

Times restaurant of the week

The Rose & Crown, Warwick ★★★★★



HAVING taste-tested The Almanack a few weeks back, I figured it was only right and proper to see how Jeremy Kynaston's former hostelry, Warwick's ever-popular Rose & Crown, was shaping up to life without him under the stewardship of new manageress Evelin Rae.

Very nicely as it happens. Busy and friendly as ever, the glowing windows of the Market Square pub were particularly welcoming on a cold winter's evening, with drinkers cheerily gathered in the front bar area and a packed restaurant round the back.

A good start, and my partner and I had a couple of good starters too, mixing and matching between the king prawn sizzler in garlic butter – the garlic far from overpowering – and chicken and leek spring rolls with sweet chilli dip. The leek element did raise minor concerns – the traditional Welsh veggie is hardly a staple of oriental cuisine, nor a favourite of mine – but again the flavours were agreeably subtle and the sauce especially tasty.

We each opted for a fish main course; my partner giving a huge thumbs up to the pan-fried cod with herb fondant potato, wilted spinach and tomato tarragon creme fraiche (more of a mouthful to say than to eat), while I did even better with fillets of sea bass (fabulously herby) with fat chips, herb salad and aioli. As at The Almanack the fat chips were a bit thin on the ground (why are there always six?) so I ordered a few more on the side, and the overall dish was definitely somefin' special.

But not as good as the pud. Nothing was, and no dessert had been all year. My partner had mulled cherries with cinnamon ice cream, which was perfectly lovely, but my iced parfait apple crumble with custard (featuring a guest appearance by some stem ginger) was the undoubted highlight of the night – creamy, lovely and the poshest most decadent of a classic old pud. The ultimate comfort food in a hugely comfortable venue. Highly recommended.

Steve Adams