

# A FEATHER IN THEIR CAP

The Feathers' much acclaimed restaurant enjoys a reputation for offering traditional and innovative, contemporary cooking using fresh, local produce. Sarah Dutton sampled its latest menu. Photography Adrian Jones

**D**ESCRIBED BY Nikolaus Pevsner in *The Buildings of England* as 'that prodigy of timber framed houses' and, more recently, in *The New York Times* as 'the most handsome inn in the world', The Feathers Hotel is internationally recognised for its beautiful Jacobean architecture and medieval heritage and it was with awe that I pushed through the glass doors of the historic hotel.

I am not sure what I expected to find behind those double doors, but I am happy to say it was a warm welcome and some fine dining.

We made our way through to the stone walled dining room and were ushered to our table promptly and with courtesy, and left to enjoy pre-dinner drinks and the chance to peruse the menu.

A fine choice there was too. All the ingredients are sourced locally where possible and the head chef, Martin Jones, explains that 'cooking is at the heart of the Feathers Hotel and here, in the kitchen, we honour our heritage by using the best local ingredients possible. Excellence is our goal, and we aim to exceed your expectations with every meal.'

It is clear that the restaurant, which has an AA rosette, is a place for customers who enjoy good food which is well prepared.

My husband seemed to be on a meat-eating fest, judging by his choices. He opted for the sautéed ox tongue, black pudding, hash brown with mild mushroom sauce for starters and then steamed tenderloin of Gloucestershire Black Spot wrapped in smoked bacon, served with dauphinoise potato, purple sprouting broccoli and wild mushroom cream.

I, on the other hand, opted for a more balanced selection, of monkfish in a tangy Hollandaise sauce and the wonderful honey roasted breast of Gwentian duck with fondant potato, roasted root vegetables and fig and orange jus.

While our meals were freshly prepared we were treated to an amuse bouche of scallop, lobster and prawn bisque which certainly whetted our appetites and promised good things to come. It was delicious.

The starters too were good. The ox tongue, perhaps



not the most fashionable cut in recent years, was delicious and the black pudding hash brown moist. My fish ticked all the boxes too, it was firm and meaty, and the sauce piquante.

Into main courses and again we were not disappointed. The menus at The Feathers state that all dishes come with vegetables, and anyone wanting additional vegetables can order them as a side dish. We didn't, and were quite happy with our portions.

The duck was roasted to perfection, still pink, with crispy skin and not a hint of greasiness. The fondant potato was a wonderful comfort food and was delicious with the jus and vegetables.

The pork was also declared a success, never having tried steamed meat before, it was a voyage of discovery



and one that would certainly be repeated if the dish were to be offered again.

Dessert called next. I opted for the cheese board, while my husband, who has a passion for crime brulee chose for the orange chocolate variety on offer.

The cheese board, with local and continental varieties was well-balanced and served with sweet grapes, celery and plenty of biscuits.

The crime brulee was truly a work of art. The pot came topped with a web of spun sugar that overhung the side of the dish and the top of the dessert itself

gave way with a satisfying snap. The taste, I was told because I didn't get to try it, was akin to a melted Terry's Chocolate Orange, fantastically rich and velvety. A clear success.

The Feathers, as well as offering formal dining in its restaurant, has a bar menu which includes traditional bar food such as burgers, and steak and ale pies as well as Thai curries.

So whatever the occasion, formal dining or a pub lunch while enjoying a trip to Ludlow, The Feathers is worth a visit. ■

## MENU AT A GLANCE

### Starters

Pike and mint soup  
Poached tail of monkfish, cream of leeks, smoked bacon and confit tomato, Pan seared mackerel, tomato and basil risotto, spears of asparagus, Ox tongue, black pudding hash brown, wild mushroom sauce, Spinach ravioli, tomato, ginger and garlic sauce with crisp pancetta

### Main dishes

Baked fillet of salmon, leek and pearl onion risotto, braised fennel, lemon and herb cream, braised Shank of Welsh Lamb, rosemary and garlic potatoes, roasted artichoke hearts, port wine jus, Honey roasted breast of Gwentian duck, fondant potato, roasted root vegetables, fig and orange jus, Steamed tenderloin of Gloucestershire Black Spot wrapped in smoked bacon, with dauphinoise potato, purple sprouting broccoli and wild mushroom cream, Tagliatelle with sun dried tomatoes, olives, fresh basil, truffle oil and Parmesan cheese

### Desserts

Dark chocolate creme brulee with vanilla seed ice cream, lead coffee parfait, berry compote, baked apple tart tatin, amaretto ice cream, Selection of sorbets and ice creams, Selection of continental and local cheeses.



Chef Martin Jones

## The Feathers Hotel

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