

Since opening in June 2004, the Hammer and Pincers pub and dining rooms, in picturesque Wymeswold, has been delighting diners and critics alike – and having whiled away an evening there, it's easy to see why. The attractive venue combines charming original features with stylish contemporary decor, and boasts an enticing modern European menu, based around innovative combinations of quality seasonal ingredients.

These are sourced locally where possible and everything from the bread to the ice cream is made in-house.

When we arrived on Saturday evening, we received a warm welcome and sat down in the bar to peruse the gastronomic selection.

Of the four of us, just myself and Simon had a starter – mum and dad preferring to leave room for dessert.

Simon went for the pan-fried wild mushroom and soft poached egg, toasted onion bread and sauce béarnaise (£5.95). This was a generous plateful of robust flavours.

I began with smoked bacon and Jerusalem artichoke soup with pommery mustard chantilly and truffle oil (£6.50). This gets top marks for presentation, as the soup was poured out of a teapot into the bowl in front of me!

After just the right amount of time, our next course arrived. I'd chosen the hake fillet wrapped in parma ham, served with crushed minted peas and new potatoes (£18.25). The menu said it was accompanied by clams, but they hadn't been up to chef's standards, so were replaced with scallops – even better!

I slowly savoured each sweet morsel – the hake was cooked beautifully, and its naturally mild taste was given a boost by the parma ham. The minted crushed peas were a delight.

Simon's cumin-coated lamb rump (£17.95) was tender and flavoursome,

Hammer time

U can't fault this! BECKY JONES finds some culinary perfection in the picturesque village of Wymeswold

while the accompanying potato and spinach curry and cauliflower puree had just the right level of spiciness.

Mum was delighted with her Collingtons beef fillet (£19.50) which was well done, as requested, and the oxtail hot-pot was rich and tasty. Dad's porcini mushroom and asparagus strudel (£14.95) was packed with fresh flavours, and served with a succulent pesto linguine and confit of vine tomatoes.

Simon and I decided to share a selection of ice cream and sorbet – the raspberry sorbet being our favourite.

Mum's decadent hot chocolate fondant (£6.25) looked and tasted stunning, accompanied by raspberry sorbet, while dad's poached pears (£6.25) went down well, although he felt the cinnamon waffles could have been spicier.

Including a round of drinks from the bar and a couple of coffees, our bill came to £111. It might sound like a lot, but after that meal, and that service, it felt like pretty good value for money.

FIVE-STAR VERDICT

HAMMER AND PINCERS, 5 EAST ROAD, WYMESWOLD

Phone: 01509 880735

Value ★★★★★
Service ★★★★★
Atmosphere ★★★★★
Food ★★★★★
Overall ★★★★★



GOOD TASTE: Jon Straw and Bridget Gray enjoy dessert at The Hammer and Pincers, which impressed our reviewer

PICTURE: LIONEL HEAP