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July 2016

Sussex edition

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smallholding. Dave also keeps bees for honey and makes jams, chutneys and marmalade.

"I tend to create menus around exactly what I would consider the perfect hearty meal on a restaurant menu," says Pip.

"Dave and I have become disillusioned with food at bland high-street chains. The supper club is quite the opposite. Quality ingredients – real butter, free-range eggs, organic tea, coffee and milk, herbs from our garden."

For dessert we were offered lemon posset and honeyed madeleines or warm apple slice with butterscotch sauce.

Pip had prepared enough for sweet-toothed fiends to try both.

As our evening drew to a close I had a warm feeling my £25 was incredibly well spent.

For bookings call 01243 543712, email pipanddavesupperclubupthelane@gmail.com or visit the Facebook page 'Pip & Dave's Supper Club Up The Lane'.



LAURA CARTLEDGE pops off to Southwick for a taste of Vietnam.

Forget the garden size or being within school catchment areas, when Andy Poole and Nancy Meara relocated from London to Sussex in 2014 they were looking for something more unusual.

Both 'a better quality of life' and somewhere their dream of running a supperclub could become a reality.

"It was always in the back of our minds when we were house-hunting," admits Andy. "We knew that the large kitchen diner space at this house would be a great space to do it."

The duo, better known as CaPhe Republic, are no strangers to sharing their culinary passion and skills.

However it was when they sold the highly-acclaimed Hampstead restaurant they'd run for a decade that the food adventures really began. A five-month tour of Vietnam followed and saw them fall head over heels for the cuisine.

Back home this saw the creation of a street food business, driven by a desire to 'get back to basics'.

"Not only cooking great food, but also serving it and getting to know our customers," Andy explains.

"Anyone we talked to about it said they had been trying to find a Vietnamese street food offer as there were none outside of London, which made the decision an easy one."

So why the extra step of a supperclub?

"The supperclub gives us the freedom to cook and serve dishes that we can't necessarily do on a stall," he replies.

If the first night is anything to go by this no-holds-barred approach is a recipe for success.

The five-course menu was a real showcase of flavours, colours and textures, from the welcome drink of a lychee mojito to the Vietnamese iced coffee finale.

Crispy amuse bouches and pork or salmon 'Goï Con' summer rolls kicked

things off in style, the latter packing a tasty punch all wrapped in delicate, transparent, soft rice paper.

These were followed by beautifully-presented hot and sour prawn soup, then the fragrant lemongrass chilli chicken or swordfish with fragrant rice, pickled vegetables and herb, lime and chilli salad.

Then dessert, always my favourite course, was the tropical and creamy 'chè xoài' coconut mango pudding.

All combined it meant you couldn't help but feel you'd been on holiday, and with the relaxed atmosphere around the tables it made it hard to believe our hosts had been anything but calm.

Despite having worked in London restaurants and project managed catering for five Olympic venues, Andy admitted he felt nervous.

"We have cooked at all sorts of events, and dinner parties for the rich and famous, but having an unknown group of people turning up in our own house to eat our food and be served by us, was strangely nerve-racking," he smiles.

The worries were unfounded however, with Andy afterwards agreeing that 'it couldn't have gone better'.

"We were so pleased with how it had gone, and the space seemed to work well."

The plan now is to make it a regular event, 'probably monthly', sharing the virtues and flavours of Vietnamese food with the potential of introducing 'other styles' in time.

"It would be lovely to build a reputation among foodie types with our supperclubs," Andy confesses, "and get a bit of a food buzz happening around Southwick would be a bonus."

To find out more about the supperclubs and Caphe Republic, visit www.capherepublic.concept-to-kitchen.com