

Having a 'local' is hugely important to any drinker, and for scores of News Shopper reporters over the years The Sovereign of the Seas has been that pub.

It has played host to celebrations and commiserations, new beginnings and goodbyes and now the reporters may be set to say one more.

People of Petts Wood, don't panic: your pub is fine, it's Shopper's hacks could be off. Not quite into the sunset, just down the road to a swish new place in St Mary Cray.

Very few people can claim their local is objectively 'the best' pub, and we're no exception but a little bit of Shopper DNA is in that place. Perhaps literally.

Being spitting distance from our soon-to-be ex-base in Mega House, The Sov has found itself in Pub-Spy's crosshairs a few times and not always escaped unscathed.

Past reviews have described its 'stench of vomit' and 'unforgivably rude service, served with lashings of resentment' but several years have passed and I can happily give this boozier a clean bill of health.

It's not the Shangri-La but it's a decent place to go for an after work pint or a cheap feed. We are converted devotees.

The Sov attracts a widely varied crowd – lots of pensioners, the odd squawking chav – but also a fair few families and regulars.

No one is going to look at the décor and be left open-mouthed with awe but at least it no longer smells of sick and the staff are always helpful.

The bar always has new and

PUBSPY

The Sovereign of the Seas, Petts Wood



The Sovereign of the Seas, Queensway, Petts Wood

DECOR: ***** Acceptable.

ATMOSPHERE: ***** A blank canvas. It's what you make of it.

STAFF: ***** Friendly.

DRINK: ***** Unusual.

FOOD: ***** A good feed.

PRICE: ***** Unbeatable.

unusual beers on tap and no-one has ever been able to fault the value – not even a horde of penniless hacks – with a pint still usually clocking in at under £3.

Its value and variety of grog alone makes The Sov one of our favourite pubs.

So, farewell and good luck to The Sovereign of the Seas and all who sail in her. Shortly, we're off to find a new local to drink away our Friday nights.



TASTE AUTUMN

If you are a professional mushroom hunter-gatherer, then this month brings a harvest of free food.

For the rest of us, it is safer to go foraging in the aisles of a good supermarket where wild mushrooms are readily available.

They are the ultimate fast food, according to Steve Clark, head chef of the Garden Restaurant at The Bromley Court Hotel.

"If you can steer yourself away from white button mushrooms, then the selection of wild and cultivated varieties now on the shelves give a flavour that is rich and nutty," he said.

"Mushrooms are so quick to cook they beat a ready-meal hands down in the race for a quick lunch. This is a

simple recipe that turns mushrooms on toast into a lunchtime treat for friends, or a tasty starter for an autumn dinner party."

CHEF'S TIP ONE: Don't stick to just one mushroom variety – use a selection such as chestnut, shiitake, pleurotes, oyster or even dried wild morels to give different textures and a depth of flavour.

CHEF'S TIP TWO: Add some chopped smoked bacon to the butter before cooking the mushrooms for a tasty alternative, or top the mushrooms with a poached egg.

RECIPE FOR POSH MUSHROOMS ON TOAST:

Serves two. Ingredients: 2 thick slices of Brioche, 25g butter, 1 tablespoon olive oil, 500g mixed

mushrooms, shallots, one tablespoon chopped fresh parsley, salt and pepper

METHOD: First, melt the butter in a frying pan and add the mushrooms – halving the large ones. Cook over a high heat for a few minutes.

Add the shallots and continue to cook for a few minutes until the mushrooms and shallots are soft, but still holding their texture.

Toast the brioche and put onto warm plates. Stir the fresh parsley into the mushrooms and season with salt and pepper.

Spoon the mushrooms, shallots and any juices over the toasted brioche and serve.

● The Garden Restaurant has a new a la carte menu this autumn. Visit bromleycourthotel.co.uk Check out more recipes online at newshopper.co.uk/vibe

WAREHOUSE DINING

A warehouse on an industrial estate may seem like an unusual place for a meal, but looks can be deceiving.

The regular Warehouse Supper Club is run by catering firm Connexions Cuisine from its premises in Kent House Lane and offers a professionally-cooked meal in an unusual setting.

It was set-up by Connexions' founder Michele Jones in 2011 as a way of keeping in touch with friends and clients and showcasing her team's culinary skills.

Usually inspiration is taken from sources such as popular chefs or flavours from around the world but the next supper club will celebrate Connexions' 25 years in business, serving its favourites such as fillet steak, oxtail ballotine and assiette of broccoli.

It will also raise money for charity Cardiac Risk in the Young, in memory of a Connexions team member who died suddenly of an undiagnosed heart condition. The suggested donation for dinner is £45. Book at warehousesupperclub.co.uk



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