

Gastro Pub

The Royal Triangle is like a sort of reverse Bermuda Triangle – so instead of aircraft and ships disappearing under suspicious circumstances, tasteful Highgrove daisy grubbers, maple-handled planting trowels, traditional Sussex troughs in which to collect your earthy organic carrots and wooden apple crates simply appear. Just like that. And everything is painted that sautéed sage colour. It's like living in the brain of Lady Bamford of Daylesford fame, the high priestess of this sort of aesthetic.

The Potting Shed is two workers' cottages knocked together at the side of the road. It's been a pub for 200 years and is now a gastro-pub. I can hardly get past its door for stickers. Normally if I see an AA rosette, I run. But these colourful bits of plastic herald that it's a member of the Slow Food Supporters Scheme, in Harden's and the Good Pub Guide, Michelin, National Dining Pub of the Year, oh and there's another tax disc thing to flag up that it was highly recommended in the British Cheese Awards. So I know that it probably serves good food because so many farmers—market-types dispensing sticky bits of paper think so. Which is a comforting start to the evening.

Inside the Potting Shed takes the Royal Triangle idiom and gives it character. There are soaring ceilings that are marvellous unless you have a phobia about wooden wheelbarrows falling onto your head (there are some suspended on the ceiling). And there are exposed beams and trusses and Farrow and Balled brickwork and tongue and groove walls painted in Ageing Apple or Pickled Parsley or something. It has Victorian watercolours of Highland rivers and brightly plumed birds, scrubbed wooden tables, kilim-strewn sofas and almost-rickety school chairs and Edwardian wicker back ones, none of them matching. Plus a log basket brimming with logs and a roaring fire, or at least there would be if it weren't summer. It's like the country cottage of someone with a sense of humour, soul and style.

The staff are young, enthusiastic and fast; and there's a village pub/locals-making-jolly atmosphere. We order three starters, two mains, one side and one and a half puddings, because we're difficult. Our meal arrives soon and Elder Daughter pronounces her mussels served in coconut, spring onion and coriander broth, "Really exciting." I like my broad bean, broccoli and chili polenta cake only a little less than my excellent lambs sweetbreads – the latter are tender and flavoursome with a delicious selection of wild mushrooms and pungent, punchy garlic and nettle sauce.

My lamb and harissa burger is also flawless and the triple cooked chips, perfection. She has chargrilled sage and potato gnocchi which I find too gloopy and the herb too overpowering. But she loves it. Next is a salted caramel pot (hers) which appeals to anyone who wants a massive Rollo – she does – and hedgerow sorbet (hers) which should accompany raspberry cheesecake but she thinks better of having two entire puddings, probably because I'm writing up the meal. The food is freshly cooked and tastes as good as it sounds. The portions are hearty.

Additionally they're dog friendly – even putting dog biscuits on the bar, unless that's a tease for drunkards: "Mmm amazshing freeze dried vegetable crispsh these".





They change the menu monthly, plus produce is locally sourced and often grown in their veggie patch at the rear of the pub. I don't see a veg patch at the back, just a boules one. But with home-style cooking this good, I'd be happy to try their boules any day.

The bill comes to £60.35 for three courses and two (liquid) Virgin Marys. Excellent value. There's no point saying I'll go back. I call the following day to make another reservation – and they're full for days ahead. Let's just say, I hope to return.

Caroline Phillips is an award-winning freelance journalist based in London

*Photographs courtesy of The Potting Shed*



	Reviewer's Rating	★★★★☆
	Dogs Welcome	Yes
	Clientele	Locals, visitors to the area & those in the know
	Need to book	Yes

### Additional Price Comments

Starters from £4.95: Mains from £13.95: Puddings from £3.95

Last updated on 18-08-2014

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