

# Wenlock Edge Inn, nr Much Wenlock



Written by Alex Walters, Shropshire Star

**Living in London, I'm used to restaurants offering deals. You can't move for two-for-ones, credit crunch lunches and complimentary cocktails.**

Restaurateurs are so desperate for business that it would be no surprise at all to see one offering his daughter as a complimentary side dish!

I dine at these establishments with the best of intentions: go easy on the drinks, stick to the set menu and avoid having a side (daughters inclusive). Yet somehow the bill creeps up above the £20 per head mark and I am left counting the 'leccy money for the meter.

So, in the spirit of the post-modern food review, I'm going to start at the end of my meal: £36.69. That's the bill, in case you hadn't guessed. For two. Including wine. And starters. Oh, and steak.

"Ah," you are thinking, "he's cheating, he was at a Harvester, or a Hungry Horse, or McDonalds, or scavenging in expensive bins."

I was doing none of these things. I was in fact eating at the Wenlock Edge Inn, Much Wenlock, and it's very, very good.

The Wenlock Edge Inn is exactly what it should be: A pleasant country pub with a proper bar and a brilliant restaurant.

It's not a gastropub, it doesn't overcharge, and it isn't full of people talking loudly into their mobiles about how much the 'current economic climate' has affected their 'property portfolio'.

It's called a recession and a grotty flat in Enfield does not constitute a 'property portfolio'. It is so good to be out of London.

The staff at the pub are friendly and well dressed, a little slow but undoubtedly hard-working. The decor is tasteful and subtle. The room melds from pub bar into smartly appointed restaurant by way of a halfway house of casual tables for the ample bar food menu.

Despite our set menu deal offering a main course each for a fixed price, my companion and I elected to add a starter to pad things out.

My wild game and black pudding terrine (£5.75) came swiftly and was served with a delicious red onion compote. The terrine itself was a little tough, but just about on the right side of forgiveness owing to the spectacular main that followed it.

My companion's lightly battered king prawns (£5.95) were succulent and juicy, not to mention numerous for the price. The sweet chilli sauce was a bit on the supermarket side (so I'm picky), but the salad served with both our starters was fresh, well-dressed and delicious.

Now, set menus are a great idea in principle. You are drawn in by the attractive price, and envisage yourself settling down to a feast fit for a king on the budget of a serf.

You open the menu, eagerly awaiting the delights on the page in front of you, mouth watering in anticipation.

Rabbit food salad and a single walnut terrine stares at you from the page. You think that will do to start but realise you have misread the menu. It is rabbit food salad to start and single walnut terrine for the main.

The a la carte menu on the opposite page lists Olympian steaks, fillets of delicious fish and other delights, yet the digits alongside them look more like phone numbers than prices.

Wine, however, is included in this set menu. At least you shall be able to drown your sorrows!

Yet the thimbleful of grog that is placed before you tastes more like vinegar and, no, the arrogant French waiter will not 'top you up', he is far too busy leching over your wife.

No such horrors at the Wenlock Edge Inn.

There are many things you can do with £24.99. You could bet on Gordon Brown losing his Commons seat at the next general election, or you can buy a significant chunk of the banking sector. A more viable investment, however, would be this set menu.

A main meal for two and a bottle of wine are included for £24.99, and there is no cheating. The options available include rump steak, supreme of seared salmon, fillet of hake, and more.

The choice of wines includes anything that the restaurant serves by the glass. I began to suspect that this wasn't a set menu at all, but in fact proof of the existence of God.

My steak was delicious. It was definitely larger than the advertised eight ounces, and came served with perfectly soft, garlic-lathered button mushrooms, salad, grilled tomatoes and roasted onions.

If, sorry, when I go again I shall ask for it rare (their medium-rare was a little too close to medium for my taste), but it was otherwise flawless.

My companion went for the hake, which came in both epic quantity and excellent quality, served on a summer fennel salad with chive dressing. Both dishes were served with vegetables and a choice of chips, potatoes or garlic mash.

Better still, this menu runs from Sunday to Friday, lunch and evening. None of that nonsense where, once you're sitting at the table, the waitress informs you that the offer is only available between 4pm and 4:07pm on the second Monday in May during every third leap year, and then stares at you, challenging your innately British sense of awkward politeness to stand up and walk the gauntlet of all the other diners who are politely eating their ludicrously expensive meals and wondering how they're going to afford to get home, the car having been sold to pay the cover charge.

So, in short, the Wenlock Edge Inn is fantastic. It's honest, the waiters aren't French, arrogant or lecherous, there are no hidden charges, no burly landlords waiting in the car park to mug you having lulled you into a false sense of security, and no other Londoners.

Brilliant!

*By Alex Walters*

## **MENU SAMPLE**

From the a la carte menu:

### **Starters**

Smoked trout salad with lemon dressed leaves (£5.25); Roasted red pepper and sundried tomato risotto (£4.95).

### **Main courses**

Half a roast duck with a plum and hoi sin sauce (£14.95).

### **Desserts**

Treacle tart and custard (£4.95); Baileys and chocolate cheesecake (£4.95).

## **ATMOSPHERE**

Warm and welcoming

## **SERVICE**

Friendly and helpful.

## **DISABLED FACILITIES**

No disabled facilities.

*Contact: Wenlock Edge Inn, Much Wenlock, TF13 6DJ. Tel (01746) 785678.  
[www.wenlockedgeinn.co.uk](http://www.wenlockedgeinn.co.uk)*

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