



## Review

# Thoughtful cooking and real ale at this fine dining local



From left are head chef Gavin Swift, manager Mandy Hall and sous chef Jake Jones. (111107AR1pic6)

## SOPHIE MCCANDLISH reviews The George at Wath

FINE dining and a welcoming local is a tricky combination to pull off but, with all due credit to the staff and management, The George at Wath holds its own on both scores.

Tasteful décor, stone and oak flagged floors and an open fire make it the perfect place to sample real ale, as the busy bar testified, and a welcoming place to study a seasonal and well balanced menu.

We were looking at the new autumn menu which made use of local game and seasonal vegetables.

There is a choice of six starters, priced between £5 and £7 with something

to suit most tastes from soup to a locally shot game terrine.

Alison chose a crispy hen's egg which included wild mushrooms, truffle and tender stem broccoli. I went for the slow roast belly pork with pan fried scallops, crushed peas and a Madeira glaze.

For mains there was a choice of seven dishes again well thought out with choices ranging from fish and chips through to steak and local game.

I opted for the locally shot partridge which would be served with salt baked Heritage Pink Fir Potatoes, roast autumn vegetables, roast

chestnuts and bread sauce. Alison chose the fish of the day which was John Dory with lobster tail served with a crab sauce and potatoes.

The main courses start at £13 with the sirloin steak at £20. There is also a tempting list of side dishes including seasonal greens and twice cooked dripping chips. We opted for the swede and carrot mash with horseradish.

The restaurant is an intimate and cosy room, clearly defined from the pub with smartly turned out waiting staff.

Shortly after being seated we were served a beautiful looking plate of appetisers which were delicious bites of rabbit and fish along with an unusual shot glass of mulled cider. But then we waited and waited for our starters.

When they eventually arrived they were fabulous, plated works of art. The belly pork in my dish was

melt in the mouth with an almost caramelised crispy skin, the king scallops were perfectly cooked and both



Roast Red-legged partridge with salt-baked heritage Pink Fir potatoes, autumn vegetables, roast chestnuts and bread sauce. (111107AR1pic3)



Crispy Wensleydale free range egg, with wild mushrooms, truffle and tender stem broccoli. (111107AR1pic2)

were complimented by the wonderfully green and tasty garden peas.

Alison's egg had the lovely crispy texture of the coating and a rich yellow runny yolk which was off set by the earthiness of the wild mushrooms and truffle.

Having enjoyed our starters we then faced another long wait for our main courses which unfortunately spoil the momentum of the meal.

The dishes when they arrived were again beautiful. Game can always be tricky to get right, with no fat on the bird it can so easily be overcooked but there was no worry about that with my partridge. It was tender and tasty with the bread sauce and autumn vegetables making it elegant comfort food. The

only thing that didn't work for me were the potatoes. The idea was to cook them in a salt crust giving them a better flavour but for me they were too salty. This did not however detract from the rest of meal and the side dish of swede and carrot mash with a horseradish twist more than made up for it.

Alison's fish was perfectly presented and cooked with the delicate flavour of the John Dory and lobster respected and not overwhelmed by the crab sauce. Finishing our main courses quite late into the evening we decided not to have pudding but the dishes served around us during the evening were fun and imaginative especially Fun of the Fair.

An impressive separate cheese menu showcases local North Yorkshire cheeses alongside British, Irish and European varieties a really good twist on a traditional cheeseboard.

There was so much to enjoy at The George and so much thought, care and imagination put into the dishes.

Each course had something a little bit different and there were a number of really unique touches, the butter served on a stone and the sauce in a small sealed jar to keep it warm, were my favourites.

If the service could just have a been a little quicker it would have made a memorable meal an outstanding one.

## Bites

### A rare attack of brevity...

IT'S a particularly brief Bites column this week, as we're just back from our holidays. We went to Malta - thanks for asking - and spent more time than is strictly healthy ferreting round small dusty supermarkets and buying foodstuffs we didn't understand.

These included goat's cheese flavoured crisps, red wine in a carton costing 1 Euro per litre, something called ticbeans and an unusually aggressive passion fruit which lodged lots of tiny splinter things in our fingers, like some kind of fruity porcupine. Though we had the last laugh when we devoured its innards.

Anyway, you don't care about that. You care about this:

LAST weekend saw more than 3,000 people head to Revolution in Harrogate, where its new rum-themed bar, Revolución de Cuba, was being officially launched.

Advertiser reader Chris Aldred won our ticket competition, netting himself and his friends a night of VIP treatment at the venue.



Mary Sketton and Sarah Sobot at the Revolución de Cuba launch. (S)

NEXT Thursday is Beaujolais Nouveau Day which, unlike National Cupcake Week and its ilk, is a food-based diary date which actually means something.

It's a very niche something, admittedly: Beaujolais nouveau is the most popular of a kind of wine known as vin du primeur - quick turnaround wines sold in the same year as the grapes are harvested.

This one is bottled just six-eight weeks after harvest, and its taste is simple, fresh, fruity and low on tannin. We know this because we looked it up on Wikipedia.

The first bottles are rushed to market ready for sale on the third Thursday of November - and Squiffy's Wine Bar on Ripon's Duck Hill is among the recipients this year. Doors open at 6pm.

AND that's it. We told you it was brief.