

= The Box Tree =

The Box Tree is a restaurant located in Ilkley , West Yorkshire , England . It has been operated by chef Simon Gueller and his wife , Rena , since 2005 . Under their management the restaurant has been redecorated , although elements from the original owners of the restaurant remain . Reception by food critics has improved over the years ; the restaurant has a single Michelin star and three AA rosettes . A sister company is also run by the chef , called Box Tree Events .

The restaurant opened originally as a tearoom in 1962 , and went on to become one of the first four British restaurants to win two stars in 1977 . After losing both stars , it regained a star between 1996 and 2001 , whilst owned by Helen Avis . In 2010 , former employee Marco Pierre White bought into the restaurant . It serves modern French cuisine , and has also been awarded three AA rosettes and listed in Harden 's restaurant guide .

= = Description = =

The Box Tree has been located at 35 ? 37 Church Street in Ilkley since its original opening under Malcolm Reid and Colin Long in 1962 . It has been operated by Simon and Rena Gueller since 2004 , originally under lease from the previous operator . Gueller had previously been head chef at the Michelin @-@ starred restaurant Rascasse . The Guellers also run a sister company called Box Tree Events , which provides outside catering .

After being purchased by the Guellers in 2004 , the restaurant was redecorated and modernised , the décor having become shabby under previous owners . The new decorations included recessed lighting and fabric @-@ covered walls . There is a fireplace in the centre of the dining room , with an 18th @-@ century settle (a type of bench) beside it . Elements from the Reid and Long era remain , with the bar and ceilings still being recognisable from their time at the restaurant .

= = = Menu = = =

The current menu still has elements from the earlier days of the restaurant , such as lobster thermidor and grouse . Chef Gueller produces modern French cuisine , with classical elements . Dishes on the restaurant 's menu include a terrine of foie gras served with a salad of smoked eel , alongside apple served both as a jelly and as a purée . Foie gras was temporarily taken off the menu in 2008 following threats of protests from animal rights activists . The dish was later restored to the menu , and foie gras has also since been served with a duck terrine and pistachios .

To celebrate the 45th anniversary of the restaurant in 2008 , Gueller recreated elements of the 1963 menu , but decided not to make certain dishes such as chicken chasseur or melon boats . Other parts of the original menu included crêpes and half a grilled grapefruit . The dishes selected were included for a week in a six course 1960s set menu .

= = History = =

The sandstone building itself dates back to the 1720s . It was purchased by Reid and Long in 1962 who initially operated the premises as a tea room . The restaurant gained two Michelin stars in 1977 ; that year 's list was the first with two star restaurants in the UK (the others were The Waterside Inn , Le Gavroche and The Connaught) .

Following the Michelin stars , the restaurant became a hot @-@ spot for celebrities , with the singer Johnny Mathis being a regular , and both Shirley Bassey and Margaret Thatcher were seen at the restaurant . In 1979 future multi @-@ Michelin star chef Marco Pierre White began working at the Box Tree at the age of 17 , under Reid and Long ; he received his training at the restaurant . He later recalled in his book White Heat that the restaurant made him obsessed with food and he still considers the restaurant to be his spiritual home .

After holding the two Michelin stars until 1988 , and then losing its single star in 1991 , in 1992 the restaurant went into receivership and was purchased by Helen Avis . Under chef Thierry LePratre

@-@ Granet , the restaurant was restored to a single Michelin star in 1996 . White returned to the restaurant as a consultant in 1994 , which lasted two months and ended in a court case against the chef with damages of £ 880 awarded after he damaged a ceiling .

LePratre @-@ Granet left the restaurant in 2001 , and was replaced by Toby Hill , the youngest chef ever to hold a Michelin star . The change of chef also changed the style of food served to a " Mediterranean slant " . something which did not last as Hill left after only seven months in charge of the kitchen . He was replaced by Shane Goodway in 2002 and the style reverted to traditional French . The restaurant lost the Michelin star in the 2003 edition of the guide and was no longer included in either the AA Restaurant Guide or the Good Food Guide . Goodway left the kitchen shortly after the restaurant lost the Michelin star , but stated that the decision had been taken before they had been informed .

The Guellers leased the restaurant from Avis in 2004 . Within five months of re @-@ opening it regained a Michelin star . Having been friends with Simon Gueller since they were teenagers , Marco Pierre White returned to the restaurant in 2007 in order to film segments for the ITV1 cookery reality television show Hell 's Kitchen . White has aspirations to work with Gueller to return the Box Tree to its former status as a two @-@ Michelin @-@ starred restaurant .

= = Reception = =

Jan Moir reviewed the restaurant in 2004 for The Daily Telegraph shortly after Gueller took over and refurbished the restaurant . She praised the lighter style of the food under the new chef and , although she was initially concerned over the waiter suggesting squab pigeon , she described the dish as " neatly executed " , and the most successful dish that she tasted . She thought that the chef was good , but needed time to settle in and described his wife Rina in front of house as a " complete natural " . Jay Rayner visited the restaurant in 2005 , prior to the restaurant being awarded a new Michelin star . He pointed out some issues regarding menu pricing as there were differences in prices on the website as opposed to in person . He thought that the scallops were undercooked , and the brioche served with a beef tenderloin arrived soggy . He said that the dishes " showed an understanding of the fundamentals " , but were not of particular note .

In 2012 , Jill Turton ate at the restaurant for the Yorkshire Post following the restaurant 's fiftieth anniversary , and described some dishes , such as asparagus and a soft @-@ boiled egg which had been cooked in a bain @-@ marie , as " perfect " . She described the meal overall as " terrific " , but said that the desserts were not a stretch for the kitchen , having ordered a chocolate brownie .

Harden 's , a British restaurant guide , describes the food as " light and delicious " , and the cooking as " exemplary " . In its review system , it rates the food as one out of five (one being the highest rating available) , and both service and ambiance as two out of five . The Automobile Association has awarded The Box Tree three AA rosettes .