



# BACK FOR SECONDS

As the Hovingham Inn reopens, **Catherine Turnbull** meets husband and wife team Richard and Lindsey Johns

**A**fter a day out in Ryedale I often make a pit stop in the stone-clad estate village of Hovingham, linger by the Marr Beck or sit on the green in one of North Yorkshire's prettiest settlements. There's a Saxon church and Hovingham Hall, the childhood home of The Duchess of Kent, and the residence of Sir William and Lady Marie-Noelle Worsley, whose family have owned the village for 450 years.

So, I was able to see that the traditional Malt Shovel pub had closed, but delighted to hear it had reopened as independent, owner-operated the Hovingham Inn, with husband and wife team Richard and Lindsey Johns at the helm. The Worsleys performed the official opening.

Self-taught chef Richard with Lindsey front of house are a critically acclaimed hospitality-duo, who gained national recognition at their first restaurant, Artisan in Hessle, East

Yorkshire. Artisan was listed for eight years in the Michelin Guide and was one of the highest scoring eateries within the Good Food Guide for Yorkshire.

The couple have earned their stripes at turning a pub into an eatery that still welcomes drinkers and recreates a 21st century ideal for a country pub atmosphere. After Artisan, they held a two-year tenure at Falcon Inn, East Yorkshire and were the first eatery in the region to be included in all the major food guides. It was awarded Top 30 UK dining pub by The Good Food Guide within 10 months of opening.

Most recently they ran Rascills at Raskelf, which won awards, but the pair relied heavily on the support of their Artisan and Falcon Inn fans, who travelled to support them, in a location that didn't quite work for them.

Now they are ensconced in Hovingham, just down the road from Castle Howard, and have already seen growing local support. "We are in a great position here, not far from

Malton and Helmsley and we are already collaborating with Castle Howard," says Richard. "We didn't expect to be starting a business again in a new place in our fifties, but after a long hard think about our futures we knew that hospitality is what we are





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good at and we’ve built hugely successful restaurants and loyal followings before.

“The Hovingham is the opportunity we have been waiting for, for such a long time, having long believed our style and personalities are very well suited to a pub environment. We are very excited about the future here and offer something that is a little bit different to our customers.”

He describes his menu as of much-loved classics with a twist with seasonal, locally sourced cookery twinned with original and special wines carefully curated by Lindsey

Lindsey offers a friendly welcome and the £500,000 refurbishment has stripped the interiors back to reveal huge fireplaces and stone walls. “We have worked on the project in full conjunction with local property



developers Martyn and Mary Greenwood,” she says. “It has been incredibly hard throughout the refurbishment program, introducing and unearthed many long-lost features back into the property, which we are extremely proud of. This place has such a good vibe.” 

## REVIEW

There’s a restaurant area in the barn-like rear of the inn, but I chose to sit in the bar near the fire. The lunch and bar menu suits all pockets with dishes starting at £6.50, that include warm homemade sausage roll, with black pudding bon bons, Parmesan crisp and salad. I had tasting portions of three – a decadent and delicious celeriac soup was rich and comforting.

I love kedgeree and the homemade smoked haddock Scotch egg, pea puree and skinny fries for £13.95 was a sophisticated twist on this all-day favourite. I was persuaded to try one of the customers’ popular choices – fried halloumi cheese, warm roast tomato, olive and herb couscous, tzatziki and cucumber dressing £9.95. Who could resist a squeaky halloumi chip, which married well with the citrusy couscous?

Lindsey’s service is warm and attentive, and she has curated an interesting wine list that includes Cline Cellars, California USA (red) and Featherdrop Sauvignon Blanc, New Zealand. She suggested a glass of Ionos Greek wine that would suit my personal tasting menu, a perfect pairing. I managed to polish off a homemade crème brûlée that was a triumph – creamy but light, with a cracking top.

A glance at the evening menu of starters and mains, such as Yorkshire lamb and seabass gave me an excuse to come back for more soon. “Pop back and see us anytime, even for a coffee and a chat,” Lindsey said, as she waved me off. I’m looking forward to hearing about the Hovingham’s first awards soon.

[hovinghaminn.co.uk](http://hovinghaminn.co.uk)

‘As a chef, you’re taught to look at produce, to nurture it, to store it well, and you don’t throw things away. That’s been ingrained in me’

