



Destination Yarmouth



When September comes, a certain mellowness floats up from the historic West Wight harbour and flows through the cobbled streets of the Isle of Wight's oldest town. Still basking in the afterglow of a summer of sailing peaks, Yarmouth is luminous. Whether visiting by water or land, now is the perfect time to explore the people and places of this once-walled port town.



One of our favourite things about Yarmouth is its feeling of cosy containment. Everything you need – and we mean everything – is all around you: within a neatly proportioned and naturally picturesque circular walk. And because of its small but perfectly formed footprint, Yarmouth is the ideal spot to while away a whole Autumn day in all its glory.

We start our day trip under the end-of-summer sun of Yarmouth's rust red-bricked Town Hall, rebuilt in 1763,





Timeless nostalgia and an oasis of luxury awaits at The Yarmouth Barbers and Connoisseurs

Diane Hatherall of Blossoms

which has recently played host to the inaugural fine wine tasting event from our first featured business, The Yarmouth Barbers & Connoisseurs.

Just around the corner, in the quaint and quiet of Jirah Place, is one of Yarmouth's newest businesses. Not that you would know it from the aura of timeless nostalgia exuding from its welcoming doors. Offering an oasis of luxury in the heart of the town, **The Yarmouth Barbers & Connoisseurs** feels as though it has always been here. And though many original features remain – the swinging solid wood salon doors, classic leather recliners and polished

black barbershop basins – this venue has, under the careful and considered leadership of West Wight locals Master Barber Nick Williams and shopkeeper Will Marsh, had quite the transformation. Combining the quintessentially English tradition of a Master Barber (Nick comes from a classically trained background) with the warm and attentive feel of a Gentlemen's Club, this is a space made for both personal pampering and perusal at a leisurely pace. With the scent of sultry sandalwood, soft leather, and salt tonic in the air, the shoulders release immediately upon entering. Take a seat in deep vintage armchairs and relax or browse the well-stocked shelves filled with a meticulously curated selection of luxury items you won't find anywhere else on the Island. There's something for every budget, all with the same impeccable taste: from classic Kent handmade combs to Havana cigars, and Smythson leatherwear to Montblanc pens plus an impressive range of fine wines and rare spirits, from Italian Limoncello to Japanese Sake. As for the treatments, this is a 'hot towels and head massages' kind of experience with deluxe wet shaves and luxury cutthroat techniques,

using only the finest quality grooming products to cleanse, condition, style and shave. For all its luxury, this feels a very inclusive space. Nick agrees. "There is no hierarchy here. This is a place where everyone is welcome – we treat all our customers as our friends."

As you emerge, freshly coiffed, into the September sunlight and follow Jirah Place as it merges into Wheatsheaf Lane, you may notice the subtle sweet-tea scent of full foliaged Heuchera plants (appropriately known as 'Autumn Leaves') adorning the terrace and drawing your attention to **Blossoms** – which, as the pretty wood-framed sign outside declares, is



Will Marsh, at The Yarmouth Barbers and Connoisseurs



"Much more than a flower shop" - Blossoms



Laid back coastal living at XV Stripes



Fine dining returns to West Wight institution Salty's

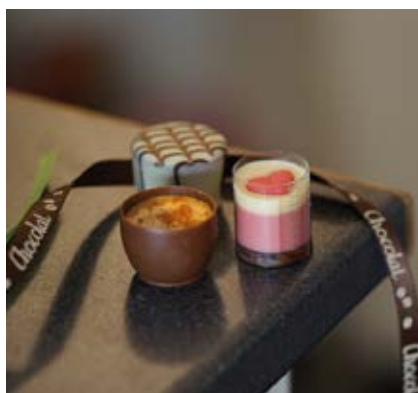
"much more than a flower shop." The sign speaks truth, for inside is not only an array of seasonal blooms – choose from burnt orange Calendula and ombre carnations and 'Knipofia' Red Hot Poker conical stems – for every price range, but "local crafts and gifts for all occasions." From handmade chocolates (we can personally recommend the zebra hazelnut praline with mocha) and vegan truffles to needlefelt animals, shabby-chic homeware, traditional teddy bears and handcrafted jewellery; you really will find something for everyone. Business is blooming, and Diane Hatherall – who is in almost constant demand making up bouquets, displays

and window boxes for many local businesses, including The Yarmouth Barbers & Connoisseurs – works quickly and efficiently, drawing on over twenty years' experience in the floristry business. "It's a really nice feeling - a florist is the heart of any community."

For a window display that epitomises Yarmouth's laid back coastal living vibes, look no further than **XV Stripes** new HQ, just a few doors down on Wheatsheaf Lane. Inside, you'll find Co-Founder Izzey Heung planning her next nautical-inspired range. It's almost inconceivable that XV Stripes launched only in 2019, so quickly have they become synonymous with sailing life. Known best for their signature '15 stripes' bedding ranges in iconic blue and white – all created by master weavers from sustainable sources – this is still the bestseller for visitors to this first flagship shop space, which only opened a few months ago. Recently, Izzey and Co-Founder Vicky Sanders (formerly head designer for Matthew Williamson) have been experimenting with new and exciting combinations. Anticipation for their soon-to-be-released Seaview range collaboration - with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust - is at an

all-time high, so watch this space. In this light and airy shop, which has the feel of a cool yet cosy cabin, you'll find not only the complete range of nautical bedding, cushions and throws, but also complementary candles, bath and body products to match the unique feeling of each collection, designed and handmade exclusively for XV Stripes by Duxmore Botanics.

For foot passengers disembarking the Lymington-Yarmouth ferry, one of the first buildings to catch their attention will probably be **Salty's**. For West Wight locals, it is likely that Salty's needs no further introduction: an Island institution, much-loved family



Handmade chocolates, at Blossoms



Fresh seasonal seafood, at Salty's



From cocktail sticks to sails, at Harwoods of Yarmouth

restaurant and celebrity hotspot, now freshly refurbished following a devastating fire earlier this summer and ready to make its return to the Isle of Wight fine dining scene. Inside, the building – which was once a garage to The George Hotel, is positively gleaming (think cool white leather benches, ocean-deep linen and sea blue panelling) at the prospect of welcoming old friends and new converts to witness its exciting new chapter. Under new ownership and scheduled for opening at the end of September, Salty's dream team comprises Head chef Tom Axford (of The George fame), Sommelier & Restaurant Manager Phil Wilson (of



Head chef Tom Axford, at Salty's

The Royal in Ventnor and Seaview Hotel fame) and Assistant Manager & Sommelier Francesca Ayling (of Little Gloster and Albert Cottage fame). It's an all-star cast, and they can't wait to get stuck in and do what they do best – welcoming coastal dining of the highest quality. Tom says "Amazing food doesn't have to be stuffy...it absolutely must melt in one's mouth. I am really looking forward to expressing my passion for great food in a destination that has a really good vibe." It won't be long now before the Salty's atmosphere is ringing in the rafters once more.

Follow Quay Street back around past the Pier and into Market Square once more to the tune of gently lapping waves against The Quay. If at this point you've taken a brief hiatus to indulge in a spot of Autumn crabbing off The Slipway, you may be wondering where to discard those used crab lines. Fear not, there's a box for just that purpose outside Harwoods of Yarmouth on St. James Square.

Harwoods is another one of those 'Island Institutions' that sounds like a throwaway compliment but really isn't. Yarmouth without Harwoods just wouldn't be Yarmouth. How to

describe it? The current and accepted long form version goes something like "a one-stop shop in the heart of Yarmouth for chandlery, clothing & footwear, kitchenware, gifts, beach kit and fishing tackle since 1893." Even such a lengthy descriptor doesn't quite cover it though. Manager Danny Arthur – who himself has worked here for over 22 years – reels off the various taglines assumed by Harwoods over the years, from "Harwoods has it" to "Best of the old and best of the new." Though both emphatically still apply, we prefer Danny's more personal trimmed down version: "from cocktail sticks to sails." As we browse the cavernous interior, a few more spring



Christopher Johnson, at Harwoods of Yarmouth



A Harrods Food Hall in the centre of Yarmouth, at Yarmouth Deli



Art for all tastes, at Yarmouth Gallery



to mind: from life jackets to luxury footwear, and flag poles to frying pans. Harwoods is another Yarmouth business where the staff are like family. "When you've got staff that stick around for that long, you're onto a winner" says Danny.

Crossing back over the road for a spot of lunch and some food-spiration, we're bowled over by the choice and quality at **Yarmouth Deli**, recently under new ownership. "A Harrods Food Hall in the centre of Yarmouth" is the vision, says Manager Sarah Waldegrave, who recently swapped a 13-year career in policing for an 8 to 8 breakfast to supper service at this



Daisy Perry and Charlotte Dupey, at Yarmouth Deli

thriving business at the heart of the local community. When we visit, it is buzzing, and the atmosphere speaks to the strength of the enthusiastic team which helps keep this ship running smoothly. Many of the team muck in both front and back of house, with exciting plans to offer home-cooked ready meals and takeaway picnic hampers. With a recently installed wet fish counter, temptingly arranged fresh fruit and vegetable section, and delectable delicatessen counter, the focus is on finest quality ingredients. Luxury larder staples and fine artisan foods from across the Continent are paired with local favourites: Isle of Wight honey sits next to freshly harvested walnuts from the Piedmont countryside, soaked in pure delicate acacia honey; Veldeon Spanish Blue ("rather strong") and Brie de Meaux ("sweet and buttery") sit alongside local unpasteurised cheddar Gallybagger. Working here feels fun. And it is, say staff members Charlotte Dupey and Daisy Perry. "It's busy, good fun, and all hands to the deck."

Our final stop on our Autumnal saunter is **Yarmouth Gallery**, situated on Yarmouth's picturesque High Street, probably the prettiest in all the town.

Hugely popular with visitors and locals alike, Anne Toms' Yarmouth Gallery is a delightful collection of paintings, ceramics, glassware, textiles, fine art prints, sculpture and photography – meaning that, you guessed it, there's something for everyone, from modern mixed media to traditional methods and materials, with plenty of coastal and nautical influences which speak to its location. Rather impressively, you'll also find a huge range of art greeting cards on offer, the gallery having recently reached the finals of the UK Greeting Cards Retailers Awards.



Art greeting cards, at Yarmouth Gallery