

Wednesday, September 1, 2010

# Souped-up English for all that ales you

**F**IRST, my neighbour told me about the delicious braised pork cheeks he ate when he visited this new restaurant.

Then I read online about the unusual idea of matching up dishes with beer rather than wine.

This was worth checking out.

Entering the cavernous venue on a wet Thursday night, the first thing we noticed was that it was packed. It was dominated by huge copper tanks in which the beers are brewed – looking like something from an HG Wells novel. Overhead was a vast wave-like ‘chandelier’ made up of 1966 (exactly) brown beer bottles. I was amused to be offered the beer list before the food menu – which followed soon after.

To start, I had the seared Dorset scallops with summer squash puree with tomato and cumin dressing – this was matched with a Blanche de



Bruxelles white beer that reminded me of apricots. The scallops were nicely browned outside and soft in the middle, the sauce giving a pleasant spicy kick.

My friend had tomato and whipped goat’s cheese salad. Being more traditional, he chose wine over beer – a mid-price sauvignon blanc that he nursed through the whole meal and declared “delicious” – the starter was pretty good too, he said.

Obviously for main I went for the pork cheeks braised in Meantime

pale ale (brewed on site) and pork belly – this came with pureed potatoes and glazed baby carrots – but the glutton in me demanded a side order of big, fat chips. This was washed down with more Meantime pale ale.

The course exceeded expectations. I’d never eaten pork cheeks before. The cut reminded me of kidney, had a similar velvety texture and intense flavour. The belly was great too with fantastic, crispy crackling.

My friend decided to try something new too: sampling grouse for the first

time. This he declared to be full of flavour but would have preferred to be asked how he’d like it as it was a little too rare for him.

We were both stuffed but felt we ought to have a dessert for review purposes, so went for the light option of raspberry beer jelly with summer fruits and vanilla cream.

This can only be described as ‘posh jelly’ – full of flavour and the ideal way to round off a meal of what we dubbed ‘souped-up English with a Mediterranean twist’.

Go on, pig out.

Nick Rutherford

**REVIEW:** The Old Brewery

The Old Royal Naval College, SE10 9LW  
tel: 0203 327 1280

**Prices:** Starters from £4.50, mains from £10.50, desserts £5

**Food:** ★★★★★  
**Service:** ★★★★★  
**Value:** ★★★★★  
**Choice:** ★★★★★  
**Venue:** ★★★★★



## FOOD

FOR THOUGHT



**Chef Beyond**  
is head chef at  
**Royal China**  
**Westferry**

## Mushroom for shared joy

**O**VER the years I have cooked for a vast number of different nationalities in China and the UK, with diners in each country highlighting very different preferences in flavours and tastes.

For instance, young western diners enjoy spicy chicken dishes, such as spicy chicken hot pot, while the Chinese will order more vegetable-based dishes.

I have also found that East Londoners are hypocritical in their love of one dish, eel. Despite being in the heartland and the birthplace of jellied eel, eel dishes are the least popular dishes on the menu with customers.

However, if you head to China Town steamed eel in blackbean sauce is a delicacy among the Chinese community.

Another great difference is that the Chinese diners will eat more adventurous dishes such as chicken feet, while UK diners will shy away. Despite the differences, wild mushrooms with butternut squash is loved by all. It is a quick and easy dish to make, with delicious textures and taste, plus it is nearly fat free



### WILD MUSHROOMS WITH BUTTERNUT SQUASH

**Ingredients:**  
500g mixed mushrooms  
3 slices butternut squash (sliced thinly length ways)  
½ tsp oyster sauce  
½ tsp chicken powder  
1 teacup chicken stock  
Pinch of cornflower to thicken sauce

#### Method:

1. Cut three thin slices of butternut squash and steam for 5minutes, until soft. Lay the butternut squash in the bottom of the serving dish.
2. Heat some oil in the wok and fry the mushrooms for a few seconds, so they are just coated. Then run the mushrooms under hot water.
3. Place the chicken stock, oyster sauce and chicken powder into the wok and mix together.
4. Add the mushrooms into the sauce and if it appears thin add a pinch of cornflower to thicken. Also, add a couple drops of dark soy sauce to give the sauce a golden brown look.
5. Place on top of the butternut squash and serve.



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