

Y Talbot, Tregaron

Far from the madding crowd, a warm Welsh welcome awaits at this hotel in Ceredigion, as **Will Hetherington** discovers.

If you drive out past Shrewsbury and Welshpool and keep going beyond the Bettws Hall driven shooting empire, and then continue past Newtown and Llangurig before heading south into the Cambrian Mountains, you eventually arrive in humble little Tregaron. At the heart of Tregaron on the market square lies Y Talbot ('Y' is Welsh for 'the') which has quickly established some close links with the shooting fraternity on the back of significant investment in recent years.

One obvious reason for this growing link with shooting is the proximity to WMS Firearms Training, the specialist rifle-training centre run by Andrew and Helena Venables. Under expert tutelage and friendly hospitality, visitors here can really hone their shooting skills out to ranges of 835 metres - at least that's what we finished on the day I was there. At this range the naked eye is not tremendously useful but modern scopes (Minox in this case) make things rather easier.

This facility is a long drive for most of us to consider going there and back in a day, so Y Talbot is

perfectly placed to bridge the gap and provides a warm welcome. Joint owners Mick and Nia Taylor have invested heavily in recent years with a whole new garden and brand new bedrooms, dining room and function room, making this hotel a viable option for many different purposes. Nia said: "We have a growing reputation as a traditional Welsh inn offering good food, beer



The gardens have been completely redesigned and landscaped to provide mixed level seating.

and cider and a comfortable bed! We finished a major renovation of the premises in 2013 and completed the landscaping and planting of the rear garden in 2014. And we received a National Tourism Award and the CAMRA Pub of the Year in 2013 and 2015. We even



Recent investment means all the bedrooms are extremely well equipped and they offer a variety of different aspects.



featured in the *New York Times* recently as one of 10 hotels in Europe (and the only one in the UK) that 'make you feel at home.'

With a fabulous entrance hall, sporting the original staircase and room bells over the reception desk, a warm and cosy bar for locals and hotel guests alike and 13 well-equipped bedrooms, this hotel feels just right from the moment you arrive. In fact, I definitely didn't want to leave after just one night.

And once you have relaxed with a pint or two in the bar you are in for a real treat from the kitchen. Head chef Dafydd trained with Marco Pierre White and was premier sous chef at The Ritz before coming here in 2010. The food was exceptional, with some of the best pork belly I've ever tasted. Breakfast could have fed a whole family. So, if you are heading this way, make a beeline for Y Talbot. Owners who have invested time and money have created a genuine travellers' rest which you probably won't want to leave.

Cost: From £110

Contact: ytalbot.com

This beautiful hotel is impossible to miss on the market square in Tregaron.

Scores

Catering: Friendly bar and excellent three-course evening meal starring pork belly from the heavens. And a breakfast to march on. **9/10**

Accommodation: Brand new bedrooms are extremely well equipped and very functional but lack the charm of the older rooms in the hotel. **8/10**

Atmosphere: Locals and guests mix in the cosy bar and dining part of the old pub. Warm, convivial and welcoming. **9/10**

Service: Attentive owners clearly recruit and train the staff well. **8/10**

Suitability for shooters: Dogs welcome in some rooms but no gun cabinet. It's the best hotel around so you'll deal with that. **8/10**

Total: 42/50

Other options in the area

Tregaron is in a remote area but the coast is only half an hour away and the Harbourmaster at Aberaeron is a quirky boutique hotel right on the quayside, offering colourful décor, fresh seafood and something of a party atmosphere in the bar/dining area downstairs.

harbour-master.com

The prices are for double rooms on a B&B basis and are approximate guidelines. Contact the hotels for more information.