



EATING AT

# THE PLOUGH at Kelmscott

Upon viewing **The Plough at Kelmscott**, for husband and wife team Sebastian and Lana Snow, it was love at second site

WORDS: TRISTAN O'HANA

**I**n 1871, as textile designer William Morris strolled musingly down Oxfordshire country bends en route to his lavish retreat in Kelmscott Manor, you wonder whether the renowned social activist popped into The Plough for a quick half before knuckling down on his next project.

Indeed, Morris is said to have drawn great inspiration from his chosen surroundings, describing the location to be almost organic, as if Kelmscott Manor had “grown up out of the soil”. Although focusing on his humble abode when coining such imageries, Morris could well have been talking about any number of the buildings that sit along the banks of this historic stretch of the River Thames.

The Plough at Kelmscott, a 17th century inn run by Sebastian and Lana Snow, could not be better placed for the history-seeking visitors to the area – as tourists and locals alike stroll (musingly or not) down the Cotswold village lanes towards the historic manor, they can't help but walk directly past the second site taken on by this husband and wife team. If such ramblers have any sense, they'll postpone the manor tour for a little longer and head into The Plough for a spot of lunch.

Avid readers of Pub & Bar will recognise the name Snow – this feature shone the spotlight on the couple's first pub a few issues back when we paid a visit to The Five Alls in Filkins. In The Plough, the Snows have their first freehold and are driving the same successes experienced in their debut Cotswold site, with Sebastian writing the menu, aided by head chef Matt Read, and Lana heading up front of house.

In an area steeped in tradition, The Plough at Kelmscott does a wonderful job at upholding the

foundations of a Great British countryside pub. Yes, its location is idyllic and the 17th century stone delivers a priceless authenticity that many new builds can only dream of replicating, but the ‘proper pub’ experience really begins once you've stepped through the door. After you've ducked a couple of taxidermies and stepped over crisscrossed dog leads – mind the pugs, they're easily missed – you'll find yourself propped up at the corner bar that sits adjacent to the front door. The Plough delivers a decent selection of drinks – craft ales, bottled beers and ciders will please most. Judging by the range, the Snows are clearly quite content in running their first free-of-tie business in the area. With the wines, discerning drinkers and casual quaffers will rest harmoniously quenched – a Domaine Fournillon Chablis is a wonderfully dry number (£39); both house

wines would sit happily alongside the majority of the menu (£18 each); and there's the particularly pleasing addition of William Chase's Côtes de Provence rosé (£32), perfect for sipping away a summer's day in The Plough's front garden.


If you fancy staying in the bar, rather than waiting for a table in the pub's back room restaurant, that's fine – there's a perfectly appealing bar menu to settle any dog-walking stomach rumbles (see box). However, it would be a shame not to at least glance at The Plough's à la carte, which changes on a daily basis.

Starters keep things simple and light. From a

‘Warm ham hock salad with Jerusalem artichokes, mint, peas, round lettuce and a poached egg’ (£7.50) to ‘Dressed Cornish crab with avocado on toast’ (£7.50) – the crab as fresh as the faces of the wrapped up walkers who just entered the bar. The portions are healthy and the prices are decent.

For the mains, it's tough (for me) to look beyond the beef perched proudly at the top of the list. ‘Roast rump of beef with Yorkshire pudding, roast potatoes and all the trimmings’ (£16) delivers everything you could want from a quintessential favourite. The meat pink, the Yorkshire large and fluffy, the trimmings plentiful. For those with a tendency to explore beyond the tried and tested, there's ‘Devilled lamb's kidneys with rosti potato and spinach’ (£14.50); ‘Crispy duck leg with goose fat potatoes, wild mushrooms, lentils and a crisp salad’ (£16); and ‘Monkfish, salmon and mussels stew with samphire, basil and garlic croutons’ (£18) – perfect for warming the proverbial cockles after a cold winter's walk along the Thames.

All the puddings bar one are priced at an appealing £6, which might just sway those waist-watching fence sitters. The list, which comprises dishes such as ‘Peach melba’; ‘Blackcurrant gin and tonic sorbet’; and ‘Sticky date and ginger pudding’ does a wonderful job at tempting diners into that often-overlooked third course.

The Snows have undoubtedly honed their country pub recipe. After visiting The Plough on a wet Sunday afternoon, it was clear that not even torrential rain would deter those seeking a hearty, local meal, with a side of tradition and a sprinkling of history. If Morris were still with us, he'd certainly be making the most of his local. 

## Eat at the bar The Plough at Kelmscott's bar menu

For those not thriving on the idea of a three-course sit down, The Plough offers a handy bar menu. Here are a few choice examples:

- Devils on horseback – £3.50
- Hogs pudding scotch egg with brown sauce – £4.50
- Kelmscott piglets in blankets – £3.95
- Mushrooms on country toast – £6.50
- Buck rarebit – £4
- The Plough's cracked pork burger and fries – £8.50

**The Plough, Kelmscott, Lechlade, Oxfordshire, GL7 3HG**  
01367 253543  
[theploughinnkelmscott.com](http://theploughinnkelmscott.com)

“All the puddings bar one are priced at an appealing £6, which might just sway those waist-watching fence sitters”