

Eating out

Where to go this June



food
reviews

The Bridge

A beautiful 17th century coaching inn, built from Cotswold stone that glows the colour of buttercups in the sun, The Inn at Fossebridge is at the very bottom of a steeply-sided river valley in the heart of foodie Gloucestershire.

Operating as a hotel and country pub with food for many years, in March the inn's ambitious young head chef Matt Wardman introduced a new fine dining concept, which is served on Thursday to Saturday evenings and called The Bridge. It's housed in the hotel's beautifully furnished regency breakfast room, where it's impossible not to feel like an extra from a BBC Jane Austen adaptation.

For the first two months, Wardman tried out a limited range of fine dining dishes. Now, an extended à la carte set of dishes is available.

Local produce is at the heart of his approach: duck eggs come from the birds you can see waddling around the four acre garden, watercress from the banks of the river running through it. Anything the chef can't gather himself by nipping out of the kitchen door is sourced, if possible, from Gloucestershire's enviable array of local producers.

As you might expect from the the elegant setting, Wardman's food is intricate and exquisitely presented. Sliced roast oniglet looks like a still life on its bed of fresh peas, baby broad beans, wafer thin slices of radish, carrots, asparagus, pearl onions and shards of spring onion. Follow the main course with boat-shaped quenelles of creamy goat's cheese with sails of homemade walnut and raisin bread and celery stick masts in a sea of halved peeled grapes.

Despite the opulent surroundings, friendly service and a lack of airs and graces makes The Bridge a relaxing place to dine, and the refined handling of the county's culinary bounty makes this new venture a satisfyingly delicious destination too. *RW*

The Inn at Fossebridge,
Fossebridge, Fosseway, near Cirencester,
Gloucestershire, GL54 3JS.
Tel. 01285 720721.
www.cotswolds-country-pub-hotel.co.uk

Sample menu

Starters

- Cornish crab and Coln Valley smoked salmon tian
- Wild mushroom cappuccino

Mains

- Roast beef oniglet, fondant potato, spring vegetables, shallot puree, thyme jus
- Panfried wild bass fillet, Jersey royal potato cake, confit cherry tomatoes, balsamic syrup
- Risotto primavera, goat's cheese, red vein sorrel

Puds

- Glazed lemon tart
- Cardamom pannacotta, rhubarb, stem ginger

Introductory prix fixe,
two courses £14.95,
three courses £18.95