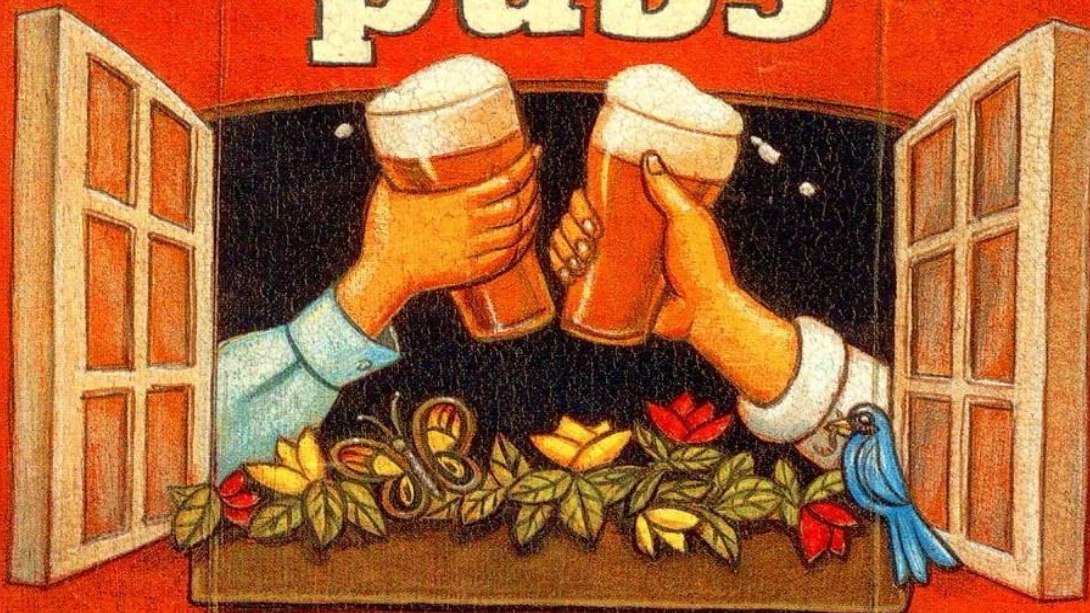


The Guardian and Observer guides to

# Summer pubs



Part 2  
**Towns and cities**



## Gastropubs

Gourmands are guaranteed a feast at any one of these foodie haunts. Get there early for an aperitif (and to bagsy a seat outside)

### 55 The Crown Amersham, Buckinghamshire

**Why it makes the grade**  
This stunning Elizabethan building sits on the high street in Old Amersham. An outdoor kitchen in the cobbled courtyard attracts customers when the sun shines, and big log fires draw them inside when it doesn't. In the kitchen, local ingredients are cooked with deceptive simplicity whilst elsewhere, the bedrooms and communal areas have been freshly made over by style goddess Ilse Crawford.

**Signature fare**  
Proper seasonal, local food is preceded by outstanding homemade breads. Sample dishes include brown shrimp, white cabbage and chervil;

lemon sole with lemon, parsley and Jersey royals; fruit cake with cashel blue cheese. Starters are £5-£8, mains £9-£16, desserts around £5. Weekday "slap bang" lunches are £12 for two courses. Book ahead for a full-on Sunday lunch. There are some well-kept local ales, and a thoughtful wine list with lovely, low mark-ups and bin-end bargains.

**We love the landlady because ...**  
Rosie Sykes (formerly Guardian Weekend's Kitchen Doctor) is bright, beautifully warm, endlessly interested and interesting, and a past mistress at making everyone feel special. In the kitchen her head chef, Mark Bristow, cooks brilliantly deft dishes with a lightness of touch that allows his quality ingredients to shine through.

**Meet the locals**  
A nicely eclectic mix of real

people from Amersham that can't believe their luck in having such a well-priced, outstanding local; international design mavens; musicians and murder-mystery authors; extended families on a big lunch out.

**Pub trivia**  
Room 12 is where Andie MacDowell bedded Hugh Grant in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*. The room also has an exposed, hand-painted wall, dating back to approximately 1550, which is registered at the British Museum. **KG**

  
Open 7.30am-midnight - Food 7-10am (Sat-Sun 7.30-10.30am), 12.30-3pm (Sun to 4pm), 7-10.30pm (closed Sun evening) - 37 rooms from £89 - 16 High Street, HP7 0DH - 01494 721541, thecrownamersham.co.uk

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