

TOWERING TALENTS

Velvet visits The Bull Inn for an evening of culinary genius

Having fallen head over heels in love with The Bull Inn since I first came across it over three years ago, my latest trip has well and truly cemented my admiration for this old coaching inn.

Venturing out of the office one evening to make a well-deserved visit to The Bull, I was already keenly anticipating what its owners, Cheryl and Sonia, would have on offer. When I arrived to find that I would have the chance to sample their signature fillet steak tower, I could hardly believe my luck!

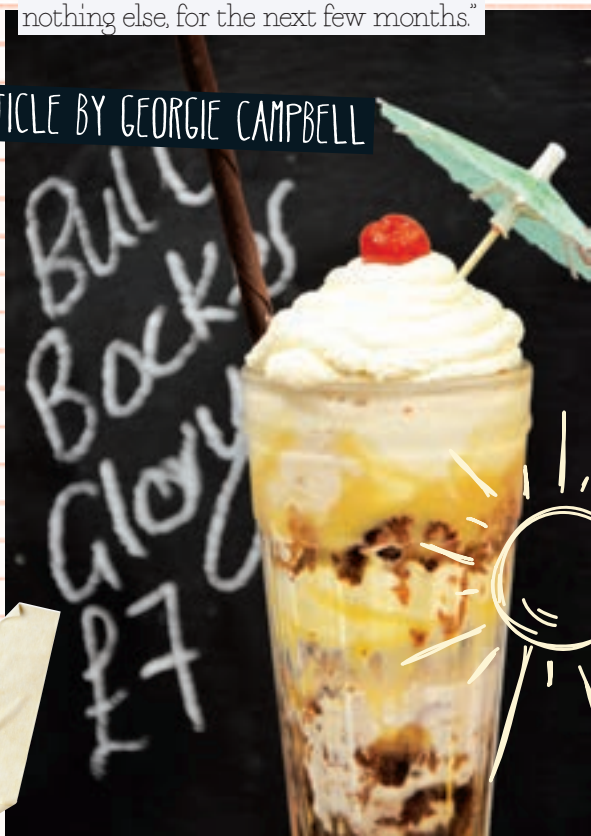
Making myself comfortable in the Inn's impressive restaurant, it struck me how much like home it felt. Although it was mid-week, the restaurant and bar areas were alive with laughter and the comings and goings of diners and those staying overnight in the 15 rooms overhead, whilst the Bull's team flew past, delivering mouth-watering bite after bite to those waiting... I could have stayed there all night!

As I turned my attention back to our table, our smiling waitress returned, bearing the first culinary delight of the evening. She presented me with an immaculate dish of Brie fritters drizzled in summer berry purée and caramelised walnuts, alongside a sampling of Madras marinated chicken with satay dip and cucumber, and I couldn't wait to get started. Waiting for my guest's Suffolk ham hock with poached vegetables, homemade bread and red onion marmalade to be placed before her, I cut gently into the warm fritters to sample my first taste of melting cheese... it was delicious! The salty tones of the cheese mixed perfectly with the sweetness of the purée to present a balanced dish, whilst the walnuts created a crunchy texture which contrasted beautifully with the smooth cheese offering... it was simply amazing! Sneaking a bite of the ham hock, I was interested to sample the mix of meats and poached vegetables which The Bull's chef had put in it, and it really worked. Mixing the soft vegetables in the meat enabled each and every bite to be completely different, whilst the marmalade gave the final touch, adding a sweet aftertaste to each mouthful. Sitting back to relax and enjoy the surroundings, I couldn't help but feel that the entire venue was relaxing with me. The cheerful nature of the staff and their amazing culinary offerings is what has seen me return here time and time again, as I've gradually introduced my friends and family to this inn's quirky ways... and I'm sure that more than most will agree with me, that The Bull always gets it just



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ARTICLE BY GEORGIE CAMPBELL



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right. Turning my attention back to the task at hand, I lifted one of the chicken skewers of our third entrée dish, dipped it in the satay dip and enjoyed the peanut flavourings and tender chicken, whilst my thoughts continually drifted to what was to come... the tower! Having heard so much about this from colleagues, friends and even family, The Bull's fillet steak tower has become part of the area's history, and, like a myth, a hero, or a magical fairytale, is something that people will travel some distance to find out about... yet, when the dish arrived, I still couldn't believe the size of it. Succulent slices of meat lay upon each other, dominating the dish with their pinkish texture and tempting aroma. Accompanied by potato and tarragon croquettes, red onion jam, roasted root vegetables and peppercorn sauce, the dish really was a thing of beauty. But it's attractiveness was just the beginning... the tenderness of the steak was so outstanding that it almost dissolved in my mouth. Juices flowed, making the flavour intensify with every taste. Mixed with the perfectly cooked vegetables, the balance of meat and earthy tones made an impressive combination.



I couldn't help but feel that this was a dish fit for a king, a dish which men and women would travel from afar to sample, a dish you should treat your nearest and dearest to to show them how much you care... and, with Father's Day just around the corner, the days are counting down before I'll be doing just that!

As I rested my knife and fork back on my plate, they seemed dwarfed by the towering stack of meat. Wanting to savour every last mouthful, I took my time before sitting back in pure satisfaction. The fillet steak tower truly lived up to its reputation, and more.

Our plates were removed, and replaced by one of the most delicious desserts I have come across. Anyone who knows me will be aware of my absolute fascination with sticky toffee pudding, but, in true Bull Inn style, they have taken this concept to a whole new level.

Even the name of the dish, The Bull Bocker Glory was enough to make me prick up my ears, but when I found out that it was a sundae combination of sticky toffee pudding, ice cream, rock salt caramel cream and homemade fudge, my mouth started to water... it's even watering now!

Diving into this mountain of temptation, my first spoonful was one moment I will never forget. Summer's answer to sticky toffee, I could honestly have eaten it, and nothing else, for the next few months. Cooling, refreshing, sweet, yet full of different textures and surprises... it was amazing!

As our plates were cleared, I couldn't have thought of a better way to end my evening. Every dish had presented an outstanding number of textures and tastes that I just couldn't wait to sample again.

With so much going on at The Bull, whether because of its menu changes, the events it organises, or the comings and goings of its guests, the bubbly character of the venue and its entire team and is something you should experience for yourselves. Whether you visit to enjoy the upcoming Murder Mystery evening on 5th July, or to treat your dad to a well-deserved Father's Day meal at this exquisite restaurant and boutique hotel, there is just so much to do... I, for one, am already looking forward to my next visit!

The Bull Inn, The Street, Barton Mills, Bury St Edmunds, IP28 6AA. Tel: 01638 711001