

<< – about 5 miles, organic milk and cream from prize-winning cattle, from udder to table in a matter of hours...”

Wow, I thought, you couldn't ask for more from your food. Except, you could. Because five out of seven at the table were kosher. And if you're kosher then it doesn't matter how organic, how free-range, how pampered and massaged, how local, how rare and tasty a piece of meat is, if it isn't permitted in the Torah, slaughtered by a *shochet* and drained of blood, it isn't fit for eating.

So a lot of fish and veggie options got eaten (the kind of stuff I eat in a non-organic joint). Home-smoked Wymeswold trout with sweetcorn blinis and cucumber salsa was the closest thing to *echt heimische* nosh on the menu, and was a great success with Dinah. The twice-baked goat's cheese soufflé, alas, she found “inadequately goaty”. Tuna carpaccio was very good, very fresh fish, sliced fine and beautifully presented with a tower of crab, which may well, as it boasted, have been Cornish but still gets short shrift from Leviticus.

For the record, I had confit rabbit in Parma ham, which is the worst kind of *trayf* (non-kosher food) wrapped around the second worst. It doesn't come uglier for Jews than swine stuffed with swarming rodent – it's the one dish God would have prohibited if He'd been limited for time and space, which He famously wasn't. (Hare rather than rabbit is forbidden in the Bible, along with camel and the always popular rock badger, but the rabbit prohibition is understood.) Still, it was beautifully done, with a sweet little tarragon beignet and horseradish cream.

I couldn't remember what the others ate for their mains, so I called Dinah's husband, Peter, to ask him: “How would I know?” he replied. “I was too busy pouring pork into my mouth.” That's what happens when a man who keeps a kosher household for the sake of his wife is offered pork when eating out. He drools, he slobbers, he groans with desire and loses all grip on his higher faculties. The fact that it was organic, local, free-range, was neither here nor there. Once he is cut free from one set of rules he's not going to go looking for more.

Peter loved it but said he didn't think it tasted any different from pork that has lived less well. It came with dauphinois, garlic spinach and morels. “What are morels?” asked Peter, who is no gastronome. The opportunity to aim a beautifully timed morels/morals pun at a man in the very act of mocking the beliefs of his forefathers was there, it was right there... but I just told him they were mushrooms.

I had a fillet of “home-killed, 28-day-matured, locally reared” beef, and it was

stunningly good. I'm not usually a fillet man, but this was roaring with flavour and age and soft, grainy texture. Downtable, the seabass was very much enjoyed, its accompaniment of shellfish provençal having been left off because, of course, “all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers... shall be an abomination unto you”. And good, fresh, muscular halibut, lemon-roasted with saffron potatoes, was popular, too. Jews love a nice bit of halibut.

They also love a nice pudding and Peter thought that the lemon grass sorbet was “un-bee-lievable”, even though it did not contain pork. The staff were sweet, the conversion from pub is unshowy, cosy, candlelit, quite romantic and best of all, when we asked for water the waitress said, “Tap?” I guess she must be a fundamentalist, just like me. ■

### HAMMER & PINCERS

5 East Road, Wymeswold, Leicestershire (01509 880735)

**Meat/fish:** 9

**Cooking:** 7

**Service:** 8

**Water:** 10

**SCORE:** 8.5

**Price:** seven people, three courses, five bottles: £350, including service

### The Oak

137 Westbourne Park Road, London W2 (020-7221 3355)

Having in the recent past been both an excellent restaurant cheffed by Mark Broadbent and a private members' club, the upstairs here is now a public cocktail bar and is really rather jolly, quieter on a summer's evening than the Cow and the Westbourne and with perfectly OK tapas, nice sofas, quite pleasant barmen. Downstairs is still a pizza place, but I had passable vitello tonnato and good grilled chicken.

### The Wrestlers

98 North Road, London N6 (020-8340 4297)

Ordinary Highgate pub opposite Lubetkin's astonishing Thirties Highpoint buildings, I dropped in for a pint the other day and found them doing decent tapas – morcilla with chickpeas, meatballs, chorizo sandwiches, pimientos de padron – and you can sit outside more easily than at the heaving Flask round the corner.

*E-mail feedme2@thetimes.co.uk if you know somewhere nice, and maybe we'll go there together*

## THE GREEN KITCHEN SAUSAGES UNDER COVER



A rummage round the Green Kitchen cookery library, followed by some clicking round the web, has yielded a general consensus on the cooking of sausages.

**Frying:** 10–20 minutes, very slowly, with regular turning. **Grilling:** 10–15 minutes, regular turning. **Roasting (very good method):** 20–40 minutes at 180–190°C/ Gas 4–5, turning once.

Discussion concluded? Not in the Green Kitchen. As usual, no one has mentioned the magic lid. When you cook sausages under cover, you cut the energy-consuming portion of the cooking time to a measly three minutes.

The challenges of cooking sausages are twofold. One lies in their cylindrical shape: the tube never touches a flat cooking surface along anything more than around 45 degrees of its circumference. If the sausage has a comma-like curve, the curved surfaces never touch the pan. This is one reason to use the grill or oven, where contact with a hot surface isn't an issue.

The second challenge lies in the need for heat control: it has to be hot

### COOKING SAUSAGES UNDER COVER IS QUICK, EASY AND GREEN AS THE HILLS

or prolonged enough to brown the skins deeply, but not so hot as to blacken them before the insides are thoroughly cooked. The lid meets those challenges.

Generously film a stout frying pan, preferably non-stick, with vegetable oil. Put in the sausages, leaving a bit of space between them. Lid on, heat up high, wait for noisy sizzling. Turn the heat down slightly and set a timer for one minute.

When the timer goes off, turn the sausages (watch for spluttering fat) and replace the lid. Set the timer for one minute. At the minute's end, turn the heat off and leave the sausages for two more minutes. Residual heat will ensure they're cooked through. (Technical note: pork is safe to eat when still medium-rare.)

There. Perfect sausages in five minutes, with just three of energy use. Quick, easy, and green as the hills.

**RICHARD EHRLICH**

See Body & Soul for Anna Shepard's weekly Eco-warrior

