

# DERBY – GREAT PLACE, GREAT BASE

## How to be a happy bunny

(Eat at Jack Rabbits in Derby!)

Derby's £2-billion regeneration may have brought with it new landmark buildings, top-class shopping and boutique hotels - but one of the truly delicious side effects has been the growth in its number, and quality, of its restaurants.

Encouraged by this level of investment and growth (not to mention, the fact that the city ranks as one of the wealthiest, per head of population, in the country), several restaurateurs and café owners have also been encouraged to turn their gastronomic visions and philosophies into reality here, in Derby.

Amongst them, Amelia Horne has created Jack Rabbits (<http://www.jackrabbitskitchen.co.uk/>) - a food emporium in The Cathedral Quarter where the emphasis is very much about lazy grazing, in a setting which feels like it's just been plucked from one of the coolest corners of New York City's Greenwich Village.

Multi-award winning, and highly original, it's a concept that may soon be rolled-out beyond Derby.

"It's just been the *best* journey," enthuses Horne who, following what she describes as 'a light-bulb moment' in January 2009, left the world of high finance to look for premises to open a café in Derby where food would be presented - with passion - from an Aga to the customer. Within days, she'd opened her first outlet - in her words: "Putting real food back on the High Street".

By Autumn, she'd won "Best Newcomer" in the city's food-and-drink awards. The following year, Rosemary Conley was presenting her with the East Midlands' "Woman of Worth" award. She picked up the "Breakthrough Business" award from the Chamber of Commerce. And soon after that, the "Best Customer Service" award from the county's food-and-drink scheme.

But that was just the start. As demand started to outstrip Aga capacity, and Horne started to look for fresh challenges, the decision was taken to open separate premises in Derby. The derelict building next door - previously a bank, and then a bar, but lacking in all services - was deemed "perfect" and in May 2011 a period of intensive renovation led to the opening of Jack Rabbits: The Peoples Grocer.

"I had a vision," she begins. "And I knew exactly how it would look. I wanted it to be casual dining, urban living, entrancing, continental, welcoming and - most importantly of all - embracing life. Food is there to be enjoyed, and if you can match that with the surroundings and great customer service, you're going to get it right."

Reclamation yards were 'raided', Farrow & Ball paint was applied, atmosphere was created, and very soon customers were waxing lyrical.

Now, as well as writing her second cookery book, Amelia Horne is working on yet another of her visions - to take the concept nation-wide. "This business is organic, and I'd love to roll this out across the country," she says. "But Derby will always be the flagship store."

For full details of Jack Rabbits visit <http://www.jackrabbitskitchen.co.uk/>.

...more over...



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Other highlights in Derby's booming food and drink scene include the Derby Pyclet Company, (<http://www.derbypycletcompany.co.uk>), Grandpa Lew's (<http://www.grandpalews.com/>), BAKED (<http://www.baked-derby.com/>); Restaurant Zest (<http://www.restaurantzest.co.uk/>), the Black Rock Grill (<http://sadlergates.co.uk/black-rock-grill>) and The Wonky Table (<http://www.wonkytable.co.uk/>).

For further tourist information, visit [www.visitderby.co.uk](http://www.visitderby.co.uk).

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