

Room Service

Edited by Lisa Scott travel@ukmetro.co.uk



The Metropolitan Railway, the world's first underground railway, reached Amersham in 1892. Its owners wanted to link with their lines further north - and, more ambitiously, with Paris via a Channel tunnel

A window on yesteryear

Hotel Review

Name: The Crown Inn
Where: High Street, Amersham, Buckinghamshire, HP7 0DH
Official rating: n/a
Cost: From £99 per night
Contact: 01494 721541 www.thecrownamersham.co.uk



Why go there: Just 35 minutes from London's Marylebone station and loitering at the far end of the Metropolitan Tube line in zone nine, Amersham is a picturesque market town dotted with half-timbered buildings, welcoming pubs and olde-worlde charm to ye olde excess.
Why we like it: I could do this in three words: atmosphere and food. It's an inn, not a city centre hotel, so don't expect rooms with a corporate feel or, indeed, with straight walls and level floors. The building oozes charm and, while some may find the bedrooms a little minimalist, I challenge anyone not to be won over by the low beams, fireplaces and downright oldness of the dining and drinking areas. Decor is courtesy

of Ilse Crawford (founded of Elle Decoration magazine, designed Babington House interior) and it is beautifully simple - clean, white walls and sheepskin rugs - without being spartan. Fear not, there are flatscreens and radios, too. There's plenty of history in this 40-room property: Room 12 boasts a hand-painted wall decoration that dates back to the mid-1500s and is registered at the British Museum. More recently, The Crown is where Andie MacDowell and Hugh Grant got down and dirty in Four Weddings And A Funeral. The food is overseen by Rosie Sykes (The Sutton Arms, co-author of The Kitchen Revolution) and her menus are in keeping with the inn's character. Expect traditional

dishes with an occasional twist. My old spot terrine was as rugged a tasty feast as I've enjoyed as a starter but more exotic fare is available too; next time, it'll be whisky prawns. Main courses are from the game/steak/fish-done-simply school. Expect to pay around £60 for a three-course meal for two, with a bottle from the inviting wine list. It was quiet when I visited but there is regular live music in the bar; settle yourself by an open fire, order a pint or three of the excellent IPA and let the cares of the modern world drift away.
Why we don't: You'll either love this place or hate it. Aside from the lack of places to hide my clothes, I loved it, even though the toilet barked at me and the bathroom door creaked like my granny's hip. If you're looking for a hotel with a modern sheen and fussy cooking, you'll find yourself walking out the door. Which means there will be more room for me by the fire.
What else can you do around here? I'd recommend nothing more stressful than wandering around



Amersham's pubs and antique shops but, if the mood takes you, the Chiltern Hills offer lovely walking. If local history is your thing, Amersham Museum (01494 723700) will help you pass an afternoon, while Benjamin Disraeli's country home, Hughenden Manor, is a short

drive away near High Wycombe (01494 755565). Enid Blyton's house, also a drive away near Bourne End, is open over the summer but only on certain days (01628 527518). Down the A355 is the Bekonscot Model Village & Railway (www.bekonscot.co.uk).

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