

Food Review



Duo of terrines



Chef Shaun Jennings

Beer battered market fish & double cooked chips



Trio of burgers



Chocolate trio



Simply the Best

Enjoying the first signs of spring this month, Velvet visits The Olde Bull Inn in Barton Mills

As the sun finally poked its head out from behind the clouds last month, the entire office sat on the edge of their seats waiting to get outside to take in the springtime rays.

Sneaking out of the office one afternoon, I was lucky enough to have a table reserved at the famous Olde Bull Inn. Already a firm favourite of the entire team for its culinary delights and impressive menu put together by Head Chef Loic de Coatpont, I couldn't wait to settle down.

Arriving at the characteristic coach house located just a few miles away from Newmarket at Barton Mills, I couldn't wait to get inside. Having adopted that 'summer loving' feeling on the journey over by basking in the sun, I couldn't think of anything better than to enjoy the Inn's impressive bar menu.

Offering some of the finest foods I have ever set my eyes on, the bar menu seemed simply out of this world; as well as a full list of main meals, sandwiches and that

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vital dessert for my ever-present sweet tooth, it offers lighter dishes as a counterpart to those served in the Inn's restaurant.

Shaun Jennings, a senior member of the kitchen brigade who has worked his way up over the last five years was to cook for us today, so I knew we were in safe hands. Scanning the menu, I almost didn't know where to start. The locally sourced meats, fish and vegetable options all sounded simply delicious, not to mention the extensive extras on offer – double cooked chips? Yes please!

Finally settling on the duo of terrines: Suffolk ham hock, Gressingham duck

and corn fed chicken with confit of Gressingham duck and prune, served with endive, toast and chutney, I couldn't wait for it to arrive. (My mouth is watering even at the thought of it!)

As the dish arrived, I couldn't believe the sheer beauty of it; I almost hesitated before slicing throughout the perfectly moulded meat terrines (almost!). Perfectly presented upon a rustic wooden chopping board, the entire dish radiated sophistication and chic presentation.

I looked up to see my guest's dish of marinated breast of duck in five spice, accompanied by mango, cucumber and red onion relish, and watercress and sweet chilli dressing being placed before him; once again, it resembled nothing less than a work of art.

As we each made a move to disturb our immaculate dishes, a surprise third dish of black pudding fritters with cauliflower purée and pea shoots arrived at the table. Never having tasted black pudding before, I was more than a little intrigued. Taking a bite of the small crisp offering, I was pleasantly delighted by the flavoursome mouthful, perfectly cooked to give a firm textured coating and soft centred filling.

Looking over to my guest, he was deeply absorbed in working through the thin strips of duck breast, a satisfied look appearing after every bite.

As our plates were cleared, I suddenly felt aware of the fun, relaxed and exciting environment in which we sat. The laughter

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that filled the room from the friendly bar staff and other diners was simply infectious.

Our second course, one of my favourite dishes, fish and chips, soon arrived. But this was not just any fish and chips – oh



no! Beer battered market fish and double cooked chips with pea purée, tartar and lemon. I was in heaven.

As I cut into the coating, the crisp batter gave way to the force of my fork, revealing some of the most succulent and tender fish I have had the pleasure of eating. Its fresh, soft taste was second to none,

perfectly finished with the chic pea purée and tartar.

When I eventually looked up, I caught a glimpse of my guest's trio of burgers, perfectly presented in a rustic style. Enclosed in a casing of ciabatta, the burgers presented a pork and apple, lamb and mint, and finally a steak offering, accompanied by double cooked chips. As he is a sworn meat-lover, it was no wonder that they didn't stay on his plate for very long!

Sitting back to enjoy some of the sun's rays sifting through the windows, I really started to fall in love with all

that this refurbished coaching house had to offer. Aside from its outstanding menu, the hotel's character, evident in each and every room, had seen The Olde Bull Inn crowned as the Best Small Hotel in the Tourism in Suffolk Awards last year... and quite rightly so.

The list of events taking place throughout the month, from bi-monthly Murder Mystery evenings to the upcoming Easter treats, makes it apparent why diners and guests return time and time again.

As our desserts arrived, I couldn't help but squeal with excitement as my absolute favourite dish of all time was placed before me – Sticky Toffee Pudding.

Even now, I find myself looking for excuses to go back, just to sample that magnificent dish. Presented with a scoop of Suffolk toffee ice cream and rock salt caramel cage, it was literally a vision of beauty, but the taste is where the real talents lay.

Soft and perfectly sweet, the toffee sauce was perfectly balanced with the moist pudding, added to by the crisp caramel cage resting gently on top. It was literally the most gorgeous pudding I have ever tasted.

Forgetting to share with my guest, I scooped the last spoonful in my mouth before resting my eyes upon his sweet delight – the Chocolate Trio.

Unable to fit in any more, I watched as he demolished his trio of chocolate mousse, white chocolate milkshake and fudge coated chocolate ice cream.

I can safely say that my trip to The Olde Bull Inn was one of the most flavour intense trips I have taken this year, and I can't wait to go back. Standing on its own merit, the bar menu brings with it delights unknown to many, perfectly providing a

slice of the culinary expertise on offer from the Head Chef. With many of us seeking somewhere to dine amongst those springtime rays this month, look no further than The Olde Bull Inn.



Homemade sticky toffee pud

Olde Bull Inn, The Street, Barton Mills, Mildenhall, IP28 6AA. Tel: 01638 711001. For more information and a listing of events visit www.bullinn-bartonmills.com.



Black pudding fritters

The end!