

The Pickwick Inn, St Ann's Chapel

The Pickwick Inn is a village pub that has had a number owners and a number of face-lifts over the years, and its latest presentation is as a contemporary Italian themed restaurant. A clear sign can be seen on a wall that faces you as you come into the hamlet of St Ann's Chapel, where the crossroads signposts the roads to Bigbury, Ringmore, Modbury, or Easton. Wonderfully, its ample car park makes for an easy visit.

Inside, pictures of pasta, people, scenery, motor vehicles and everything Italian, adorn the walls. Quotes like this one from Christopher Morley, are printed on overhead beams 'no man is lonely eating spaghetti it requires so much attention'. And a quip from Yogi Bear adds to the Latin flavour, 'you better cut my pizza into 4, I'm not hungry enough to eat 6'.

The current 'mine host' John Stevens' pub style is apparent here. Leather couches set around a blazing log fire have his decor fingerprint along with the distinctively Italian flavour. It could be said that the warmth of the hospitality is no less than the warmth from the grate. The setting for alfresco dining in summer is a landscaped terrace garden.

The Pickwick Inn invites drop-in trade seven days a week. People leaving the beach at Bigbury-on-Sea will find this family friendly pub on their way back to the A379. The bar is dog friendly with hooks for leads to stop your pet from wandering.

The menu provides a good range of basic Italian cuisine and also English dishes. At our table, we enjoyed a fine spaghetti bolognese and notably good fish and chips, while the range of pizzas brought smiles of approval from teenagers who felt comfortable in the family atmosphere of the early evening meal. The lunch menu is creative and includes lite dishes.

Sunday lunch provides a traditional English roast, which at £8.95 is the same price as the spaghetti carbonara and the homemade 8oz burger (topped with plum tomatoes, dill pickle and lettuce).

A certificate of excellence, awarded by Trip Advisor, hangs on the wall. It's a useful recommendation for this restaurant and bar, which should have also benefitted since the demise of the Rose & Crown in Bigbury village. You can book on line and if your visit is between 9 and 11 p.m. on the first Friday of any month, you will be treated to live music from a local band.

Check tide times and levels before using the tidal road from Aveton Gifford into St Ann's Chapel from the Thurlestone side as that road floods at high tide. If you time it right, you could use it for the return journey as well. The detour via Ashford adds 3 miles to your journey, and the main road via Harraton Cross 5 miles.

For more information, or to make a booking call 01548 810 310 or send an e-mail to info@pickwick-inn.co.uk.

You can also catch the flavour of the place from their website: www.pickwick-inn.co.uk and from the advert in South Hams Eating Out Guide 2014/15, a useful free handbook from S. Hams Newspapers.