



The Angel Inn

There's no better antidote to the working week than the perfect Sunday lunch, reckons KATE AUTHERS

As our economy teeters on the edge, one thing guaranteed to glue together the cracks – at least for a few hours on a Sunday – is the tradition of the Great British Sunday Lunch.

The promise of a traditional roast manages to achieve what seems impossible on any other day: it brings together family and friends,

offering the perfect social antidote to the too-busy working week.

And while the nation's love of a traditional roast is unfaltering, even earning us the nickname of 'les rosbifs' from the French, there is many a fierce debate on just how it should be done.

I'm of the school of thought that it always tastes better when someone else is doing the cooking. And until a

week or so ago, I was totally sold on the idea that you can't beat a mum-cooked Sunday lunch chez Authers – the secrets of which are more closely guarded than the family silver – but that was before I'd been to The Angel Inn at Heytesbury. (Sorry, mum.)

It's been on my must-try list for a while now – to my mind it seems they have a better rep now than when Antony Worrall Thompson

was executive head chef, although rumour has it, he never actually set foot inside the kitchen.

So it was with our favourite meal of the week in mind that we took a drive just outside Warminster to this pretty 16th-century coaching inn. Greeted by the welcoming sights of a tabby cat curled up on the bar jostling for space with a couple of locals out for a Sunday pint, this is exactly the sort of place I'd hoped it would be.

The dining room too, has the homely touch: lovely exposed brick work, flagstone floors and exposed beams, with odd shaped glasses and silverware decorating the walls.

Having forgone the usual bacon sandwich in favour of the three-course lunch, we didn't waste any time setting our sights on the menu – one of those rare breeds where you can't decide what you want because it all looks so tempting.

I went down the fishy route to start and opted for hot and cold smoked trout (£6.50). Light, fresh and perfectly executed, the 'hot' half of the duo had a lovely, slightly sweet home-smoked flavour, which worked brilliantly with the silky texture of the cold trout, peppery rocket, tiny piquant capers and sweet tang of the baked lemon dressing. The balance of flavours and seasoning were spot on, not to mention the ideal partner to my Grove Mill Estate New Zealand sauvignon blanc.

The Lawyer, meanwhile, went for the guilty pleasure of a Scotch egg to rival all Scotch eggs. His duck egg, caramelised apple and black pudding version, £7, was elevated so far above



The instantly welcoming surrounds of the bar area

staple comfort food levels, it was something of a revelation.

"The crisp shell gave way to godly black pudding sausage meat dotted with sweet apple and mushroom, encasing perfectly-cooked egg that split its golden elixir with velvet grace." I purloined a forkful (OK, or three) and would have to agree, that whoever came up with the combo is nothing short of a genius.

For mains, we both went down the obvious route and plumped for the roast, of which there were a generous three options on offer. (For those not wedded to tradition, you'll find the likes of pan-fried salmon fillet with chorizo sauce vierge, steaks to beer-battered fish and chips and tagliatelle to tempt you.)

Our plates, mine a roast leg of

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Devonshire lamb, the Lawyer's, roast West Country beef and Yorkshire pudding, both £12.50, came groaning under the weight of their goodness.

As the inevitable silence ensued, it was almost instantly apparent that this was verging on the best Sunday roast I've ever eaten. To hell with the sentimental nonsense, the roasties were perfect: buttery, crisp, fluffy beauties. The accompanying veg, from individual pots of cauliflower cheese to buttery swede were fresh, lightly seasoned and invigorating. Even the homemade sauces, mine, mint and his, horseradish, "creamy piqued perfection," did a grand job of being way more than just pretty accompaniments. The lamb, flavoured with garlic and rosemary was meltingly soft, while the beef, was "sumptuous, utterly."

We shoehorned in a rich and moreish sticky toffee pud. (£5.50) before going to walk it all off at Stourhead. I'd recommend a visit to The Angel on any day of the week, and on the strength of its Scotch egg alone, but for a Sunday roast that's nigh-on impossible to beat, The Angel's all set to become my new local. Just don't show this magazine to my mother. **SL**

VISITING DETAILS

Opening hours: Lunch served from 12 noon daily and dinner from 6.30pm daily (except Sunday). Booking in advance is advisable

We visited: Sunday lunchtime
Prices: Starters, £5-£7; mains £9-£19.50; desserts £4.50-£5.50

Do they welcome children?

Well-behaved ones, yes, and dogs on leads

Vegetarian choice:

Good, at least two per course

Disabled access:

A few small steps to negotiate

Wine list:

Extensive

The Angel Inn
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