

The Wellington

The pub: **The Wellington, Wellington, Herefordshire**

Licensees: **Ross and Phillipa Williams**

Competition chefs: **Ross Williams and Chris Potts**



Pub background: Ross and Phillipa Williams left jobs as directors of PR agencies in London to buy the freehold pub four years ago. When the couple took over the Wellington they had no experience of running a pub or professional catering, but Ross is now a hands-on head chef, while Phillipa runs front of house. The Wellington has a wet:dry split of 35:65. The average spend per head on food is £10 for lunch and £20 at dinner. The Wellington won Pub of the Year in 2005 in the Flavours of Herefordshire Awards. The pub serves an average of 350 covers per week.

Roast offer: The Sunday lunch menu changes every week, but the cuts of meat tend to stay the same to ensure consistency.

Roast Hereford Cross beef is always offered (varies between topside and sirloin) as well as free-range roast pork (either loin or leg) and leg of lamb. A vegetarian and fish option is also available which is varied week-to-week. Occasionally the offer may include specials such as roast rabbit.

All meat is sourced locally, including from farms in the village, and the pub prints the name of the farm from where the meat is sourced on the menu.

Average roast sales per week: Roasts account for 15% of the pub's total weekly food sales with 50 roasts sold on average each week.

Roast price: Two courses £12.50; three courses £15; Children aged under 12 £7.50/£10.50.

On the Sunday menu: Sample starters include: fresh pea and basil chowder, prawn and smoked salmon cocktail, tomato, red onion and mozzarella salad with olive oil and vintage balsamic vinegar, and asparagus with butter sauce, cracked black pepper and Parmesan.

Sample desserts include: Strawberry pavlova, rhubarb crème brûlée, lemon posset with home-made shortbread, apricot glazed brioche bread and butter pudding.



Best-selling roast: Roast topside of beef.

Accompaniments: These include freshly prepared seasonal vegetables, roast potatoes made from Maris Pipers cooked in goose fat, new potatoes, honey-roasted parsnips when in season, home-made Bramley apple and sage stuffing, and Yorkshire puddings with fresh thyme. Sauces include home-made horseradish cream, home-made apple sauce and home-made mint sauce.

Secret of good gravy?: Prepare a pot of freshly made stock, either chicken or beef, as the base. Add red wine and a sprig of fresh thyme and bring to the boil, reducing slightly. Then add a good gravy powder to thicken and colour the gravy.

Ross nets top prize

Ross wins the chance to talk food with Heston Blumenthal at his pub, the Hinds Head in Bray, Oxfordshire – which won *The Observer's* Best Sunday Lunch Award. He also receives £1,000, a plaque to put up outside his pub, a set of IO Shen knives and knife roll from Knife Wizard and a three-month supply of Knorr Fine Gravy Granules.

On the judges' menu:

Starters: Ham hock terrine with home-made piccalilli, red-onion marmalade and Ragstone goats' cheese tart.

Main: Topside of Hereford Cross beef with Yorkshire pudding and fresh horseradish cream. Roast loin of Welsh White pork with Bramley apple and sage stuffing.

Desserts: Madeira and summer berry trifle and fresh raspberry bakewell tart with Dairy House clotted cream.

Judges' comments: "A fantastic pub with a great mix of diners and drinkers"; "Excellent value for money"; "Ross' passion for food shines through"; "Great utilising of local ingredients"; "The flavours of the ingredients are allowed to shine through".

Success story: Ross says: "Our Sunday roast is so successful because it is a traditional Sunday lunch executed perfectly. Everything is made fresh by our chefs in the kitchen and everything possible is sourced locally, often direct from the farm. We only have one sitting on a Sunday in order to maintain the freshness of our food and to allow customers to relax and savour the experience. Add our fantastic front-of-house team and the fact it is only £15 and it is no wonder our Sunday lunch is so popular."



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