




TTM Pub Review

THE HOPE & ANCHOR MIDFORD

This month we look at one of the best pubs in the area that not only provides exceptional food and drink, but also tailors for families and is in a great country location. Could you ask for more?

Words and pics: Andy Jones

 We've had requests to consider the family side of the pubs we review and, with that in mind, this month I decided to drag my own (family that is) along to one of the finest pubs around, minus the rest of the TTM team, but hopefully still at publisher Jude's expense! The Hope & Anchor at Midford is a 20-minute drive out of Trowbridge and I'll say up front: it's well worth the journey.

The pub itself is nestled next to what was the Somerset & Dorset

Railway – in fact the pub's car park lies across the old line and is next to where Midford station once stood – which is now being converted into a cycle path that will soon lead into Bath. On our visit we decide to sit in the secluded garden which acts as the perfect suntrap on a great October afternoon.

To the food

The lunch menu is quite something, and broken down into soups, starters and salads, and vegetarian and meat

or fish mains. The starters – many of which can also be expanded into mains – include Provençal fish soup with rouille, cheese and croutes (£5.50), deep fried Camembert with onion marmalade (£4.80), deep fried whitebait (£5.50) and Polish Pierogi (£5.90).

It all sounds great so far and the mains are easily a match with something for everyone. Pork, smoked paprika, creamed leeks and stilton (£14.20) sounds amazing, as does the rosemary and garlic

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“The vegetarian options are enough to tempt any meat eater.”



Figs with melted stilton – could you resist these?

marinated venison with sloe gin and blueberry sauce (£14.50). If these sounds a bit too posh, there's plenty more on offer and at reasonable prices including lasagne (£9.80), sirloin steak (£15.50), homemade sausages with mash (£11.50), and house favourite ham, eggs and fries (£9.50).

The vegetarian options are enough to tempt any meat eater including flat field mushrooms with tomato Provencal sauce and melted cheese (£10.20) and feta and goat's cheese, spinach, pesto, tomato and pine nut strudel (£11.50), both of which I've thoroughly enjoyed on previous visits.

For the kids there's a good selection with sausages, carrots and mash/fries; ham, egg and fries; two types of pasta; chicken goujons and scampi all on offer at a very reasonable £4.20. The specials board is something else again, with pork belly and mash (£12.95), pan fried skate wings (£14.50), duck cassoulet (£12.95) and many more.

Hope fulfilled

It's an incredible choice and the Hope & Anchor really is one of the rarest pubs I've been to where I could easily



go for one of at least half a dozen dishes – possibly as many as 10! – and I'm genuinely torn between many of the dishes on offer. In the end we go for the smoked chicken, avocado and prawn salad (£6.20), and grilled figs with melted stilton and Parma ham (£5.25 from the specials menu) as starters. The kids opt for the ham and eggs and sausages while our mains are eventually settled on as the paella (£11.20) and Cajun chicken (£11.90)

The food soon arrives in

NEED TO KNOW

The Hope and Anchor

- Address: Midford Road, Midford BA2 7DD
- T: 01225 832 296
- E: info@hopeandanchormidford.co.uk
- W: www.hopeandanchormidford.co.uk

Opening times

- Mon – Sat: 1130am to 3pm (food 12 - 2pm); 6 – 11pm (food 6pm - 9.30pm)
- Sun: 11.30am to 3pm (food 12 - 3pm); 6pm to 11pm (food 6pm - 9.30pm)
- Booking advisable, especially at weekends



'The potato maketh the pub'



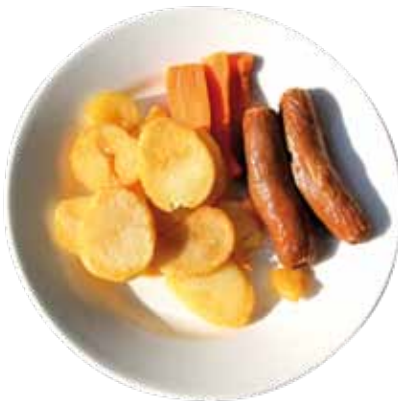


Paella complete with shells and bones to give it some oomph

impressive quantities and it also looks fantastic – just look at the pictures. The starters are almost big enough to satisfy as mains. The fig/stilton combination is an absolute hands down winner while the smokeyness of my chicken beautifully balances with the avocado – if all salads were like these I’d have one every day!

The paella is a mound of greatness as is the Cajun chicken surrounded, as it is, by courgettes, tomatoes, onions, mango mayo and avocado. With the Hope it’s about these extras. My paella, for example, is no ordinary paella – it’s paella with chicken on the bones and prawns in shells, where the flavour

The kids meals keep ‘em quiet

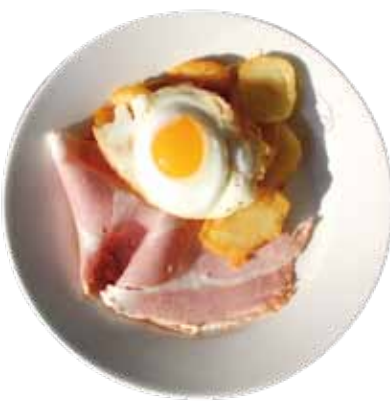


consequently shines through. It’s this great attention to detail and great flavours throughout each dish that sets this place apart.

Oh, and the fries. The fries! I know, I know, I’ve said it before but the ‘potato maketh the pub’ and these fried potatoes aren’t the kind of thing your mum did in a pan back in the day but the best parts of a chip, fry and roastie in one crispy fluffy form.

The kids...

Oh yes, I almost forgot the kids, rather the point of this feature in the first place, so engrossed am I in my own plate. Again, their portion sizes are great and the simple balanced



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meals are just what my lot are after. I don’t know about you but if I’m eating out and the kids are quiet then I’m happy. And they are very quiet, so the food must be very good...

To sum up: The Hope & Anchor sits in a great location with plenty of places to walk off that food after your meal. As well as the wonderful surroundings you get a snug bar for winter and bright extension for summer and it’s family friendly too. But forget those plusses for the moment because it’s the food that will have you coming back. We’d happily say this has the best foodie pub around, and if you know any better then let us know, because if there really is anywhere better than this we’d be surprised not to mention very glad to give it a try... ■