



Head chef Malcolm Gardner

The Roundabout Hotel, West Chiltington • 01798 813 838 • www.roundabouthotel.com

West Chiltington's Best kept secret

SQUIRRELED away on a leafy country road in West Chiltington is one of Sussex's best kept secrets.

The Roundabout Hotel in Monkmead Lane boasts a crisp white dining room and a lounge oozing Tudor charm. But that's not the only gem it's harbouring - the other is the establishment's talented head chef Malcolm Gardner.

He has been cooking up a storm at the hotel for five years after a long and successful career in the industry. The cuisine he creates for customers is mostly traditional English, but with some surprising twists, the occasional hint of the exotic and constant attention to detail.

Malcolm, 48, explained: "We try to keep it a bit old world but we do have a lot of travelling business people so a little bit of exotic for them as well. "I wouldn't say we have a signature dish because all of the dishes we put a lot of care and love into."

Perhaps one of the most traditional dishes on the menu is the grandfather of comfort food - steak and kidney pudding. This suet pudding with a rich gravy is steam cooked for seven hours and when I visited was served with roast potatoes, a vegetable parcel, including baby corn, carrots and green beans, as well as a watercress and redcurrant garnish.

Together the ingredients created a wonderful contrast and fusion of flavours. Elsewhere on the menu fish pie can be spied, featuring a heady mix of salmon, prawns, cod, mussels and cockles. There is also fillet steak or ale battered fish and

chips. However if you were after something a little different, you might experiment with a pan fried cannon of lamb.

This sees Parma ham wrapped around a lamb fillet with sun-dried tomato and mint pate, served with a marsala sauce, vegetables and dauphinois potatoes.

And if you were on the hunt for a taste of the exotic you might explore a Moroccan tagine of lamb. Malcolm added: "As much as possible we use local suppliers. "For me it's actually just to see the dish completely cleared.

"I also like different flavours and putting strange flavours together." In fact herbs and vegetables are sourced from Pulborough.

Malcolm trained at Chichester College and started cooking when he was 16. Over the years he has worked at the Charcoal Grill at Chichester Festival Theatre, which in its day was the theatre's restaurant. "It's a tandoori now," said Malcolm. "Then we had daily produce coming in. we had three sittings a night and then the cast came as well."

He was even the head restaurant chef at the Britannia Adelphi in Liverpool.

The Roundabout Hotel was one of about 30 houses designed by local architect Reginald Fairfax Wells during the 1930s, when he sought to create the perfect English village.

For more information and to see the menus in full visit www.bw-roundabouthotel.co.uk or call 01798 813838.

by Samantha Clark



The Reginald Fairfax designed Roundabout Hotel