

Maltsters Arms

The Fish Pub on the Dart at Bow Creek, Tuckenhay

There's a place to eat south of Totnes that has unique character and charm. Beautifully located beside Bow Creek is a Devon pub and restaurant with local ales and ciders, as well as very fresh fish served in a style that's delicious and not fussy. 'Keep it fresh and keep it simple' is the adage. Maltsters Arms is at Bow Creek on the River Dart between Dittisham and Totnes.

As you enter the historic 18th century riverside inn and close the door to shut out winter's chill, your attention is likely to be drawn to The Dart Cavern immediately on your left. Red flames from burning logs in the grate greeted us from that cosy room. Smiling faces of young diners seated there, added cheer to the fire's warmth.

Further inside the pub there are tables alongside the well stocked bar. From there you may enjoy the hub of the pub as you eat, but the prime restaurant overlooks the creek. We had a table booked in the Keith Floyd room. It's on the riverside with lovely Bow Creek views. Keith Floyd's travel books are displayed on the walls and the tales they tell are of the restaurant in the 60s. Keith Floyd wrote up culinary ideas from around the world and presented the first ever TV cooking program.

We order from the menu and, while waiting for our meal, look out over the relaxed river scene where rental canoes glide on its slow moving, murky, tidal water. Kingfishers can be seen diving for fish as the tide comes in. Grey Herons walk around in the mud when the tide is low just waiting to snatch passing fish. There is tranquillity.

We ask for nibbles and have a starter bowl of whitebait, with a dip, to share. We appreciated the soft lighting from T-lights, oil burners, and filament light bulbs overhead, as well as fresh flowers on the table.

One of us ordered skate wing with capers - served with roast new potatoes, broccoli spears and French beans that were all beautifully cooked.

Our other order was smoked haddock on a bed of bubble-and-squeak and topped with a poached duck egg. It was perfectly prepared and reminiscent of a childhood favourite.

Other fish choices include oysters, haddock, scallops and sole, but if it's meat you prefer, some choices are lasagne, duck breast, steak, or seriously popular burgers.

There is a function room downstairs where shooting parties happen. Yacht-naming ceremonies and other private functions are held in 'The Quarterdeck'.

Outside, patio tables along the river bank are in a fabulous setting especially for summer. And if you are into boating, check the tide times and pre-order refreshments to be served on the poop-deck of your yacht as you moor up.

Prices:

Starters are £4.50 upwards; Mains are £12 – £20; Puddings are around £6.

Sunday lunch is £8.50 for a local roast meat dinner; £12 for two courses.

Directions: From Thurlestone, take the Totnes Road.

Turn right 2 miles after the Dartmouth turnoff (BP station) at Northpark corner.

It is sign-posted Cornworthy. Follow the Cornworthy signs along the Devon lane.

After two miles turn left at the sign for Tuckenhay with just ¼ mile to go.

You'll pass mill buildings on the right before a white wall above shrubs shows the Maltsters Arms sign: A fish on a bicycle. For more details call 01803 732350