

Spotlight

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Hertfordshire
Hoteliers
Association

**Mercure
Hatfield Oak**



A new look and name have helped to launch a new era for the *Mercure Hatfield Oak Hotel*. Formerly known simply as the Hatfield Oak, this member of the Focus Group of Hotels has signed up to carry the Mercure brand, part of giant French hospitality company Accor. The move follows an 18 month refurbishment taking in all 76 fully-equipped en-suite guestrooms, bathrooms and the lounge area. The switch to the Mercure banner also heralds a boost for the hotel's food offer in the Gallery restaurant. This will now focus more heavily on local produce and the introduction of a range of signature dishes by head chef Stuart Smith, plus a Sunday carvery lunch at £9.95 per person. The greater emphasis on the restaurant gives the Mercure Hatfield Oak a prominent place in the Hertfordshire Hoteliers Association campaign to attract more people into the association's member properties as places to visit for a cosy lunch or family dinner or

even a well-prepared breakfast to start the day. *The Oak* offers a good English buffet breakfast with fresh coffee and speciality teas, while the varied lunch and dinner menus created by chef Smith put the emphasis firmly on freshness and seasonality. Starters could include smoked mackerel mousse with melba toast and leaves, ham hock and potato terrine, French onion soup with goat's cheese crouton, or a salad of Mediterranean vegetables with olive tapenade. Popular main courses include roast leg of lamb with red onion marmalade-sweetened sauce, roast fillet of sea bass with crushed new potatoes, supreme and confit leg of guinea fowl with spinach fritter and onion potato cake, and herb-crusted salmon fillet with a tomato dressing. Among the desserts are banana caramel tart with vanilla ice cream and chocolate sauce, plum and almond tart with vanilla sauce, lemon tart with raspberry juices and fresh fruit pavlova with Chantilly cream. Vegetarian alternatives are

available for each course. Hotel general manager Anna Brennan says the Oak is pleased to be part of Mercure, which gives guests all the benefits of belonging to a major organisation, including the opportunity to join Accor's A Club loyalty scheme, while allowing the hotel to retain its own individuality. She explains: "The Mercure branding gives *The Hatfield Oak* a three-star-plus rating, just above sister Accor brand Ibis and just below the Novotel division. We began our refurbishment and developing the food offer in anticipation of becoming a Mercure property, and ten of the 12 Focus hotels now carry the Mercure name. It's a good time to join - there are about 40 Mercures in the UK and Accor has an ambitious expansion programme with the object of having 100 by the end of 2011."



Anna Brennan
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