



# Bull with a sense of humour

It's the inn that wants to be your friend and Annie Sherington joins in the fun

**D**ue to a house move, in the week coming up to my stay at Barton Mills I had slept in four different houses, in four different beds. A house in desperate need of some TLC and my wedding looming next month meant that I was excited to escape reality just for a night.

We arrived mid-afternoon at the award winning, privately owned coaching inn just off the busy A11, but far enough away that the traffic noise isn't a constant interruption and were warmly welcomed by the very friendly Sonia, who is the sister of the owner Cheryl and manager of the hotel. After an expertly mixed gin and tonic from her partner who also provides weekend bar duties we were all soon chatting like old friends.

The feature rooms are not plainly brazen with numbers, but named to reflect their themes; examples include the Princess, Gold, Zebra and Daisy rooms. Quite aptly our room for the night was the 'Lazy Cow' it was opulently and cheekily furnished with the most fantastic milk bottle chandelier, an enormous and comfortable

bed with the cow theme continuing into the bathroom with the monsoon double shower that had the backdrop of a licking cow! As I had foolishly put all of my hair equipment into storage, touches such as having not only a hair dryer but hair straighteners in the room really added to the feeling that the team were looking after us.

We chose to enjoy dining room food in the more informal surrounding of the bar area which was surprisingly lively for a sleepy Sunday in September. For my starter I had scallops, my absolute favourite seafood. These were beautifully complemented with black pudding, crispy bacon and apple purée. Black pudding was also included in my fiancé's trio of pork which also featured local Blythburgh pork wrapped in bacon and the crispiest crackling either of us had ever had; those with weaker teeth might want to avoid that one! The salty flavours of the pork were offset by a fresh pea purée. On to mains and my partner choose the 'Surf and Turf' sirloin steak with double cooked chips and a jalapeño slaw. The steak was served perfectly pink with the spiced

accompaniments raising the dish to something more exciting than a standard Surf and Turf. I choose the sea bass accompanied with crushed Norfolk new potatoes, prawn and chorizo stuffed tomatoes and a red pepper coulis. Again although there were a lot of strong flavours they all complimented each other perfectly. My fiancé has not got the most adventurous palate but was encouraged to try the rock salt caramel sticky toffee pudding with toffee ice cream. It was wolfed down quickly despite the two sizeable courses before. I treated myself to the warm chocolate brownie with chocolate ice cream - simply delicious. We slept well and woke up the next morning refreshed and ready for breakfast. Still so full from the night before I had a saintly fresh fruit salad whilst the ganet opposite me demolished a full English breakfast which I eyed with a degree of envy. All in all The Bull Inn is a stylish boutique establishment in a quiet West Suffolk location.

For more information go to [www.bullinn-bartonmills.com](http://www.bullinn-bartonmills.com)