

RESTAURANTS  
MICHELIN

## MICHELIN MAN

Benares' fusion of Indian and Western cuisine and stunning setting has won plaudits in the Michelin Guide, overseen by Jean-Luc Naret (below)



## GUIDING STARS

After more than 100 years, the Michelin Guide is still the definitive dining directory – and the chefs' 'Oscars'

Little red books have always done well. Take Mao Zedong's. The Chinese chairman of the Communist Party printed his in 1964 and it currently sits in second spot behind the *Bible* on the bestseller list. Then there's the *Michelin Guide*. Also little and red, it was first published in 1900 and currently sells just shy of a million copies a year, in 21 countries.

*Michelin Guide* director Jean-Luc Naret, only the sixth-ever director of the guides, explains why Michelin still represents the final word in food. "We don't give our personal opinion. We have a list of assessment

criteria and we make multiple visits to a restaurant to guarantee an accurate picture. We are the international benchmark for all chefs," says Naret. "One star in New York is equivalent to one star in Paris or London". Both L' Atelier de Joël Robuchon and Benares picked up new stars in the capital this year.

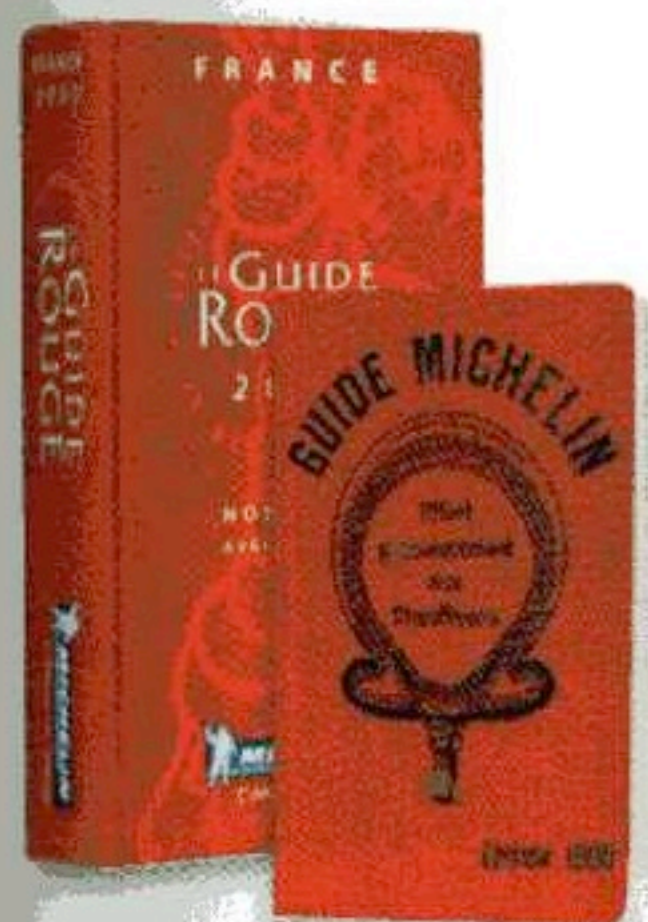
As Marcus Wareing, who has been awarded a second star for Pétrus at the Berkeley, asserts, "the guides are our Oscars".

With that kind of pressure, it's not surprising that protecting the anonymity of Michelin's inspectors is paramount. Some chefs even claim to have a photographic wanted list of Michelin inspectors pinned up in their kitchens.

Which begs the question: who are the inspectors? "Well, obviously they have a passion for food. But the inspector may not be the lone diner sitting making notes. It could be a young couple having a romantic meal." PH *The 2007 Michelin Guide To Great Britain & Ireland*, £15.99, and the *2007 Michelin Guide to London*, £9.99, are out now.

## IN THE RED

The Michelin Guide's crimson covers contain all you need to know about where to eat, earning it a million sales worldwide each year



## BEST OF THE BRITS

ONE STAR  
ARBUTUS

## ● What is it?

Only open since May 2006, Anthony Demetre's Arbutus (*below*) was one of last year's most exciting new restaurants.

## ● The Guide says

"...an original selection of dishes bursting with flavour, which belies their somewhat delicate presentation."

## ● Don't miss

Saddle of rabbit shoulder cottage pie with shallots.

63-64 Frith Street,  
London W1.

020-7734 4545,  
[www.arbutusrestaurant.co.uk](http://www.arbutusrestaurant.co.uk)

TWO STARS  
GIDLEIGH PARK

## ● What is it?

Breathtaking hotel and restaurant (*above*) where Michael Caines weaves his culinary magic using the finest ingredients in the Southwest.

## ● The Guide says

"Stunningly refurbished in 2006 and set in 45 Dartmoor acres... sumptuous rooms are the epitome of style. Superb cuisine, prepared with skill and flair."

## ● Don't miss

Lobster fricassee with summer vegetables and herbs.

Chagford, Devon,  
TQ13 8HH. 01647 432367,  
[www.gidleigh.com](http://www.gidleigh.com)

THREE STARS  
THE FAT DUCK

## ● What is it?

Molecular gastronomer and *GQ*'s resident food columnist Heston Blumenthal's stunning eaterie (*below*) is one of only three three-star restaurants in the UK.

## ● The Guide says

"History and science combine in an innovative alchemy of contrasting flavours and textures."

## ● Don't miss

"Nitrogen" scrambled egg and bacon ice cream.

High Street,  
Bray, Berkshire, SL6  
2AQ. 01628 580333,  
[www.fatduck.co.uk](http://www.fatduck.co.uk)

