

Kemp Town's top dog



IT'S fair to say Kemp Town residents reacted with some excitement to news of a new Gingerman venture in their area.

The Ginger Dog officially opened in what used to be The Wellington, in College Place, on Monday, but locals couldn't wait that long.

"We had to run tours of the place when it still looked like a building site," says Pamela McKellar wryly. "People were knocking on the door asking if they could take a look about. We had cars slowing down as I was taking my daughter to school shouting out suggestions for what we should call it."

Pamela and her husband Ben are the team behind local foodie havens The Ginger Fox, The Ginger Pig and the Ginger Dog, and bring them a considerable amount of experience for uncomplicated food served in laid-back and stylish environments.

Since their involvement in Drakes restaurant a few years back, the pair had been interested in Kemp Town as a potential new site; then The Wellington came up. "People have said Kemp Town can be a hard market," Ben says, "but we enjoyed it when we were at

THE GINGER DOG

College Place, Kemp Town, 01273 620990

Drakes and love its individuality and community atmosphere. People treat it like a village and support their local businesses. You do have to

be part of the community though – that's the key we think."

It's perhaps for that reason the pair have encouraged people to share ownership of the place, canvassing via Facebook and Twitter on furnishings and launching a competition to name the pub. There were dozens of submissions but Ben says: "The Ginger Dog just sounded right." "Plus our son is totally obsessed

by dogs," Pamela adds, "So basically, a two year old chose the name!"

After serious refurbishment, including relocating the kitchen, knocking through several walls and creating an airy function room upstairs, the pub has been given the Gingerman stamp. It's a typically thoughtful blend of original fittings, funky colour schemes and quirk (including "bowler hat" lights above the bar, mismatched charity shop chairs and a coat stand donated by a friend in return for "a glass of Prosecco on every visit").

The menu is "similar

in style but completely different in content" to their other sites. "It's small and changes monthly depending on what's good and what's fresh." By way of example, Ben pulls out his mobile to show the text he's just had from his fishmonger detailing today's catch.

They've also brought across the popular two courses for £10 menu, available on weekday lunchtimes and between 6pm and 7pm, and the £5 children's menu. Ben is acting as head chef currently, while things get going, but the role will later be taken over by the head chef from the Ginger Pig. Its former assistant manager has taken up the reins at the Dog.

As their portfolio expands yet further, do the couple worry the Gingerman brand could eventually reach saturation point? Ben agrees it is a concern but says: "We take time in choosing sites and expanding. We wouldn't want to ruin what we have and we're careful about maintaining all our sites and improving them. Every time we open another site, we just get better at what we do."

words: Nione Meakin
pictures: Lisa Devlin



INFO Food served	
Monday-Thursday	12pm-2pm and 6pm-10pm
Friday	12pm-3pm, 6pm-10pm
Saturday	12.30pm-3pm, 6pm-10pm
Sunday	12.30pm-4pm

SAMPLE THE MENU	
Starters	
Chick Pea and Sweet Potato Croquette	£5
Fried Field Mushrooms With Duck Egg On Toast	£5
Black Bream Creviche	£5.50
Mains	
Parmesan and Truffle Arancini	£10
Monkfish, Aubergine and Shitake	£15
Red Curry	£15
Ham Hock, Trotter and Potato Pie	£10
Desserts	
Guinness Rarebit	£5
Black Muscat Jelly with Ice Cream	£7
Treacle Tart and Double Cream	£5