



Raise a GLASS

Meet some of our fabulous local restaurateurs, producers and retailers who have all secured top honours in the Essential Surrey Awards

Like so many businesses, our trusty purveyors of fine dining, coffee, breakfasts and all things food and drink related have had a less than easy year. But their resilience, resourcefulness and downright hard work have not gone unnoticed.

Here, we pay tribute to those leading lights of the local food and drink scene as voted for by our readers and visitors to essentialsurrey.co.uk



Best Breakfast

Winner: Eight on the River, East Molesey

Scoping 'Best Cup of Coffee' in our 2019 awards, this lovely café situated on the river bank at Molesey Boat Club is co-managed by Jeff Wood and has now taken top honours for its breakfast menu comprising perfect pastries, a super sourdough selection, as well as a stacked full English and veggie variation.

Jeff says: "It has been a really tough, but we have been lucky, operating as a takeaway service. The team has been so flexible and without them we wouldn't be where we are now. The biggest thank you needs to go to our customers, who have supported us by eating over 6,500 bacon and sausage baps and nearly 5,000 pastries all washed down with more than 110,000 shots of coffee."

■ Visit: eightontheriver.com

Congratulations to runners up: Parade & Albany, Claygate (paradeandalbany.com); Bears at Pack House, Farnham (bearsrestaurant.com); Pilot's Hub, Redhill (pilotsclub.co.uk)



The French Table, Surbiton

Best Fine Dining

Winner: The French Table, Surbiton

Showcasing an array of traditional and contemporary dishes, the French Table in Maple Road, Surbiton is owned by Sarah and Eric Guignard. Following lockdown the restaurant adapted its offer to include a tasting menu and a British staples selection with a French twist for a takeaway with added *je ne sais quoi*.

Sarah says: "We are going into our 21st year and we feel so grateful to all our lovely customers not only for the recognition but for their support too. We really love what we do and we are so pleased to be of value to the local community. During the lockdown we tried to give people something easy yet special – gorgeous dishes that just needed reheating. Our customers have been great and that has helped us cope."

■ Visit: thefrenchtable.co.uk

Congratulations to runners up: The Latymer, Pennyhill Park (exclusive.co.uk); Wotton House, Dorking (wottonhouse.co.uk); The Tudor Room at Great Fosters, Egham (alexanderhotels.co.uk); The Clockhouse, Dorking (theclockhouserestaurant.co.uk)

Best Local Producer

Winner: Williams and Bunkell Fishmongers, Claygate

Claygate's busy high street can now claim another Essential Surrey award-winner thanks to your votes propelling fishmonger Williams and Bunkell to the Best Local Producer prize. Trading for more than 35 years, this traditional shop is in the capable hands of Matt Clift and Mark Bean.

Matt says: "It's great to get such recognition. For us, 2020 has been really busy and we have welcomed lots of new customers. During lockdown, I think people started taking time to cook and eat fewer takeaways. We were worried that once people felt safe going to the supermarkets again they wouldn't come back, but they have and we're thrilled. It's important to keep the high street going. I think last year made people think about that more."

■ Visit: surreyfishmonger.co.uk

Congratulations to runners up:

Bachmann, Thames Ditton (bachmanns.co.uk); Chalk Hills Bakery, Reigate (chalkhillsbakery.com); Noel's Farm Shop, Guildford (07908 124603); PJ Dale Family Butcher, East Molesey (pjdale.co.uk)

