



Taste of the West Hospitality & Retail Awards 2022

NAME OF ESTABLISHMENT: MICHAELS BUTCHERS, DELI AND BISTRO
CATEGORY: CASUAL DINING
DATE OF VISIT: 29/1/22
RECOMMENDED AWARD: GOLD

SECTION 1: COMMITMENT TO LOCAL SOURCING AND COMMUNICATION TO CUSTOMERS ABOUT LOCAL SOURCING

Upon arrival at Michael's Butchers, Deli and Bistro you feel a sense of belonging with a warm welcome, the windows span the full front of the shop either side of the doors, and you instantly see customers enjoying their food! Along the bottom edge of the windows stand a series of blackboards with highlights of the range they stock, and the food you are encouraged to enjoy – local meats, and home-made delicacies stand out.

A good variety of local products is lovingly scattered across the store and featuring in the café menu – from Tracklements meal accompaniments to local eggs, Hobbs breads, Marshfield ice creams and numerous local cheeses including some I had not come across previously like Wiltshire Loaf!

There is certainly a commitment to local sourcing, and I would say that Michael and Sandra work hard to ensure this too.

Currently, the menu references the local eggs (Sherston), Local bread (Hobbs) and home-produced sausages – it would be good to make the most of the fact that the menu is probably 50-70% locally sourced.

I also think the drinks menu offers a further opportunity to talk about local products – I am not sure where the tea / coffee is sourced but there are options like Miles brand, or even getting supplies from local roasteries like Dusty Ape in Trowbridge (amongst others!), including local milk supplies too? Great to see Thatcher's and Proper Job on the alcoholic drinks list Is a local wine is also an option in the future?

The staff are incredibly well versed in their craft – the young butchers talk very knowledgably about what goes into the making of the sausages, burgers, and the added value meat products they have on the butcher's counter – from home-made beef wellingtons to crown cushions of chicken breast and lamb pin wheels. All the meat is locally sourced, and I would recommend having some details of the farmers behind the counter on the wall – this would really stand out! The sourcing is genuinely local, and this is such a great story to shout about.

The array of home-made sausages is perfect – something there for every taste bud, with some intriguing names! I would love to see the highlighted ingredients on the product labels, as again this would add to being able to show off the local contents as well as stamp authority on the best sausage maker in town! And probably one of the top across the county? (I would state this and happily be challenged!)



Taste of the West Hospitality & Retail Awards 2022

Advice from Taste of the West:

Our judge had the following suggestions for improvement:

Why not make a greater emphasis about local sourcing around the premises?

An A- frame board outside, mentions in the menu, tent cards on tables, framed information sheets on the walls, and even to some tasteful decals in the window could be shown more prominently in a few places to ensure no one misses this!

Another suggestion is to have a small book style menu (rather than just an A4 sheet) with the stories of the suppliers, and the farmers they source their meats from would demonstrate to anyone walking in just how dedicated they are to the local offering they make.

Online through the website and social media is another opportunity to really push the local messages – and feature the local farmers, producers, processors that the team work alongside - and they in turn will help to promote your business too.

SECTION 2: QUALITY OF THE MEAL

This menu was a classic café menu with great choice, also an additional specials sheet too! (The only thought I had here was to potentially include some seasonal dishes?) From full on English Breakfast (which look amazing!) to variations to offer a selection of brunch options. I had Bubble and Squeak with local bacon, local egg local toasted bread and beans! I also got to try the house pork sausage, which was tasty and a good size too!

The meals were large in portion size and well presented - and the food piping hot after being freshly cooked. The table was set up nicely with a slate holding the cutlery and a basket full of local sauces and condiments. The quality of the meat was exceptional – lean, tasty, and great texture. Eggs were perfectly cooked, and the toast a great accompaniment.

I was unsure if the products on the deli counter (e.g. scotch egg, quiche, sausage rolls etc) could be ordered whilst eating in the bistro/café so I enquired and it is possible for some of the products to be served – I think it would be a great addition to the menu to have these on there as they also looked amazing and being homemade would bring another great added dimension to the local meal options.

The only disappointment were the chips – it is a personal thing when serving this popular accompaniment to the meals, but they were lacking bite and that lovely crunch! Just one thing to watch in a sea of goodness!



Taste of the West Hospitality & Retail Awards 2022

On the back of eating at the café, we bought a selection of the meats from the butchery, looking forward to enjoying these at home. One part of the shop supports the engagement with the other!

Advice from Taste of the West:

Our judge mentions that they were unsure if the deli counter items could also be ordered whilst eating in the bistro.

We would suggest adding a comment such as “check out our deli counter options, also available to enjoy in our bistro” to your menu. It would be such a shame if people missed out on trying your fabulous homemade products because they were unaware that they were also available to order.

SECTION 3: QUALITY OF SERVICE

The café was very busy when we arrived, most of the tables were full – which is a good sign! The counter had a steady flow of customers the whole time we were there.

It took a little while to get served as the waiter was a bit busy with customers, but the owner was soon over directly to us to introduce himself and enquire about us! He was always very friendly and polite and talked through the history of the business and some of the bespoke products they make. In fact, the staff are all very pleasant and helped each other out across the shop and café, smiling and ensuring you were happy.

Once we had ordered, the food came in good time, and we tucked in immediately! I find that so many places these days do not think about accompaniments until well after they have delivered food to the table – so it was brilliant to have this at our table before it came! Well done for that.

Having had the chance to talk to both owners, it is clear they have passion for their business, and want to please customers right through their journey – from buying products over the counter, to sitting in the bistro area where they offer table service and spend time chatting to you about the menu and the origins of the ingredients they use.



Taste of the West Hospitality & Retail Awards 2022

SECTION 4: ATMOSPHERE, AMBIENCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY

There was a pleasant atmosphere when we got to the venue, and throughout our stay. The seating we had was comfortable and we had plenty of space around us to enjoy our food.

The only small challenge around us was the front door, which didn't quite close when people arrived – and let cold air through to the tables. Maybe a way for it to close fully would be a good option for diners?

The staff were all well presented in their aprons and worked around us to deliver food and clear up quietly and to keep tables clean.

The menu was very much value for money, with good price points for hearty meals – the portions were very generous and very satisfying!

SECTION 5: SUMMARISING COMMENTS AND/OR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

A great venue in the casual dining category to head for in Malmesbury, offering a good local selection of products - and with just a few added touches could be shouting about their hard work around sourcing and making their own recipes.

A very busy shop which is testament to the customer service and value for money offered through the great quality food they range and serve. Their impeccable knowledge of their raw ingredients and bringing this to bear in a great meal shows off their excitement about good local food, and that shows with their approach to customers.

Just an aside for information - Upon searching for the business online using Google, you find that the knowledge panel displayed have a link to the website for the previous business (which seems to redirect to a travel business of the same name! One to check with your web hosting business! You do see the current website further down, but it is confusing to begin with!)

[We have added some advice boxes from Taste of the West with suggestions to help Michael's address some of our judge's comments and continue to grow going forwards.](#)