



*Liz Nicholls visits The Kingham Plough near Chipping Norton which has just been named as a Good Food Gastropub award winner*

**O**ur corner of the Cotswolds is prized for its heart-stoppingly beautiful views. But all the dishes arriving from the kitchen on a recent wintry evening could give those regal oak-framed landscapes and chocolate box villages a run for their money.

At one point during our meal, I was embarrassed to be caught snapping my starter on my phone, like the tourist I am. Not cool. But then I wanted to record for posterity the prettiest slice of chicken liver parfait in Christendom. Encased in a pale marbled butter and herb jacket, it tasted even more sumptuous than it looked, fit for a queen, in fact. Accompanied by a cute mini brioche, quenelle of shallots which were sweetly pickled on red wine and glistening currants, this dish showed from the off that the team here really dig their flavour combos.

So mesmerised was I by this that I didn't get a look-in on my partner's equally sexy salmon starter. But the mains carried the party on – my flat-iron steak was perfectly charred on the outside and pink within, dunked in perfect Béarnaise with delicious chips – perfect with a rich and fruity Malbec. Its sister dish was a tablet of beautifully cooked pearlescent hake on a bed of

kale and tatty under a blanket of creamy sauce. To complete the trio of courses, I was elated with my deconstructed black forest gâteau with tonka bean chantilly that tasted heavenly and sinful.

The Kingham Plough achieved stellar fame under chef patron and Great *British Menu* winner Emily Watkins so its new owners, Matt and Katie Beamish, had a tough act to follow. Luckily, not only is Matt possibly the most charismatic a foodie you'll ever meet, but the old inn, which has rooms, is drop-dead gorgeous; a vision of classy muted F&B walls (which I was caught fondling. Again: not cool), vintage finds in cosy fireside nooks and stunning art (we had a Dali sketch next to us) for sale.

I'm thrilled the couple and of course the team, under head chef Jonny Pons, scooped a Good Food Gastropub award. Talented Jonny and co are spoilt for choice with local riches such as exceptional cuts from Paddock Farm and cured meat from Chippy's Salt Pig. Their skill more than does these justice in this, Daylesford country. And, if our meal sounds too meaty for you, the vegetarian options are amazing, too, and check out the Christmas and NYE menu for pure food porn.

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