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## Who's popping in for a pint – or more?

Wednesday, January 28, 2009, 09:00

THE growing empire of Rick Stein could soon be spreading into the village of St Merryn.

Rumours have been rife for weeks that the world-famous chef had his eye on the quaint village pub, The Cornish Arms.

This week it was confirmed by pub owners St Austell Brewery, that Mr Stein was interested in taking over the pub.

A spokesman said: "We are delighted at the interest shown in acquiring the tenancy of this delightful and popular pub and we can confirm that we are currently in negotiations with a local businessman with exciting plans for the future of the Cornish Arms." Mr Stein and his ex-wife Jill have created a large business empire in Padstow over the past 33 years and own four restaurants including the Seafood Restaurant, St Petroc's Bistro, Rick Stein's Café and Stein's Fish and Chips.

They also have a delicatessen, a patisserie, a seafood cookery school and 40 guest bedrooms.

His huge impact on the town has led it to be nicknamed 'Padstein' by some.

The news has been met with a positive reaction in St Merryn.

Mick Stratton, landlord of the village's other pub, the Farmers Arms, said: "I think it is a really great thing that Rick Stein is looking at coming to St Merryn.

"Just look at what he has done for Padstow.

"In the winter months we really struggle and if this gets the village on the map we can not complain. I am hoping it will have a knock-on effect and boost our trade too.

"If people are visiting to see Rick Stein at the Cornish Arms they will wander around and hopefully come and visit us too, especially if his prices are too high!"

At the time of going to press Rick Stein was unavailable for comment.

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