

The Argus

Food & Drink

The Sussex Ox

Milton Street, Alfriston

Call 01323 870840

Open Monday to Saturday 11am-3pm and 6pm-11pm and Sundays noon-5pm. Food is served Monday to Saturday noon-2pm and 6pm-9pm and on Sundays noon-3pm.

Review: March 10, 2006



Next time you are contemplating a pub lunch, consider driving out to Alfriston for a really traditional country pub experience. Instead of busy roads and heaving bars you'll find peace and quiet, cosy comfort in beautiful surroundings, friendly service and fantastic food. Owners David and Suzanne Pritchard serve-up generous portions and freshly-cooked, inspired dishes which mean satisfaction is guaranteed.

Situated in the South Downs close to the Long Man of Wilmington, The Sussex Ox is set in almost two acres of park-like grounds. A front garden and large rear garden with an enclosed deck both offer fine views. "The deck proved to be hugely popular last summer, especially for late suppers and watching the sun set over Firle Beacon," says David.

Inside, there is a public bar area alongside the Garden Room, which overlooks the back garden, and the more formal Dining Room. Newly-painted and uncluttered, the split-level Dining Room seats around 40 people (the Garden Room caters for 30 or so) with plenty of large pine tables for parties. A number of framed photographs hanging on the walls are a lovely reminder of Alfriston and the surrounding countryside in all seasons. This is a pub clearly proud of its heritage.

David and Suzanne are also passionate about their kitchen and are now starting to enjoy the recognition they deserve. "We have three trained chefs," says David. "They create every item on the menu from scratch using raw ingredients from a range of local suppliers, including Burts Family Butchers in Sidley and Network Seafoods in Newhaven.



"Our head chef Steve Lucas has worked in many fine restaurants, as well as owning his own business for several years. He loves to use locally-sourced and seasonal produce." This is evident in the menu, which changes monthly. Sous chef Jack Cotton joined the kitchen team last year following stints at De Vere Grand Hotel in Brighton and the critically-acclaimed Seven Dials Restaurant, and second sous chef, Jaime Bushell, has previously worked at Raymond Blanc's restaurant in Tunbridge Wells.

Rumbling bellies will be satiated with a variety of appetisers, such as feta stuffed olives, mini Swedish salami bites and dangerously more-ish mixed vegetable crisps (from £1.50). Expect to see starters such as Sussex smokie with a gratin of leek and cheddar (£5), baked avocado glazed with goat's cheese and served with a celeriac rosti (£4.50) and a variety of hearty, home-made soups (£4.25). Save room for hearty main dishes such as King fish (£11.25) and beef bourguignon with a thyme dumpling, both served with baby potatoes and seasonal veg. Sunday roasts include roast sirloin of 21 day beef with Yorkshires, roast potatoes and a selection of seasonal veg (£9) or roast chicken with a chipolata, bread sauce, and all the trimmings (£9).

Finally, desserts here are a must. The rum-laced spotted dick and fruit crumbles are delicious and the chocolate trio (£4.50) is divine. Featuring two miniature pots of creamy peppermint and chocolate mousse, a dark chocolate and

Irish Cream brûlée and a moist chocolate brownie torte, this dessert alone makes a trip to the Sussex Ox worthwhile. Hurry before the menu changes.

A range of real ales including Harvey's, Summer Lightning and Hophead are available, while an extensive wine list covers all palates, from a French Sauvignon Blanc to a Chilean Merlot to Champagne.

Review by [Xenia Gregoriadis](#)