

# Gastro Pub is the Recipe for Success at the Queen Ann Pub

## Locals at the Queen Anne pub near Buxton gave the thumbs up to The Authentic Food Company's new Gastro-Pub range in the latest Pub Food product trial.

Gastro pubs and Gastro-style food have rocketed in number and in popularity over the last year making this a lucrative market, as consumers are increasingly looking for traditional 'home-cooked' style dishes. To meet this demand, The Authentic Food Company launched a new range of Gastro-style, hearty meat products earlier this year, combining traditional foods with international, contemporary ingredients.

For a week, the Queen Anne pub, Great Hucklow, trialed three products from this new range – Moroccan Lamb Shank with Chick Peas and Apricots, Cornfed Chicken Supreme in Wild Mushroom Sauce and Caramelised Pork Hock in Spicy Peking Glaze. The Authentic Food Company created and supplied menus, which were displayed in the pub alongside the usual food offering.

Situated in the very heart of the English countryside, the pub usually attracts tourists, ramblers and campers looking to get away from city life to the quaint village of Great Hucklow. With a rustic feel to the interior, the pub has a large beer garden, overlooking the stunning Derbyshire peaks. Run by Malcolm and Stella Hutton, the freehouse was keen to try out the new products on the locals, to encourage them to consider the venue for food as well as drinks.

Malcolm and Stella have had the business since 2001. Malcolm manages the bar while Stella attends to the food orders in the kitchen. Food, usually prepared and cooked to order, is served at lunch and dinner-time and usually consists of filling pub favourites, such as haddock and chips, and steak & ale pie. The number of covers varies but usually goes up during the summer months, as more tourists flock to the Peaks. With an average of 25 covers per day, Stella has her work cut out. Takings from food account for 25% of total turnover.

Stella prepares some meals from scratch and for more complex dishes, she buys in partly prepared quality main courses. She was willing to try out these dishes as they would be practical over the busy summer period. The menu ran for a week during the summer and Stella served the main courses with a choice of rice or potatoes and seasonal vegetables. Each dish was offered at £9.95 with accompaniments. Guests were impressed with all three dishes but the Lamb Shank was the favourite – a tender fore shank of lamb with a chunky Moroccan-style sauce.

Stella commented: "It was good to be able to experiment with these new dishes. They

were quite easy to store and prepare, the cooking instructions were clear, and the portion-sized pouches made them really easy to work with. It was relatively quick to cook the food and serve it up, without customers having to wait too long. They're also cost-effective for us as the accompaniments are quite simple and when customers come to us for a full meal, they usually have a couple of bottles of wine to go with it – so it's money in the bar till too!

"All the products were suitable for lunch and dinner-time menus so were quite versatile for our customers. They went down well with the locals, and tourists were glad to get a bit of home-style cooking after a long day of walking".

Local resident Sheila Taylor commented, "I really enjoyed the lamb, it was a good portion of meat and the sauce was just the right consistency. Rice was a good accompaniment, but cous cous would go well too, as it's a Moroccan dish. The quality of the meat was really good and the taste matched the description on the menu. I wasn't sure about the combination of chick peas and apricots at first, but it was a really tasty sauce, a bit tangy with a sweet kick".

Irene Alcock, another regular at the Queen Anne added: "The sauces were very important with these dishes, they had quite a rich flavour but weren't too overpowering, and tasted really home-made. It was nice to have familiar meat dishes with a bit of a twist, and the spices gave the meat a nice aftertaste."

Malcolm commented, "All three dishes went down a treat all week. Both tourists and regulars liked the variety, and the quality of the products was really good. From the feedback we got, the food offered value for money and most of them have been back with friends to try the dishes again. I think they'd work well over winter too, as they are quite filling, hearty dishes".

Nik Basran from The Authentic Food Company comments: "Doing the trial was a great way to gain immediate reactions from a pub landlord and his customers. It was great to work with The Queen Anne pub as it has quite a mixture of customers and all the feedback has been taken on board.

"So far, our Gastro-Pub range has been extremely well received as it allows chefs to meet consumer demand for premium gourmet foods at an affordable price".

