

Ramsgate's Empire Room makes Harden's Debut

The highly acclaimed Empire Room restaurant at the Royal Harbour Hotel in Ramsgate in Kent, has been included in the prestigious Harden's restaurant guide for the first time.



The stylish **Empire Room** restaurant is decorated with warm red walls and furnished with Victorian and Georgian wooden tables and chairs, linen napkins, Georgian style wine glasses, original Empire magazine covers on the walls and history books on library shelves with stone and wooden floors. It is heated in winter by a wood burning fire.

The **Royal Harbour Hotel** is a quirky 28-bedroom townhouse hotel that stands on a picturesque Georgian crescent with views of the harbour and beyond.

Its coastal-inspired rooms, individually styled with antiques and period furnishings, come with smart TVs, free WiFi, and tea and coffee making facilities. Upgraded rooms have 4-poster beds, sea-view balconies and Nespresso machines, while suites also feature living areas with fireplaces.

The hotel is rated highly on TripAdvisor; it has 'Hall of Fame' status for having won their Certificate of Excellence five years in a row. Three homely sitting rooms feature stripped floors, armchairs, crackling fires and an honesty bar. Furnishings include a roll-top desk, a large collection of beautiful art spread throughout the building, gramophone player with an extensive collection of vinyl records and library. Herbs for The Empire Room restaurant are grown in the courtyard garden.

Double rooms start at £90 a night with a full cooked breakfast and evening cheese board included. Public areas include 3 sitting rooms with fireplaces and honesty bar, plus a walled garden at the rear. There is free on-street parking plus a small private, off-street car park.

The 2018 edition of annual guide of the best UK restaurants – the 27th – is based on a survey of 8,500 diners who contributed 50,000 reviews of their restaurant experiences. Ratings are provided for food, service and ambiance, where a score of 5 is exceptional, 4 is very good, 3 is good, 2 is average, and 1 is poor.

The Empire Room ranks highly with 4s in each of the three criteria, with the Guide reporting: "Freshly landed fish straight from boat to kitchen, prepared by chef Craig Mather's delicate touch ... with the ambience of a private dining club ... excellent value set menu."

Empire Room is one of eight Thanet restaurants to be included in the 2018 edition. Ramsgate's only other entrant is Flavours By Kumar.

Another debutant is Stark, which joins Wyatt & Jones from Broadstairs.

In Margate The Ambrette, Bay at Sands Hotel, GB Pizza, Hantverk & Found are featured.

Hotelier James Thomas is delighted his restaurant has been recognised by the Guide: "Harden's reporters are a demanding bunch with discerning taste, who really know their onions – our inclusion should help boost Thanet's gastro tourism."

The Empire Room has just announced its Tiffin Club gourmet takeaway scheme, with reusable metal tiffin containers, aimed at reducing marine plastic pollution.

Harden's Best UK Restaurants 2018 guide is available from bookshops and online for £15.99. www.hardens.com 

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