

The View review

Even before the shopping begins, Cassi Kingshott finds a not-to-be-missed treat



**The Silver Plough • White Hill • Pitton • near Salisbury • SP5 1DU
01722 712266 • www.silverplough.co.uk**

Joyce and Hughen Riley are the perfect hosts; friendly, relaxed, welcoming. The Silver Plough is a country-style pub with a fresh, home-cooked style menu, a skittles alley and bed and breakfast accommodation in two self-contained apartments adjacent to the pub.

Situated in the typically English village of Pitton, in the lush countryside just outside Salisbury, the pub is very much part of the thriving community. There's a village hall (which holds film nights), two schools, a church, tennis and theatre clubs, a post office store and the pub. The Silver Plough is surrounded by gorgeous little thatched cottages with a tiny railway station opposite.

Inside, the pub is deceptively large, airy and set on different levels, creating cosy areas. The walls are adorned with interesting memorabilia, collected by Joyce over the years, including a World War II 'survival kit' and a Military Cross in a frame containing a range of old medals.

On our way to the medieval city of Salisbury, a girl friend and I stopped at The Silver Plough for lunch and a good old chat before an afternoon of shopping. I chose the homemade salmon fishcakes with parsley sauce.

A classic English dish, it was accompanied by fresh vegetables – broccoli, carrots, courgettes and diced pan-fried potatoes with onions. 'Homemade' is a word all too frequently used as a food marketing tool so when you taste the real thing it's a delight. These fishcakes were full of chunky pieces of salmon in a moist filling and the breadcrumb coating was beautifully crisp. The two-cake portion was extremely generous.

Likewise, my vegetarian friend chose the locally smoked cheddar and leek tart. This was offered as a starter or main course option. Choosing this dish as a main course resulted in a man-sized serving of two savoury tarts, together with new potatoes and a very fresh mixed salad. The cheese had a strong flavour perfectly complemented by the leek and rich, crumbly shortcrust pastry.

The Silver Plough serves cask ales brewed by Hall & Woodhouse, family brewers from Blandford in Dorset. As we were on our way to indulge in some serious retail therapy we did the sensible thing, resisted temptation, and kept to water with our meal, and coffee after delicious puddings.



Homemade salmon fishcakes with parsley sauce

I was delighted to see profiteroles on the menu and couldn't resist. Homemade, these light, fluffy little choux buns, filled with thick cream and drenched in a rich chocolate sauce, invoked sweet memories of this classic Seventies confection. My guest was equally delighted with her choice of trio of Belgian chocolate mousse, served in a tall glass and topped with a little physalis. It reminded her, she said, of being a child and having a knickerbocker glory as a treat. This 'trio' was sophisticated dark-, milk- and white-chocolate layers.

The Silver Plough is very much a family run pub. Joyce runs the front of house and husband Hughen is chef. Hughen used to play football professionally and memorabilia of his career is on display. On the day we visited, their son, Christian, was sous chef for the day.

Joyce and Hughen are obviously keen supporters of their local community and have set up a charity called Loving Care. They raise funds through various activities at the pub, which are used to good effect locally. The Silver Plough is clearly a popular local, as around £20,000 has been raised since the charity began a few years ago. ▽



Hughen and Joyce Riley, and their son Christian

Our two-course meal for two came to around £35, without drinks