



# YORKSHIRE DELIGHT

**D**OWN A WINDING tree-lined lane, a white-painted inn sits tucked into the fold of a verdant Yorkshire valley. To its front, a small brook burbles away, while in the surrounding greenery birds call and flit busily. Parts of the building date back to 1650, and it has known several uses in its lifetime. Its time as a corn and textile mill supplied its current name of Shibden Mill Inn.

“We’re in the bottom of the valley and both approaches are steep picturesque lanes. You have to know where we are,” says Simon Heaton. He and wife Caitlin have owned the inn for almost 20 years, and love the beautiful setting and the variety it affords. “It’s on a public bridleway, and we get lots of riders coming past. We have a trough where they can tie their horses up, and we get lots of walkers and cyclists too. Dogs are welcome, and we get all sorts, from local drinkers to business people who come to stay here.”

Since taking it on, the Heaton family have refurbished and revived the inn. “Until six years ago, I was travelling the world for work, and knew what kind of place I wanted to stay in,” says Simon. “Caitlin and our general manager Glen Pearson have done it all up sympathetically. It’s a really nice characterful building in a beautiful setting. We aim to offer good food, good wine and a

good old-fashioned Yorkshire welcome in a great atmosphere.”

Vital to this are the inn’s staff. “We have a great team, and if you have a great team you can cope with anything,” says Simon.

Leading the team in the kitchen is head chef Darren Parkinson. He loves the abundance of this time of year. “You know when the season is changing, and it’s great. We have wild garlic growing out the back, and you can smell it. Once the Jersey Royals are in supply you know it’s all on the way.”

The inn’s menu reflects the season’s variety. From sea trout from the east Yorkshire coast to fresh asparagus, and cheese made a few miles away in Todmorden, Darren is in his element. “I keep things fresh, with big flavours and no more than five ingredients on a plate so the flavours are nice and clear.”

The inn’s small kitchen garden also supplies herbs, baby vegetables, berries, courgette flowers and more. “The gardener will bring a basket down every day, which will be used as garnish or become a special vegetarian dish. We might only get 10 portions, but it’s lovely to grow it right in front of the inn.”

The garden’s raspberries go well with a local dish popular at this time of year, the Yorkshire curd tart. This was traditionally baked for Whitsuntide, the week or weekend including Whit Sunday, the seventh Sunday after Easter.