



PROPER NORTHERN HOSPITALITY

Nestled between the Georgian elegance of Winckley Square and the verdant beauty of Avenham Park, Aven restaurant is quietly redefining Preston's dining scene, writes *Ali Gudgeon*

This intimate, 32-cover haven, a recipient of the prestigious 3 AA Rosettes, offers a boutique-style fine dining experience unlike any other in the city. Inspired by its picturesque surroundings, Aven is a testament to culinary artistry and a celebration of Lancashire's rich natural larder.

Esteemed chefs Oli Martin, a MasterChef finalist and Taste Lancashire Ambassador, and Sean Wrest have crafted a dining experience that reawakens British heritage and embraces the wild bounty of the region. Their tasting menus are meticulously designed around the finest seasonal produce, sourced from Lancashire's outstanding growers and suppliers. Aven's commitment to sustainability extends beyond local sourcing, with foraged ingredients adding a touch of the unexpected to each dish. By searching for herbs, fruits and roots in the wild, they create fresh, flavourful dishes that surprise and delight the palate.

Aven's reputation has soared, particularly after a glowing review from Giles Coren – one of the UK's toughest food critics – which catapulted the restaurant into the Square Meal Top 100 restaurants in the UK.

Coren highlighted the restaurant's attention to detail, creative flavours and elegant execution, crediting the passion of the chefs and the nature of the restaurant. He wrote: "These are supremely gifted and thoughtful chefs and this is proper Northern hospitality: Original, Modern and Sleek." This recognition, coupled with word-of-mouth recommendations, has



transformed Aven from a hidden gem into a culinary destination.

The restaurant's ambiance strikes the perfect balance between refined and relaxed. It's a place where exceptional service and exquisite cuisine are delivered with genuine Northern hospitality. Aven's commitment to showcasing local producers is evident in every aspect of its menu. From scallops sourced from the Orkney Islands by a Preston-based supplier to Farm Yard Brew Co beers used in beer flights and even incorporated into their bread, the restaurant champions the best of the region. Cuckoo Gin also graces the menu, further highlighting their dedication to local partnerships.



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Oli Martin, Chef Director at Aven, said: "I'm Lancashire through and through, brought up on good home-cooked food and family recipes. Those traditions mean a lot and teach you respect for produce, seasonality and making the most of what's available in your community."

The menus, which change every six weeks to reflect the seasons, feature 90 per cent locally sourced produce. This dedication to seasonality and local sourcing ensures that every dish is bursting with fresh, vibrant flavours. The restaurant is continually evolving, with plans to expand their offerings, including developing an 'Aven at Home' experience. And collaborations with other notable chefs, such as Dan Merriman, further solidify Aven's position as a culinary leader in the region.

Aven's success is a testament to the passion and creativity of its team, a celebration of Lancashire's culinary heritage and a destination for those seeking an unforgettable dining experience. ■