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Northern Lights

Restaurant Insider: in Lancashire, writes Nicholas Lander, the hospitality is unbeatable and the puddings delectable

If I had to choose my ideal meal it would definitely include two courses from Lancashire. From the coast I would choose a starter of James Baxter's Morecambe Bay potted shrimps and somewhere towards the end of the meal I would like a plate of Mrs Kirkham's Lancashire cheese with an Eccles cake. The latter is a pouch of flaky pastry filled with currants that takes its name from the town just outside Manchester – a dish that is permanently on the menu at London's St John restaurant.

I was reintroduced to this Lancastrian penchant for combining sweet and savoury at the end of a meal at the Highwayman in Burrow, north Lancashire. This pub is right by the border with Cumbria where the sign from the local tourist board reads, "Lancashire, where everyone matters"

At the Highwayman, Nigel Haworth and Crag Bancroft from Northcote Manor in Langho, near Blackburn have teamed up with Thwaites, the local brewers. The same partnership is involved with the wonderfully named Clog and Billycock, further south at Pleasington. While Thwaites provides the sites, good beer and a limited choice of wines by the glass. Haworth conjures up a mouth watering menu that credits his suppliers at every turn.

It was a new dessert of Bramley apple pie for two (£8) served with a slice of Lancashire cheese and small jugs of custard and carnation milk that provided the highlight. The sweet pastry contrasted with the sharpness of the filling, while the crumbly cheese (not quite as tasty as Mrs Kirkham's) added an extra dimension.