



PUREFOY IS PURE JOY

Daniel Whiteway has the most memorable meal at The Purefoy Arms, which is under the ownership of rising star chef Gordon Stott

Writing a review, especially of a restaurant, should ideally be done as soon as possible after the experience, when thoughts, feelings and emotions are fresh, not dulled by time and the frantic pace of life.

This review is being written more than a week after a visit to The Purefoy Arms, in Preston Candover, but the vivid tasting experience stays in my mind due to the sheer quality of the food on offer.

The Purefoy Arms is under the ownership of Gordon Stott, who became head chef at The Sun Inn, Dummer, at the tender age of 20, around six years ago.

In May of this year, he opened his first solo pub, The Purefoy Arms, where I found myself on a warm summer's evening, eager to try out the taster menu to get a broad experience of the food cooked by a chef writing his own book and aiming for a Michelin star in the near future.

The initial impression at The Purefoy Arms is of an effortless blend in the decor. It is the only pub in the village, so as a necessity it should work to retain its appeal to locals.

This can be seen in the menu, where there are jazzed up takes on pub staples like burgers, and fish and chips, in addition Stott's signature ribs.

However, the menu is full of top quality restaurant dishes and the overall feeling of the place is it is perfectly natural to have this refined fare on the menu but also having the country pub standard of dog treats in a jar on the bar.

My partner and I were in for a surprise first up. Stott had taken a delivery from his fish supplier of lobster which he made into a scampi for us to try.

Served with basil oil, fennel and a delicately spiced cream, it was stunning. The flavours complemented each other perfectly, while being soft enough to allow the lobster to dominate.

Already salivating at what was to come, and

after a fresh sourdough was also dished up with a tomato and basil spread which brought back memories of trips to Italy, 'Cheese and Onion' was the next dish.

Like many dishes on the tasting menu, the inverted commas are the key to understanding as there were often takes on classics. This featured a deep-fried cheese with onion confit, onion bits, onion ash, onion jam and watercress.

The strength of the cheese was cut through by the sweetness of the onion, while the ash added an intriguing texture.

Next up was 'Pork Pie', a slice of a shortcrust pork pie served with piccalilli, basil, balsamic vinegar and puff crackling – think pork crackling but popcorn like. For my taste, the piccalilli and vinegar combination was a touch sweet, but my partner adored this dish.

Due to my taste preferences, the fish dish was the one I was a bit worried about. It was



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kedgeree, which meant poached cod, a quail's egg, curried rice, breaded mussels and capers. I was even more worried when an intense fish smell came from the serving bowl.

I need not have been worried. This was my favourite dish of the night.

The flavour combination between the curry and the fish was delightful, as was the balance between breaded mussels and the egg. This was nothing short of superb.

The main was a lamb loin which simply put was a dish doing the basic things extremely well but adding a twist to it.

The succulent lamb was well seasoned but a succotash was added to it with the bacon and peppers in particular a lovely addition, and one can never go wrong with a red wine jus.

The knife just sliced through the lamb, which was a foretaste for how the meat would melt away in the mouth.

A pallet cleanser followed of 'Coffee and Cream' – coffee crumb served alongside Chantilly cream which was light and uplifting, almost like an iced latte.

Finally, there came dessert perfection.

'The Chocolate Bar' consisted of a chocolate ganache, orange sorbet, hazelnut crumb and white chocolate fudge.

Given the name, the ganache and fudge were laid out alternatively like a chocolate bar, atop the crumb with the sorbet lingering to the side.

The ganache was not too bitter or dark, the orange complemented the chocolate brilliantly, the crumb added a great variety of texture and the white chocolate fudge was to die for.

'The Chocolate Bar' was pure happiness on a plate.

All in all, with this menu and the continued innovation and ambition of the man, it is to be expected that Stott's star will continue to rise.



Gordon Stott