

The Charles Bathurst (CB) Inn

As I write, it's Sunday evening, England 1 – Germany 4. My prayers had been answered on Friday when I wanted to run for the hills to find a flag and vuvuzela free zone – I like football but not 24/7. The editor rang: 'Howard, we would like you to do a review this weekend, I know it's short notice and I need the copy by Monday. I was thinking about The CB Inn – you have mentioned it before in dispatches.' Heaven!

For those of you not familiar with it, The CB Inn is set in the most beautiful of Yorkshire countryside, nestled a few miles west of Reeth, in one of the lesser known Dales – Arkengarthdale. It's an area where the topic of conversation is more likely to be tups and the differential flight patterns of grouse and pheasant than whether Lampard and Gerrard can play in the same team.

So what will you find in this well established eating house, which re-opened in 1996 but has 18th century coaching inn origins? It's simple, as the largest sign outside announces Free House (which means award-winning real ales from the Black Sheep, Theakston and Timothy Taylor breweries: the thoroughbreds of Yorkshire ale) and Fine Ale. Now that is not fine in French haute cuisine style but wholesome, flavoursome, exceptionally well cooked traditional British fare with an occasional twist or two. The emphasis is most definitely on local and seasonal sourced produce cooked to a very high standard.

I chose Cream of Mushroom Soup. Soups with the title 'Cream of ...' are often dominated by the cream. I was presented with a dark grey soup: a good sign. With cream not being an overpowering ingredient, the flavour balance was excellent – it was earthy, well seasoned and full of flavour – a simple dish but perfect. When it came to the main course, I thought long and hard about the Cornfed Chicken with Fresh Herb Risotto and English Asparagus – it screamed 'healthy, healthy, healthy' just as the scales earlier in the day had screamed 'get off'. However, my affection for steak won the day and I couldn't resist the very local 12oz Sirloin served with Red Onion, Tomato stuffed with Cheese and an array of Summer Vegetables. In the name of nutritional balance I resisted the 'fat chips' although they did look awesome. The meat was excellent quality and cooked perfectly, without the hint of a vuvuzela – it's as good as it gets.

Following the theme of self restraint and with the calorie counter working overtime I declined the splendid array of what my mother would call 'Sweets' – which many of them were! I will however regale you with a few of them, it might whet your appetite – Southern Comfort and Honey Crème Brulee, Sticky Toffee Pudding and Pear Crumble and Custard.

I must also make special reference to the cheese offering. I have seen the word 'local' used in other establishments when in fact the produce was from the local wholesaler or

supermarket. In this case local means very local – a variety of Wensleydale, Yorkshire Coverdale and Yorkshire Blue – all served with homemade chutney. Not many food miles or CO2 emissions apart from the goats, sheep and cows.

I have already made reference to the beer, the wine list is comprehensive and works well with the menu and there is a nice range (11 in total) of wines by the glass.

I should also point out that there are 19 well appointed bedrooms and should you stay overnight you will be treated to another culinary delight. I realise that porridge, fresh fruit, fruit juice and homemade yoghurts form an integral part of a balanced diet and that breakfast is a very important meal of the day, but you just have to treat yourself every now and again to a full cooked breakfast – well, this is the place to do it: sausage, bacon, black pudding, mushrooms and eggs. It's a feast, and you can appease any conscience you may have with the knowledge that by tucking in you are supporting local farmers and butchers. If you add in the wooden and flag floors, antique pine and Mouseman furniture, superb views, and the friendly and attentive staff you have a great place to eat, drink, relax and to enjoy and explore the magnificence of the Yorkshire Dales.



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