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Where have all the stars gone?

This year's Michelin results included well-deserved two-star status for Nathan Outlaw and Hélène Darroze, but the general feeling among the industry was a distinct sense of anti-climax. *Kerstin Kühn reports*

The wait is over and this year's Michelin results have been announced. As always, the chef and Twitter community burst into life at the announcement around midday on Tuesday but the excitement was soon replaced with a distinct sense of anti-climax.

After all, this year was the big one, with the Great Britain and Ireland guide celebrating 100 years since its first publication. As always, rumours were rife, with the likes of Marcus Wareing and Claude Bosi widely tipped for three stars, Simon Rogan and Sat Bains for two; and Pierre Koffmann and Bruno Loubet for one.

However, with no change in the three-star stratosphere, it was Cornwall chef Nathan Outlaw and French chef Hélène Darroze who stole the show after being the only operators to have won two stars.

The 2011 Michelin Guide to Great Britain and Ireland also awarded 12 restaurants in London and England with their first stars. There were no new additions in Scotland, Wales or Ireland and 10 establishments lost their stars.

While the results bring the total of Michelin-starred restaurants in Britain and Ireland to 143, the highest number in the guide's 37-year history of awarding stars, the lack of higher accolades also marks what is being described by the industry as a disappointing crop of awards.

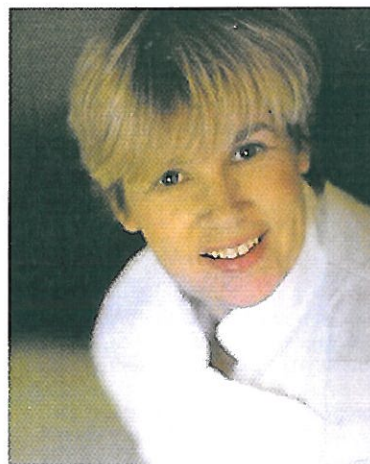
Phil Howard, chef-patron of the two-starred Square and co-owner with Rebecca Mascarenhas of



Kitchen W8, both in London, which debuted with a star in this year's guide, said the results were "modest, to say the least". He added: "I do feel that there are restaurants in London that offer a world class experience so there should be some more acknowledgement at the top end."

NO REAL SURPRISES

This was echoed by Alexis Gauthier, chef-patron of Gauthier Soho in London, who gained a star, having opened last summer. He said he'd hoped for a more interesting result. "Overall I think it's a shame that there were no real surprises in this year's Michelin guide," he said. "London is the leading city in Europe when it comes to eating out and deserves more two- and



three-star restaurants. But I have no doubt that it's just a matter of time and it will happen."

The *Observer's* food critic Jay Rayner was more critical. "This new list of stars is tedious and patronising in equal measure, a dull squeak of irrelevance," he commented on the Guardian's Word of Mouth blog. "The Michelin guide has apparently been publishing in the UK for 100 years (though not consecutively). Well, it's certainly behaving like a stereotypical centenarian: gripped by the need for routine, fixed to its bath chair, smelling faintly of ointment and bodily fluids."

While Michelin was unavailable for comment as *Caterer* went to press, new editor-in-chief Rebecca Burr, successor to Derek

Bulmer, who edited the current edition, said: "There is no doubt that 2010 was a difficult year but those hotels and restaurants that represented value for money, at whatever price, were the ones best placed to weather the storm."

THE BIG HITTERS

Nathan Outlaw debuted in the guide with two stars, having previously been tipped by Michelin as a rising two-star chef for two consecutive years in 2008 and 2009. He relocated his restaurant from the Marina Villa hotel in Fowey to the St Enodoc hotel in Rock last year, where he also runs a more casual Seafood and Grill restaurant. In a press statement, Outlaw, who is currently on holiday, said: "It's a real honour to be



Clockwise from left: Nathan Outlaw, Hélène Darroze, Pétrus, Alexis Gauthier, Adam Simmonds

3 "If I didn't have such fantastic suppliers, I wouldn't be in this fantastic position"
Nathan Outlaw

"We always knew H el ene Darroze had the talent. It looks as if she's going to concentrate on London, luckily for us"
Derek Bulmer



recognised for what you do day in, day out. This is, of course, testament to the incredible local ingredients I have available to me. If I didn't have such fantastic suppliers, I wouldn't be in this fantastic position."

Bulmer added: "We've been following Nathan for 10 years. He has settled finally, and made Cornwall his home. He has a particular flair with fish, and raises quite simple dishes to new heights. He doesn't overcomplicate. He knows when a dish is finished."

Meanwhile, French chef H el ene Darroze is currently the only female chef-patron in the UK to hold two stars. She won her first star in 2009 following the opening of her eponymous restaurant at the Connaught hotel in

2008. Last year, Darroze lost one of her two Michelin stars at her restaurant in Paris in the 2010 edition of the Michelin guide for France.

"We always knew H el ene Darroze had the talent. It looks as if she's made the decision she's going to concentrate on London, luckily for us. It was then almost inevitable that the second star was going to come," said Bulmer.

Among those operators celebrating their first star are newcomers including the 10 in 8 restaurant group's Paris House in Woburn, Bedfordshire; and in London Gordon Ramsay Holdings' relaunched P etrus; Nuno Mendes' Viajante and Galvin La Chapelle.

Head chef and co-owner Jeff Galvin said he was thrilled to have won a star and thanked his team for their contribution. "It's no coincidence that we have won a star. I'm cooking at the most consistent level of my career at the moment, thanks to our amazing team, who provide a real layer of safety. I just wish I could celebrate with a glass of Champagne now but I have 120 in for lunch."

More established restaurants being awarded their first Michelin star include Petersham Nurseries in Richmond, where Skye Gyngell is in charge of the kitchen, and Adam Simmonds at Danesfield House Hotel, who already held four AA rosettes and 8 out of 10 in *The Good Food Guide* and previously had a Michelin star at Ynyshir Hall in Wales.

Simmonds said: "It has taken a long time. I'm absolutely delighted, as you can imagine. It has been a four-year gap since I held a star at Ynyshir Hall, but you have to go through your ups and downs, and this makes up for it."

Michelin also awarded a total of 26 Bib Gourmands, denoting good food at moderate prices, leaving 117 restaurants, pubs and caf es in possession of the award, down from 131 in 2010.

While the 14 operators who have been blessed with new stars will no doubt be celebrating, Michelin's centenary edition does raise the question why there weren't more awards. With seemingly obvious omissions, many a chef will be scratching their head at Michelin's results.

THE RESULTS

NEW TWO-STAR RESTAURANTS

London
H el ene Darroze at the Connaught, Mayfair

England
Restaurant Nathan Outlaw, Rock, Cornwall

NEW ONE-STAR RESTAURANTS

London
● Kitchen W8, Kensington
● Petersham Nurseries, Richmond
● Viajante, Bethnal Green
● Galvin La Chapelle, Spitalfields
● P etrus, Belgravia
● Seven Park Place, St James
● Gauthier Soho, Soho

England
● The Curlew, Bodiam, East Sussex
● Pony & Trap, Chew Magna, Somerset
● Adam Simmonds at Danesfield House, Marlow, Buckinghamshire
● The Black Rat, Winchester, Hampshire
● Paris House, Woburn, Bedfordshire

RISING ONE STARS

England
● The Marquis, Alkham, Kent
● Artichoke, Amersham, Buckinghamshire
● The Black Swan, Oldstead, Yorkshire

Scotland
● Castle Terrace, Edinburgh

DELETIONS

London
● Nahm (at The Halkin Hotel), Belgravia
● Roussillon, Victoria

England
● Drakes on the Pond, Abinger Hammer, Surrey
● The Goose (closed), Britwell Salome, Oxfordshire
● West Stoke House (closed), Chichester/West Stoke, West Sussex
● The New Angel (closed), Dartmouth, Devon

● Harry's Place, Grantham/Great Gonerby, Lincolnshire
● The Star Inn, Helmsley/Harome, North Yorkshire

Scotland
● Summer Isles, Achitibuie, Highland

Northern Ireland
● Deanes, Belfast, Antrim

NEW BIB GOURMANDS

London
● Goldfish City, City of London
● 28°-50°, City of London
● Charlotte's Bistro, Chiswick
● Trullo, Canonbury
● Morilo, Finsbury
● Canton Arms, Stockwell
● Simply Thai, Teddington
● Zucca, Southwark
● Galvin Caf e a Vin, Spitalfields
● Iberica, Regent's Park & Marylebone
● Polpo, Soho

England
● The New Inn at Backwell, Bristol
● The Jolly Cricketers, Beaconsfield/Seer Green, Buckinghamshire
● Chilli Pickle, Brighton and Hove, West Sussex
● Carpenters Arms, Burford, Oxfordshire
● Pea Porridge, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk
● Freemasons Country Inn, Clitheroe/Wiswell, Lancashire
● La Locanda, Gisburn, Lancashire
● Crown, Maidenhead/Burchett's Green, Berkshire
● The Magdalen Arms, Oxford, Oxfordshire
● Purefoy Arms, Preston Candover, Hampshire
● Black Rock, St Ives, Cornwall
● The Cat Inn, West Hoathly, West Sussex
● The Bull Inn, Wimborne St Giles, Dorset

Scotland
● Osso, Peebles, Borders

Republic of Ireland
● O'Dowd's, Roundstone, Galway

