

Scrumptious lunch on a glorious day

QUINTESSENTIAL floppy-fringed Englishman Hugh Grant got his wicked way with Andie MacDowell in a suite in Four Weddings and a Funeral at this Old Amersham hostelry.

The most risqué thing my guests and I had to do on our visit to The Crown Inn was to begrudgingly sidestep the chocolate-infused dessert menu, although it did prove harder at lunchtime than expected.

This 16th-century building staged the tryst between the Hollywood pair way back in 1994 and, 17 years later (has it really been that long?), The Crown Inn still has a cosy, romantic air about it.

Created by Ilse Crawford, whose CV boasts decking out New York's Soho House no less, the Crown's *raison d'être* is the provenance of its ingredients, which are locally sourced – where possible.

Normally a glass of chilled wine would have complemented such an inviting menu, but our visit coincided with one of the hottest days of the year so far so please forgive me for

lowering the tone a little and plumping for an ice-cold beer to accompany my two courses.

Opening with two delicately prepared fishcakes, which were moist and coated in crispy breadcrumbs, the softness of the fish was given a kick by a tangy mayonnaise.

I have always been a sucker for trying something new on a menu, so when I saw the intriguingly titled roast muntjac – after seeking clarification, I realised that it was deer – I dived straight in.

Cooked beautifully pink and accompanied by lashings of smooth mashed potato, it proved a fine choice.

My dining partners homed in on the risi e bisì risotto and duck with crispy potatoes respectively, and their subsequent silence while both plates were swiftly cleared spoke volumes.

At just under £20 for two courses, it is perhaps a tad expensive for a lunch menu, and the wait between dishes when (lunch) time is of the essence, a touch long. Yet it was difficult to

quibble when local produce is so tenderly prepared and placed before you.

● The Crown Inn restaurant is open from noon until 3pm and 6pm to 10pm. It also has an all-day menu in the bar (7am to 10pm).
16 High Street, Amersham | 01494 721 541 | www.thecrownamersham.com

■ **CRACKING FARE:** The restaurant at The Crown Inn and (below) the exterior

Contributed

