

Gigging Squid Reveals Wide Differential In Tips Across Group

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Gigging Squid, the Thai restaurant chain, has revealed figures which show a marked contrast in the level of tips left by customers at its different branches.

Henley-on-Thames tops the table with an average tip of 9 percent, which is almost 3 times the typical gratuity left by Brighton customers at just 3.2 percent. Brighton's neighbour, Hove, is one place ahead with an average tip of 4 percent, confirming a distinct regional difference for the south coast.

The full break down is:

Henley-on-Thames 9.0%
Tunbridge Wells 6.7%
Crawley 6.5%
Reigate 5.7%
Hove 4.0%
Brighton 3.2%

Average spend per customer in Brighton at £22 is also lowest across the group, comparing to £30 in Henley, with identical menus.

The Gigging Squid has a group-wide policy of not adding a compulsory service charge to customers' bills.

"We leave gratuities to the discretion of the customer which are shared between waiting and kitchen staff and should reflect the customer's enjoyment of the entire experience.

"Personally I added around 10 percent to the bill when I dine out, but sometimes as high as 15 if the meal has been exceptionally good," said Gigging Squid owner Andy Laurillard.

Compulsory service charges added automatically to bills are also subject to 20 percent VAT, whereas voluntary tips are exempt.

Customer feedback in Brighton and Hove remains high and reports on review websites, such as TripAdvisor for the two restaurants are equally positive, so Laurillard is confident that the standards of the two restaurants meet the group's exacting standards. This is confirmed by the fact that the volume of customers and takings are also at record levels. Year-on-year, customer numbers are up 15 percent with sales having risen by 27%.

The chain will monitor the regional tipping differences around the country as it embarks on its quest to become the first national Thai chain in Britain.

New openings in Stratford-upon-Avon and Marlow are scheduled for this Autumn, with a ninth restaurant expected in Maidstone in the New Year. Negotiations are also taking place on 4 more properties.

Gigging Squid expects to grow its portfolio of 'Thai Tapas' restaurants to Britain is to 80 sites within 7 years.

Editors' Notes:

Gigging Squid, which opened its first restaurant in 2009 in Hove, has established a strong reputation for its authentic, rustic and fresh Thai cooking with the emphasis on street food and coastal specialities. The pair deliberately set out to look and cook different – using drift wood and reclaimed timbers, to create a modern chic environment. The food, described by The Times as "exciting", is prepared by master Thai chefs using fresh ingredients, sourced locally where available.

Owned by husband and wife team Andy and Pranee Laurillard (the brand is derived from the nickname of one of their three children), Gigging Squid's formula of serving "rustic" Thai cuisine, with the emphasis on sea- and street-food, is a winning one. Queues forming outside its recent openings for the "hottest tables in town" are not an unusual sight.

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The lunch menu offers a choice of six Tapas-style 'tasting sets' that allow diners to sample several of different dishes in at a single sitting, costing between £8.00 and £10.50 with 16 individual dishes priced under £3.90. "Big" dishes with rice cost £6.50 to £7.95. "Combi" meals with starters are priced between £6.00 and £7.25.

The evening menu is more extensive with over 50 dishes available. The ever popular Thai Green Chicken Curry is £8.50. The signature "Giggling Squid" – steamed baby squid filled with minced chicken, squid and herbs with basil and chilli – is £10.50.

Press contact: Hi res photos and menus available. To review or organise competition prizes call: George Shaw, Avocado Media.

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