

Where are our stars?

Michelin opts not to dish out ANY new stars to Irish restaurants in 2015 guide

By Eamon Donoghue

TOM Doorley and Neven Maguire agree – the Irish restaurant scene should be a far starrer place this week.

This year's Michelin guide is out and there are no new gongs for Irish restaurants. However, those already in possession of the Michelin star (or two in the case of Restaurant Patrick Guilbaud) have retained them for the year to come while Etto, on Dublin's Merrion Row, has been given a bib gourmand, a kind of nod, if not quite a consolation prize.

Speaking yesterday on the Ray

'There has never been a better time'

D'Arcy Show, Maguire said: 'I'm disappointed about this week...'

'I think there's never been a better time to eat out in Ireland and there's some seriously good chefs.'

Doorley told the Mail: 'Restaurateurs pretend not to care much about such things but secretly they do. It's all very odd because (a) Michelin is wildly inconsistent, especially outside France and places like New York and Tokyo.'

'And (b), as the celebrated critic AA Gill has said, when a restaurant gets a star it will 'fill up with people with faces like smacked bottoms who complain about everything'.'

Comment – Page 14

TOM DOORLEY SEE WEEKEND SECTION

TOM DOORLEY PICKS FIVE THAT SHOULD GET THE GONGS



1. FOREST AVENUE
Forest Avenue, a Dublin restaurant, is widely thought to be one of the best restaurants in Ireland – something I said in its first ever review. It didn't even get a measly bib gourmand. This is

probably the most exciting food in Dublin right now in a way that breaks the mould and really puts it up to the competition. I loved the simplicity of the décor contrasted so starkly with the sheer skill and panache of the cooking.

2. THE GREENHOUSE

Another Dublin restaurant – does Michelin get here at all? – The Greenhouse has been overlooked for the second year running, which is utterly laughable. Michelin probably thinks the tables are a smidgin too close together or they don't like the curtains.



In any case, here's an outstanding restaurant by any standards and it doesn't even merit a bib. Chef Mickael Viljanen's food is perhaps best described as pictures on plates, with fabulous intensity of flavour and impeccable balance. The fact that it has been ignored for the second year in a row demonstrates that the fantastic menu obviously doesn't float the Michelin boat.

3. THE HOT STOVE

What of The Hot Stove on Parnell Square and Joy Beatty's superb cooking? It's probably too cheap or too Northside for Michelin. Again, not even a miserable little bib. If it were in Paris or even Cherbourg it would have a star. The fact that it's in Ireland, and an unfashionable part of it at that, means that Michelin simply apply different standards. It took Chapter One years to get a star so maybe this suggests that Michelin are just slow learners.



4. THE TANNERY

Paul Flynn's The Tannery in Dungarvan doesn't please the Michelin police either. When he was head chef for Nico Ladenis in London he got a then-unprecedented three stars. And now he's not even worth a bib gourmand? The Tannery is a beacon for people in Munster who seek excitement in restaurant food.



5. GREGAN'S CASTLE

Another spectacular omission is Gregan's Castle in Co. Clare where head chef David Hurley and his team serve creative and modern dishes, which continue to be exceptional. This is cooking of very high order, haute cuisine but with a great sense of place. And distinctly Irish. It is an extraordinary place to find in the barren and beautiful landscape of the Burren. This luxury hotel is located in the heart of beautiful Ballyvaughan Village.

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