



## The Nags Head

The Nags Head in Great Missenden is celebrating its recent success as the Regional Winner of two awards from *Publican Magazine* for 2011 – 'Food Pub of the Year' and 'Accommodation Pub of the Year', along with maintaining their AA Rosette for 'Culinary Excellence'. I went along with a friend for lunch to find out why this pub is so successful.

We were greeted with a friendly smile by Adam Michaels, who with his father Alvin and mother Sally run both the Nags Head and its award winning sister pub, The Bricklayers Arms in Flaunden in Hertfordshire. Visitors walk straight into the snug bar and dining area, dominated by the large inglenook fireplace. There are plenty of tables for dining, but in the summer months you can also eat 'al fresco' in their large garden. The building dates from the 15th century but the décor is contemporary with a cosy atmosphere. The menu is advertised as 'English Tradition and French Fusion' which offers nine starters and eleven main course

dishes, on the lunch menu alone with plenty of choice in fish and vegetarian dishes alongside the meat choices. There is also a specials list. Chefs Howard Gale, Alan Bell and Claude Paillet believe in giving good value for money and serve only the finest quality food. They use local suppliers and all the smoked fish and meats are smoked on the premises at The Bricklayers Arms.

I started with one of my favourite dishes, a risotto consisting of leek, peas and smoked cheddar, served with tomato coulis and a mixed leaf salad, followed by the Steak, Kidney and Ale Pie, with a chive mash and side salad. This was good wholesome food and well prepared. The steak pie was very tasty with tender meat covered with a crisp light pastry. The creamy chive mash was delicious but I would have preferred peas perhaps to the side salad, my fault as I am sure I could have requested them when I ordered. My friend tried the Mushroom Feuillete as a starter, a puff pastry top with mushrooms in

a Calvados cream with juliennes of vegetables, followed by Crab with home smoked Salmon served with a chive cream and blinis. We both enjoyed our food enormously and the portions were plentiful. There is an excellent wine list, with a good selection offered in either 175 ml or 250 ml, or bottles ranging in price from £14.95 to upwards of £80, with an exclusive list of the rarer wines.

After lunch we asked to see some of the bedrooms, just out of curiosity as I was unaware until then that the Nags Head had accommodation. They have in fact five double and twin rooms, all newly refurbished in a contemporary style with beautifully finished bathrooms or showers ensuite. Each room has a flat screen digital TV and DAB radio alarm clock, tea and coffee making facilities, hairdrier and iron. Situated in the Chilterns with lovely scenery and plenty to do in the area, The Nags Head makes an ideal base for a few days to relax and unwind. From my experience I think they fully deserve their awards.

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