

# Contemporary Country Cooking

A village pub which set its sights on becoming a boutique dining house has managed to combine the traditional atmosphere of a rural inn with an up-market bar and restaurant serving top class food. Photography: *LottieDesigns.com*



Once upon a time, at the heart of any close village community in Britain you would have been sure to find a welcoming pub that served up refreshing drinks, delicious food and good old fashioned banter. This is as true now, as it was in times gone by at The Coach and Horses in the picture-perfect village of Bolton-by-Bowland, which spoils those who enter with all three of these ingredients - in plentiful measure.

When co-owners Ross Heywood and Zak Aujla took on the challenge of transforming the traditional pub into a stylish boutique dining house, they had a vision to create an upmarket bar and restaurant and couldn't predict that their vision was soon

to change considerably, thanks to the overwhelming support of their new neighbours.

Before they had even completed their move to the village, Bolton-by-Bowland's tight knit community began to contact Ross and Zak to welcome them to the village and let them know the importance of the role that The Coach and Horses played in their rural village. On their arrival and after meeting with the villagers, it soon became clear that, in order to ensure the hub of the village remained a meeting point for the folk of Bolton-by-Bowland, their plans needed to be re-evaluated. Although the new décor of soft furnishings and modern artwork were to stay, the original idea to serve only bottled beers and pistachios and olives

as bar snacks were replaced with locally-produced draught ales and hand-cut crisps.

Talented head chef, Cassie Bond, has also designed the menu with the locals and out-of-town diners in mind by adding small contemporary twists, that would most usually be found in trendy city restaurants - traditional dishes made using the finest ingredients that Lancashire and Yorkshire have to offer. Dandelion and Burdock Glazed Roasted Ham, Egg and Champagne Battered Haddock and Smoked Local Belly of Pork with Scallops, Black Pudding, Smoked Pancetta and Celeriac Puree are just a few of the mouth-watering dishes that appear on the winter menu. Ross and Zak have even developed a traditional takeaway service so

that the community can enjoy the delights of The Coach and Horses' kitchen without having to leave their homes.

By maintaining its position as the soul of the beautiful village and by offering an amazing food and wine menu in stylish surroundings, The Coach and Horses succeeds, where so many other English pubs struggle, in providing a welcoming venue where both locals and non-locals can eat, drink and be merry. n

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