



pic: HANNAH SINCLAIR



pic: MICHAEL WCHRY

INN AT ELM TREE ****

St Brides, Wentlooge, nr Newport

Once inside, a cosy, intimate restaurant is impeccably clean and with the lick of paint creates an inviting ambience with a menu whereby the bar staff engage was soon taken, and we were seated. First up, the starters. I had gone for the guest went for the mixed bread (\$2.50) the melon was excellent. As was the bread. For mains my guest went for the suet, as my eyes landed on that strait duck five spice (\$14.50). I don't usually be the time to start trying things. No. For dessert I had the kiwi and lime double chocolate brownie (\$3.95). And it is worth mentioning that at the moment touches to the menu, but I can assure the tweaked menu will surely be as good. We left thoroughly impressed. And it's back. Well, that plus The Kinks. **LUKE**



U2 plus... brecon jazz greenman pop pete +education special 2009

FREE

THE MARKET PLACE *****

66 High Street, Cowbridge. Info: 01446 774800

I have no doubt whatsoever that the majority of owner-managed establishments are far superior to those that aren't. There are lots of reasons, but mainly the attention to detail, genuine exuberance and passion for the business is apparent to any onlooker. This is unmistakable at The Market Place. Peter and Tim Marriott are father and son who now own and manage the restaurant. Tim is an experienced chef formally of Coast, Marco Pierre White's Titanic and a stint at Scott's, the renowned fish restaurant. With these glowing credentials behind him, Tim has more than earned his fine pedigree up there with the nation's greats.

Bearing this in mind, it was no surprise when surveying the menu that there is more than a hint towards seafood. Gravadlax with orange infused crayfish tails, pan-fried scallops with black pudding and cauliflower puree, mackerel mousse with beetroot mayonnaise and, from the mains, delectable sounding salmon and cod fishcakes spiced with lemongrass, ginger and aioli.

As I favoured a dessert, I opted out of a starter and was told I must try the pan-fried fillet of sea bass, saffron risotto, asparagus and chorizo in a shellfish sauce. I was not disappointed. Like a lover, food must rock your world, if it doesn't, don't bother. This did in spades. Desserts – all homemade of course – included iced passion fruit parfait, poppy seed tuille and mixed fruits, apple crumble with vanilla ice-cream and my choice of vanilla and white chocolate pannacotta with shortbread and strawberries. Pannacotta is beautiful when made properly; this was thick, creamy and utterly divine, as were the dainty biscuits. Needless to say, a return visit is guaranteed. If classiness and simple, fine food is what you're after, the Market Place will undoubtedly rock your world. **ANTONIA LEVAY**

ELAICHI ****

4 Cog Road, Sully. Info: 029 2053 0176

You have to be in the right mood for Indian food (or more accurately Bangladeshi) but when you are, the endorphin rush of a spiced Bangladeshi Flatfish is Proustian in its pullback to your first Indian experiences. Elaichi is a new Indian restaurant in Sully, owned by the same people who have Cardiff's Cardamon in Victoria Park. My dining partner was in a harrumphing metaphysical anguish of a mood, having metaphorically just put down yet another damaged pet, or boyfriend, I didn't like to ask. The evening didn't bode well: she was full of terse comments and the self-referential logic displayed only by women who can kill can get away with it. And have done. Recently.

Nonetheless we kicked off to a delightful three-dish starter combination recommended by our host, Mas Biran. It consisted of gorgeous filets of fish rubbed in spicy paste and fried in a cast iron gillet: King Prawn puree and Pushka, a Bangladeshi street snack of chickpeas and potatoes. My guest's mood briefly elevated. Next up, a main course Tandoori Sea Bass and Imperial Biryani (chicken, almonds, yoghurt and cashews) hit the button perfectly: creamy, yet spicy chicken and beautifully firm fish competed in a gorgeous 10-minute feast. A side order of our host's speciality Chotpoi (another street snack of chickpeas and scrambled egg) was not too stodgy or mawkish and cloying, but beautifully balanced and packed with sumptuousness. She almost smiled.

After a brief distractionary conversation on refraction and colour wavelength we hit a wonderful traditional Bangladeshi desert of coconut pancakes: More-ish and satisfying, along with the Cobra Beers it rounded the night nicely. My dining partner had metamorphosed backwards, Kafka-like, from a giant, bad tempered, spitting beetle into a warm beautiful woman (almost). God knows what this place would do for real couples. I advise you to attend ASAP; it's a positive Bangladeshi Lourdes... in Sully. **JACKSON BAY**