

FOOD REVIEW

ARLINGTONS:

‘A pretty venue with even prettier food’

This dining spot has been given a new lease of life – with a vibrant menu and décor to match, says Danielle Lett

I always say it, but Ipswich's food scene is always abuzz with new openings left, right and centre.

One of town's latest additions I've been dying to try is Arlingtons. Located on Museum Street, it was once a popular restaurant that thrived before lockdown – but sadly closed last year.

Thankfully former Moloko co-owner Zoe Cutting has taken on the Grade II-listed property, throwing open the doors to the new-look Arlingtons a month ago.

I ate at Moloko last year – and thoroughly enjoyed the experience – so I couldn't wait to see what this place had to offer.

I always look at the menu online before I eat out anywhere, and what particularly jumped out at me was the two and three-course set menus for £20 and £25, respectively.

Not only could you choose between a handful of dishes, but it came with a cocktail (either a peach bellini or an Aperol spritz), glass of prosecco or a pint of beer included in the final price.

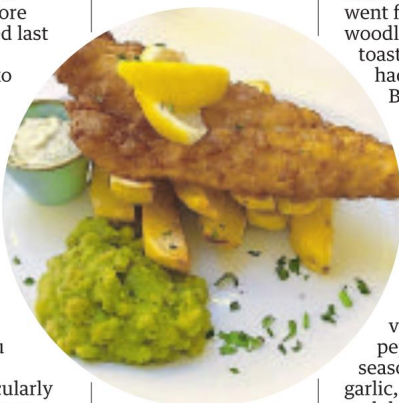
Available between 5pm and 8pm Wednesday and Thursday, that's great value for money if you ask me.

I met my mum after work on a Wednesday afternoon and we made our way there. When we arrived and stepped inside, we noticed how pretty the décor was. Upon entry, there's a floral phonebooth (perfect Instagram fodder), and a door to the bar (this however was closed when we went).

The restaurant is located upstairs (there is also a lift), with a private dining room to the side, just before you make your way to the main dining hall.

And what a gorgeous space it is. The high ceiling with a central skylight allows natural light to flow in beautifully, and the fairy

RIGHT:
Inside Arlingtons
Pictures: DANIELLE
LETT



Beer battered haddock and chips



Chicken roulade

lights throughout give the whole place a warm, cosy ambiance. As a food reviewer, it made my job easier when taking photos.

Now onto the food. I ordered the crispy deep fried goats' cheese (seriously with red onion marmalade), while mum went for the fricassee of woodland mushrooms served on toasted sourdough, and we both had peach bellinis to drink.

Before our starters arrived however, our waitress, Eleanor, came over to the table with complimentary soup starters. She said the chef was trying out a new recipe, and we were more than happy to oblige and give it a taste test.

Made from Mediterranean vegetables, courgettes, peppers, shallots and seasoned with pepper and garlic, it was delicious, warming and definitely packed a punch. I certainly hope this gets added to the menu as a seasonal starter this autumn/winter, as I'd definitely order a full-size serving.

My goats' cheese was amazing. Coated in what I believe were panko breadcrumbs, it had a nice crunch as you bit into it. The cheese itself was smooth and creamy, and the side of sweet red onion marmalade was perfect. You couldn't have asked for a better starter.

The fricassee of woodland mushrooms served on toasted sourdough was plentiful. Jam-packed with an assortment of freshly-picked mushrooms and served with a smattering of greens and an edible flower, it's the perfect starter if you're feeling autumnal. And once again, would look good on your Instagram feed.

I have to say, the place itself, and every dish we were served, passed the photogenic food test. Each dish was beautifully presented and tasted as good as it looked.

For mains, I had the beer

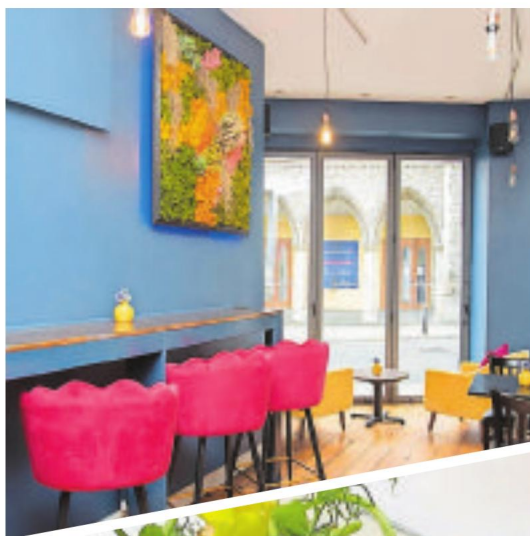


battered haddock fillet with hand-cut chips, mushy peas, and tartare sauce, while mum had the roulade of chicken with goats' cheese and sun-blushed tomatoes, new potatoes, salad, and a honey and mustard dressing.

I'm a sucker for restaurant-made fish and chips, and this piece of haddock was crispy, not at all greasy. My only complaint was that the chips were too thick, and felt slightly undercooked. If they were cut a bit thinner, and maybe

double or tripled-cooked, they'd be perfect. Other than that, no complaints.

The chicken roulade was delicious – the honey and mustard dressing was especially fantastic, and the chicken wasn't overcooked. My only suggestion would be to get rid of the salad though and maybe swap it for cooked vegetables such as broccoli or honey-roasted carrots, as the salad was warm (due to being next to the hot chicken and potatoes).



By this point, we were both pretty full, but we'd opted for the three-course menu and ordered all of our dishes right at the start, so we knew we had to commit.

I went for the cheesecake of the day served with ice cream, and mum had the Eton mess. Both portion sizes were generous - my cheesecake was creamy, smooth and topped with fresh raspberries, strawberries and blueberries, while mum's Eton's mess was the stuff of dreams. Plenty of fresh fruit, meringue and whipped cream.

In total, we both ordered three courses for £25, and two half pints of San Miguel (£2.60 each), so our bill came to £55.20.

All in all, Arlington's is a great dining spot and I definitely recommend it. It's great value for money, the portions sizes are just right, everything looks beautiful, and the service is top notch. I'll definitely be going back - I may have to head there for brunch next time though, as I spotted Oreo French toast on the menu and that's something I absolutely need to try.



EAST ANGLIAN CHEF WITH DAVE WALL

The chef patron of the UK's best gastropub, The Unruly Pig, shares a very special recipe

The blistering heat of this year's summer is now behind us. I am both relieved and happy as autumn is my favourite season - for many reasons. It's game season of course and at The Unruly Pig we make extensive use of the abundance of great game that is available locally. It's also the time of autumn hues and the first log fires and, as the nights sadly draw in, it is time for comfort food.

My ideal comfort dish is pie and mash. Pies are such a great way of using up leftover roast meats. For example, I love chicken and leek pie. I fry some seasoned, chopped leeks in butter until soft and throw in whatever meat is left on the chicken. Then I thicken chicken gravy with some flour (over a medium heat) add this to the chicken/leek mix and put in a pie



dish. Making pastry can be a bit of a faff for some, so why not cut a corner and use ready rolled? Simply bung it in the oven for 25 minutes at 180C and bingo!

The key to success with all pies though is to invest some time making proper, creamy (and dreamy) mash. The recipe below is my take on a traditional beef and ale pie (with mash of course) and uses Estrella Damm lager as I love the hoppy flavour it gives the meat.

BEEF SHIN AND ESTRELLA PIE (Serves 4)

Ingredients

- 1kg beef shin on the bone, cut into 5cm thick steaks through the shin 'ossobuco' style (your butcher will cut these for you with a bit of notice)
- 125g diced pancetta or dry cured bacon lardons
- 200g calf's/lamb's kidney, diced into 2cm chunks
- 2 medium onions, peeled and diced
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 330ml Estrella Damm
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 2L of good beef stock
- 10 sprigs thyme (leaves picked)
- 1 bay leaf
- 750g shortcrust pastry (or your favoured type - puff or hot water pastry would work great too)

Method

Preheat a heavy casserole dish and over a medium sizzle, brown the meat until you reach a deep caramelisation, turning every other minute. Add the kidneys, pancetta, onion and garlic. Continue to brown for two minutes until the kidneys and pancetta are just starting to colour. Sprinkle the flour over the mix and brown for a further minute. Add the beer and reduce until it has evaporated. Add the thyme, bay leaf and stock, return to a simmer. As it comes to the boil, skim away any froth with a ladle. Cover with a sheet of parchment and a lid. Cook gently in an oven at 100-120C for 3-4 hours (turning the mix every hour). Check after the first 20 minutes to make sure it is not cooking too quickly - low and slow is the game. When the meat is totally tender,

offering no resistance when pierced with a fork then it is ready. If it's not done after four hours then just keep going until it is, checking every half hour. Allow it to rest and settle for an hour.

Before it cools completely gently strain off the liquid through a sieve into a new pan, taking care not to break up the meat. Return the pan to a gentle simmer and assess the consistency of your gravy. It needs to be nice and thick - if it seems a little thin it will need thickening. You could do this with just a spoonful of gravy granules.

Whilst the gravy is simmering flake the meat away from the bone, keeping it in large chunks.

Return the gravy to the meat but only enough to make it the consistency of a hearty stew - there should be enough excess liquor left over to serve as gravy for the plate.

Allow the mix to cool. Roll your pastry, line your chosen mould (buttered and floured). Fill the pie, being sure to have the mix heaving to the brim. Egg-wash the lip to seal the lid. Trim the edges and crimp well with your fingertips. Egg-wash the lid and then pierce a hole or two for steam to escape.

Make sure your pastry is chilled again before cooking, at least another 45 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 180C. Cook the pie from fridge cold. It should take half an hour for individual pies or 45-60 minutes for a family style.

Allow the pie to relax for 10-15 minutes before demoulding. Serve with buttery mash potatoes and your reserved gravy (and a pint of Estrella of course!)