



» Eating out

Emlyn Returns in style

After a major refurbishment following flooding, Emlyn Restaurant is back with a new style, new chef and new menus.

Set within the Burford Bridge Hotel at the foot of Box Hill, Dorking, the focus is on seasonal offerings from local producers.

Head chef Nick Sinclair has returned to Emlyn after an absence of four years and his ambitions for the restaurant and passion for regional ingredients are palpable. We visited on a drizzling wet weekend and enjoyed a sumptuous Sunday lunch. Anticipating a classic roast, we were not disappointed; the menu featured many of the usual favourites but with a modern twist. The dishes were refreshingly unpretentious and beautifully presented.

We began with starters of scorched mackerel with celeriac and burnt apple and roasted Mediterranean vegetable tart. The tart was light and delicious whilst the mackerel was, as the gentleman at the next table said "not what I was expecting but all the better for it". This was done in what I think of as 'sushi style', allowing the natural flavours to pervade and enhanced by the accompanying elements. I should say that our starters were preceded by an interesting bread board together with flavoursome herb, curry and horseradish butters.

Next, I enjoyed the roast breast of chicken with buttered mash, shallot purée, charred Roscoff onions and barbecued sweetcorn, whilst my partner Alistair tucked into the roast Surrey farm beef which was served together with a mini braised shin cottage pie, Yorkshire pudding and pan gravy. The roasts were everything we had been anticipating and more, but almost the best part was what I can only describe as a smorgasbord of vegetables which arrived, and which we proceeded to demolish with relish: roast potatoes done to perfection, stuffing, baby carrots, creamy swede, spring greens and fresh cabbage. We finished by sharing the apple crumble and rhubarb ice cream – light, sweet and refreshing.

It being a Sunday it seemed only right that we should have opted for roast dinner, but I was also tempted

by the pan-roast salmon with crushed new potatoes, fricassee of spring vegetables and watercress beurre blanc; and the tagliatelle with blue cheese, broccoli and balsamic roasted red onions. I was pleased the menu was not overloaded with dishes but had a good selection. As Nick says: "We have a passion for good food, cooked to perfection and we love the surroundings. "We cook everything we can in-house on a daily basis, including baking our own bread, smoking our own fish, making our own ice-creams and patisserie." As well as a kitchen garden with vegetables and herbs, plans are afoot to establish beehives and a smokehouse.

The weekly, changing, market-fresh set menu for lunch and dinner comprises two courses at £19.95 or three for £23.95. For the seasonally changing a la carte menu starters begin at £8 and mains at £16. Sunday lunch is £24.50 for two courses and £29.50 for three. Six-course tasting menus are available every Friday and Saturday for meat-eaters (£55) and vegetarians (£45). A wine flight is available at £35 per person – half price on a Saturday until 31st October. Some example dishes include starters of quail with spinach, sweetcorn, grapes and dandelions; truffle risotto, confit egg yolk and pecorino; and skate with warm tartare sauce mussels and clams. For mains there is halibut with carrot and vanilla purée, salt-baked carrot, samphire, purslane and hibiscus emulsion; hay-smoked sirloin of beef, Jacobs ladder (short ribs), onions, horseradish and ale; and stone bass with cauliflower, coconut, tempura oyster, ponzu dressing, salty fingers and sea aster. Desserts on offer are white chocolate panna cotta with strawberries and basil; sticky toffee pudding with clotted cream ice cream; and peanut butter and banana cremeux with caramel and bitter chocolate.

A feast for the palate – worth revisiting again and again.

● Emlyn Restaurant, London Road, Mickleham, RH5 6BX.
Call 01306 884561