've been undertaking a survey of staff to find out what puts them off cycling and what would encourage them to do so, and staff who take the plunge benefited from a discounted bike scheme through the Evans Ride2Work programme.

The approach to sustainability adopted by Carluccios is pragmatic and achievable: Take it one step at a time, tackle the 'easy hits' first, but keep your eye on the big picture and put in place plans for dealing with the more difficult issues in the future.