

Summer Specials

Summertime at The Sun Inn

Essentially Catering caught up with Gordon Stott, landlord and head chef at Hampshire's acclaimed gastro pub The Sun Inn, Dummer, to find out what his recipes for success are during the summer months

Landlord and head chef at The Sun Inn near Basingstoke is 25-year-old Gordon Stott who took over the pub in 2012 aged just 20. However, do not be misled by his tender age - in recent years, Gordon has made a name for himself in the pub industry as one of the UK's most exciting young chefs. Listed by *The Publican's Morning Advertiser* as one of the Rising Stars of 2016, he has been a finalist in no fewer than seven national and local awards over the last 12 months, including the Craft Guild of Chefs Awards 2015 and 2016.

Seasonal specials

Locally sourced and seasonal produce influence the dishes created by Gordon and his team at The Sun Inn. Menus change seasonally to make the best use of what is available, and herbs and salad leaves are grown on-site in the purpose-built greenhouses along with strawberries, beetroot and other seasonal veg.

During the warmer months there is a notable increase in the popularity of lighter fish and seafood dishes. Summer favourites include Brixham crab cake with watermelon, avocado and homemade tartar sauce and salmon roulade with beetroot and cucumber.

A versatile cucumber granita is used across the menu. Perfect with salmon, as a palate cleanser between courses, or with strawberries and mint for a refreshing dessert.

Mediterranean influences are popular all year round,



but those dining outside in summer especially favour the breaded mozzarella and sun blushed tomato salad as a quick and tasty lunch option. In the same vein, the garlic and thyme gnocchi served with feta cheese, roasted onion, mushrooms and quails egg available as a starter or main course, is a new addition this year.

Popular summery puddings are predominantly fruit based, such as lemon posset with raspberry and meringue, and cinnamon brioche with strawberry compote, yogurt sorbet and almonds.

By far the most popular dessert on the menu from June until September – and one that creates a real talking point among diners – is The Sun's special Taste of the Fairground. This sharing platter of sweet treats includes homemade candyfloss, oven-baked doughnuts, toffee popcorn, marshmallows, and candied apples.

Cheers

As a popular pub with drinkers as well as foodies, The Sun Inn capitalises on the longer evenings and draw of its large country garden with seasonal drink promotions.

Conveniently located just eight miles from the new Bombay Sapphire distillery at Laverstoke, gin is the order of the day. The Sun Inn promotes offers on Bombay Sapphire with tonic to strengthen links with the distillery, as well as Twisted Nose, a craft gin distilled in Winchester and made using Hampshire watercress and other local ingredients.

Summer wouldn't be summer without Pimm's. Between June and August jugs of Pimm's are available for £15 to enjoy in the garden or while Wimbledon is shown in the lounge area.

New for summer 2016, the pub is stocking a still cider for the first time: Explorer, brewed by the Orchard Pig Brewery in Somerset. Still cider is not widely available in Hampshire pubs,



so it is hoped that this new addition to The Sun's drinks offering will draw customers looking for something a bit different. www.suninndummer.com

Gnocchi - a popular dish at The Sun Inn



Gnocchi

600g potatoes, peeled and cut into 2cm cubes

1 egg, beaten

1 tbsp salt

60g Gran Moravia vegetarian hard cheese, finely grated

130g plain flour

Zest of 1 lemon
1tsp dried thyme

To decorate
100g of crumbled goats cheese
Handful of watercress.

Method

- Place the potatoes into a large pan and cover with cold water, bring to the boil and cook until soft.
- Mash the potato and push through a sieve. Mix in the cheese, thyme and lemon zest.
- Once cold, place into a large mixing bowl and mix in the egg, flour and salt until combined.
- Flour a work surface and cut the Gnocchi dough into quarters.
- Roll one of the quarters into 2cm thick logs.
- Using a knife cut 2cm pillows along the log.
- Place on a floured tray.
- Cook the Gnocchi in small batches - about 10 per batch - in a pan of boiling salted water. When the Gnocchi float they are ready. This will take about 3 minutes. Remove and place in cold water so they don't overcook.
- Place a sauté pan on a medium heat, add the butter and oil, cook the mushrooms in the pan with a little salt. Add the gnocchi and cook until hot.
- Place the tomato sauce on the bottom of 4 plates, place the Gnocchi on top, decorate with the crumbled goats cheese and watercress.

Tomato Sauce

2 tbsp olive oil

3 medium cloves garlic, peeled, finely chopped

1 medium onion, finely diced

10 tomatoes

2 red peppers, roughly chopped

2 red chillies, roughly chopped

Salt

Pepper

¼ tsp dried basil

¼ tsp dried thyme

¼ tsp dried sage

100ml veg stock

2tbsp tomato purée

Method

- Heat the oil in a large pan on a medium heat.
- Add the onions and a pinch of salt, sweat the onions until transparent.
- Add the garlic, peppers and chillies, cook until the peppers soften.
- Add the tomatoes, tomato puree, herbs and stock. Cooked for 25-35 minutes.
- Place in a blender and blend until smooth, season to taste and pass through a fine sieve.
- Keep warm and set aside.