

# FOOD REVIEW: 'A REALLY GOOD VALUE SUNDAY LUNCH IN IPSWICH'

Danielle Lett, not ordinarily a Sunday roast fan, makes an exception for On The Huh

**W**e're well and truly into the throes of winter - and it sucks. I'm not a winter person, and I don't understand the love for the season at all.

It's dark by 4pm, it's cold, and it's grim. Besides Christmas, what's there to romanticise? But the one saving grace for this time of year is all of the guilt-free comfort food you can indulge in.

You can load up on stodgy, carby, meat-and-potatoes goodness, and not worry. It's the one time of year where it's acceptable to eat a big Sunday lunch and go for a nap afterwards.

My go-tos this time of year are pie and mash, slow cooker curries and chillis, and saucy pasta bakes smothered in lashings of cheese.

"But what about roast dinners?" Sorry to say, but I don't like them all that much. They're an effort to make (and clean up after, since they use every pot and pan in the kitchen), and overrated.

The only time I really have a roast is Christmas dinner. But even that's an exception because you've got wildcard additions like bread sauce (yum), parsnips (yum), and pigs in blankets (yum). The holy trinity of sides. They really help lift an otherwise boring meal, but the other 364 days of the year? Nah.

However, I'd heard great things about what's on offer at a café in Ipswich, and I thought it was about time I became a Sunday

lunch convert.

My mum told me she'd booked us a table at On The Huh, on St Peter's Street, so I met her there for a catch-up last week.

We'd placed a reservation earlier in the week, as its Facebook page said 'book now to avoid disappointment', and we didn't want to risk being turned away if there no tables available. They also asked us which meat we wanted with our roasts, ahead of time.

And it's a good thing we did book, as the place was pretty busy. We were seated around 1.30pm, and people kept filtering in and out - all for a roast.

In terms of interiors, On The Huh is really cute and quaint inside. Like your nan's dining room. It's pink and white, with framed artwork on the walls. The tables and chairs are pine, and of course there was a Christmas tree up.

I asked for a menu, to see what else was on offer, but they told me they didn't have one. I then asked for a drinks menu but they didn't have that either.

However, there was a fridge with soft drinks that we could grab a drink from, hot drinks available to order, and wine behind the counter.

Mum went for a bottle of local Breckland Orchard cloudy lemonade (£2.75), and I went for a medium glass of white wine.

After about 20 minutes or so of

nattering, the waitress brought our roasts over.

I went for the pork, while mum went for the beef.

Presentation is key, and I like how the plate came out with just the meat, potatoes and Yorkshire pudding on it.

"I'll be over with the veg in a second," the waitress added before heading off.

She came back with a generous serving of broccoli, cauliflower, red cabbage, carrot, and swede.

We couldn't wait to eat so we loaded up our plates with veg and tucked in.

Firstly, as someone who isn't a big roast fan, I really enjoyed this. One thing I hate is watery gravy, and theirs was perfectly thick. The roast potatoes were pretty crispy, and the meat itself was great. The pork was a good cut of meat - not too fatty, and the beef was moist and tender.

The star of the show though had to be the Yorkshire puddings. "Danielle, we need the recipe for these - they're amazing!" said my mum. She was such a big fan in fact, before we ate, she actually made me swap my Yorkie with her as mine was bigger.

Both roasts were £12.50 each (or £10 for a vegan option), which I think is great value for money. The portion was a fair size, and of course it takes out all of the fuss of prepping and washing up after trying to make a roast at home.

With (just about) enough room for dessert, we asked the waitress the special was.

"Apple cinnamon and date crumble - with ice cream or custard," she said.

So we went for that, with two spoons as we knew we couldn't tackle our own desserts each.

Freshly made and filling, it was a traditional home cooked pud at its best.

Our total bill came to £37. The receipt wasn't actually itemised so I'm unsure how much the dessert and wine cost but I guess they were around £4 and £5 each, respectively. Nothing was expensive here - and value for money seems to be its draw.

Throughout the week, On The Huh also serves all day breakfasts, a variety of £5 lunch specials including soup, macaroni cheese, hash brown patties, sausage rolls, and mushrooms on toast, as well as a number of sandwich and toastie options. I definitely need to pop in and try lunch one day.

If I'm in the mood for a roast again, I'd definitely go back. I'd have loved it if they offered the option to add on a couple of pigs in blankets though - 'tis the season, after all.

**BELOW:**  
On The Huh in  
Ipswich

Pictures:  
DANIELLE LETT



# EAST ANGLIAN CHEF WITH DAVE WALL



The chef patron of the UK's number one gastropub, The Unruly Pig, can't get enough of mallard

A generation ago duck was considered something special and vaguely for the elite. Chinese restaurants and supermarkets then put paid to any notion that duck was only affordable for some in society. Peking duck, for example, is now a regular guilty pleasure for so many of us.

What is less ubiquitous is mallard and that's a shame because if you like 'normal' duck, you will likely love it. So,

what's the difference? Well, there are over 100 species of duck, and mallard is one of them. Ducks tend to divide between by their feeding habits: either diver or dabblers. A mallard is dabbler, feeding from the surface of the water. Mallard is rarely, if ever, farmed and it thus tastes like a gamier version of what you buy in a supermarket.

The lovely thing about mallard is that it is sustainable and has certain health

qualities. It is rich in selenium (a kind of antioxidant) - so, it's kind of good for you. Why not give it a go and I promise you won't look back?

Here is a simplified version of a dish currently on our menu - mallard breast with faggot and pickled blackberries. We also serve the dish in the pub with porcini (roasted and pureed) and a crispy croquette of braised leg meat, but for a comforting touch at home you could maybe serve with some creamy mash?

## MALLARD BREAST AND FAGGOT WITH PICKLED BLACKBERRIES (Serves 4)

### Ingredients

- 2 mallards, crowned with legs removed
- Oil and butter for cooking
- Seasoning
- 1 clove garlic
- Sprig thyme
- For the faggots
- 200g mallard meat from the legs, trimmed of skin and bone
- 60g pancetta
- ½ small onion, 1 clove garlic, both finely chopped
- Leaves of 5 sprigs of thyme
- 100g pig's caul crepinette (available from good butchers)
- For the blackberries
- 1 punnet blackberries
- 100ml Port or good red wine
- 25g demerara sugar
- 25ml aged balsamic vinegar
- 2 lightly crushed juniper berries
- 1 star anise

### Method

To pickle the blackberries bring all the ingredients apart from the berries to a simmer.

Pour the liquid over the berries and allow to steep for a few hours.

To make the faggots mince (or finely chop) the mallard leg meat with the pancetta, onion, garlic and thyme.

Weigh into 35g pieces, wrap in the caul and chill. Rest in the fridge until you're ready to eat.

Bring the mallard crowns to room temperature an hour before serving.

Pre-heat the oven to 160C



and bring a heavy-based, oven safe frying pan to a medium heat on the hob. Lightly season the birds. Add a good splash of oil to the pan and lightly colour the birds all over, moving regularly.

Turn the crown on its back, add a generous knob of butter, a lightly crushed clove of garlic in its skin and some thyme. Turn the heat

to low and baste the bird for a few minutes.

Transfer to the oven and cook for three to four minutes. Meanwhile, season the faggots and fry gently for two to three minutes.

Sprinkle the mallard breasts with salt, allow to rest for a short while, then carve, serving with the faggots, blackberries and some lovely mash.



ABOVE AND LEFT: Roast pork, veg to share, and Apple cinnamon and date crumble with ice cream at On The Huh