

PRICE IS RIGHT IN SPOONS BID

JD WETHERSPOON pubs are cutting the prices of all food and drink for one day in a bid to highlight taxes on the hospitality industry. The chain will reduce prices by 7.5% across the UK and Ireland on Thursday. The move is being done to mark Tax Equality Day, highlighting the benefit that a permanent VAT reduction would have on pubs and restaurants.



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Written in the palms

Panda-ing to masses

A MAN is celebrating his 100th birthday – as a palm reader once said he would. RAF war veteran Harold Page marked the long-predicted landmark with family and friends in Norwich. EDINBURGH Zoo's giant pandas are to return to China after 11 years. A zoo spokesman said Tian Tian and Yang Guang have had an "incredible impact" on visitors.

MICHAEL OWEN DENIES HE'S BORING AS HE LAUNCHES FASHION RANGE



YOUNG: Michael playing for Liverpool in a friendly against Linfield in 1997

If you talk about football, you are lighting a fuse.. SOMEBODY IS GOING TO GO MAD



STYLE ICON: Michael wearing pieces from his new Peacocks collection

EXCLUSIVE by NADINE LINGE

FILM-HATING Michael Owen has now watched a whopping 14 movies in his lifetime.

But it wasn't billion-dollar Barbie or blockbuster Oppenheimer that added to his tally. Instead Michael – who'd previously watched 13 flicks – went to see The Grinch after being "badgered" by his daughter. The former England striker says: "I just don't like films at all.

My daughter wanted to watch The Grinch so I watched that a few years ago because she was badgering me. I can't relax into it. I know it's all made up.

"If I see James Bond, he rolls over, he ducks under this, oh he's about to die, surprise, surprise, he doesn't, he



PUNDIT: Owen's online stick

shoots someone then there's a fire – come on, it's so far-fetched.

"How can anyone be watching this and believing it? I don't find it interesting at all."

But some TV does occasionally catch Michael's attention. He adds: "I like documentaries if they teach you something.

"I like live sport. I like quiz shows but to be honest I don't watch telly."

While he's a regular pundit on TV, Michael also appeared on the box as Doughnuts in last year's The Masked Singer.

He's also been approached to do shows including Strictly and I'm A Celeb – but says: "Last year I did 90-odd days of broadcasting and predomi-

nantly games are on Saturdays and Sundays. I've got my horse business, I've got family. I hardly get a day off as it is to squeeze in six weeks in Australia or a weekend dancing."

But the former Liverpool and Newcastle United star does have a new clothing venture – a col-lab with fashion chain Peacocks. Posing for the photoshoot came easily to the 43-year-old. "I'm quite experienced in modelling for pictures," he says. "When I was

a player I was one of those that had a lot of commercial sponsors. I've done thousands of photoshoots.

"But they've thinned out a little bit now – days, maybe three or four a year compared to 30 or 40 a year back in the day."

A regular social media user, Michael has learned to deal with trolling. "If you're in the public eye, you get tons of abuse at some point and I've suffered that," he says. "I don't really care any more. You can be Messi and still get

absolute dogs' abuse. If you talk about football, then you are lighting a fuse, somebody's going to go mad. So I just take it with a pinch of salt."

He doesn't believe it adds to the pressure on young footballers as they can control how they are viewed – something he didn't have starting out at Liverpool in 1997 and playing in the 1998 World Cup.

He says: "Now a footballer can control their image. I came onto the scene at 17, I was a little baby, and I'm playing for probably one of the most famous clubs in the world.

"I go to a World Cup and score and in the same game David Beckham gets a red card. "I was portrayed as this whiter-than-white little angel, boring.

"People who meet me think I'm very different to what they perceive.

"You ask teammates – I was probably one of the nastiest pieces of work. "I got sent off when I was a kid at Old Trafford for two really bad tackles, I was a man on a mission on the football pitch."

THE Michael Owen Edit is available online and across the 340 Peacocks stores nationwide now. Peacocks (peacocks.co.uk) offers fashion for all the family at affordable prices and great quality.

'A REAL GEM'

MICHAEL'S daughter Gemma appeared on Love Island last year, coming runner-up alongside fishmonger Luca Bish.

He admits he had reservations about the then-19-year-old doing the show – but only because he'd miss her.

Michael says: "To get into the world she's in, you've got to start somewhere and I don't think there's a show on earth that catapults you into fame as quickly. "I was more thinking I'm going to miss her for two months."



THE 14 MOVIES

"I WATCHED the five Rocky movies when I was kid because my brothers and sisters had them on.

"I watched Cool Runnings when I first met my wife. I didn't really want to but I had to, to be nice. I watched Ghost and Heat.

"I watched Jurassic Park twice and neither time I wanted to watch but I was training at Arsenal and Manchester United when I was a kid and they took all the trialists to the cinema."

He's also seen Forrest Gump, Seabiscuit, Creed, The Karate Kid – and The Grinch!

