



The
Vanilla
Reader
Review

The Swan

Stratford
St Mary

3 course meal £25-£30

**The Swan, Lower St,
Stratford St Mary,
CO7 6JR**

01206 321244

www.stratfordswan.com

The Swan was a wonderful find. Chef Steven Miles (formerly of The British Larder) has created an original and very creative menu which was tempting from start to finish and cooked with the best, fresh local ingredients. This was a food experience we hadn't had in a long time.

What's unique about the Swan is that every dish has been matched with a recommended choice of wine or beer and the team here are passionate, knowledgeable and helpful with their suggestions. With over 100 bottled beers on The Swan's list, as well as an exquisite wine list (which includes an array of sherries), we welcomed the friendly suggestions.

To begin (after some delicious home roasted nuts), Charles chose the pig's head croquette, parsley, caper & raisin salad which came with a home-made pork scratching. I chose Mrs Kirkham's Lancashire rarebit, pickled pears, onion jam & Watercress salad.

The other starters were equally tempting and manager Jane Dorber treated us to tasters of the roast carrot and star anise soup (with homemade bread) and the marinated herring, roast beetroot, horseradish cream,

served with sourdough granary (again, homemade). With the herring came a glass of Taffel Akvavit, an aniseed & caraway seed flavoured liqueur described by assistant manager Ed as the Scandinavian equivalent of whisky – not for the faint hearted!

To follow, Charles chose the braised lamb shoulder, served with spiced lentils, turnip puree and a small lamb samosa, which he described as 'melt in the mouth' delicious. My choice was the hake fillet, served on a crisp garlic and parsley croquette and with razor clams, which I enjoyed with a superb glass of Greywacke Sauvignon Blanc.

To finish we enjoyed the bitter chocolate and salted caramel tart (served with a New Zealand dessert wine, Forrest Estate Botrytised Riesling) and a hazelnut and carrot pudding with coconut cream.

The Swan was completely charming. Dating from 1532, it was once one of the '12 mile' coaching inns on the road to London and a regular haunt of John Constable. Jane and Ed and the team have restored it perfectly, including the gardens (where 100 hops have been planted) and the river frontage. There are more plans in the pipeline and we look forward to returning.

REVIEWER: **PENNY ARBUTHNOT**

