SWANNING AROUND

The Swan is an independent freehouse in the centre of Loddon, a thriving market town in South Norfolk. We find out more about what's on offer this summer

Tell us about the team at The Swan.
Andrew Freeland bought The Swan five years ago, Jason Wright is the head chef and Kelly Wright is the bar manager.

And a little about its history?
The Swan has a long history dating back to the 18th century when it opened as a coaching inn. It reopened in 2012 after an extensive renovation, with the owner wanting to keep it as a country pub with a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

The kitchen provides a seasonal menu of top-end British pub favourites made from fresh, locally sourced produce. Dishes range from light bites to family Sunday roasts. Behind the bar, the pumps are flowing with traditional local ales whilst offering a varied wine list.

JASON WRIGHT, ANDREW FREELAND & KELLY WRIGHT

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The design of the pub has made the most of the great space available with a cosy, relaxed bar area as well as four dining areas including the bar, a new restaurant, beer garden and events room.

The Swan is situated on Loddon's main street, a designated conservation area with a scenic view of the Holy Trinity Church, which dates from 1490. It is a minute's walk from the River Chet, a popular tourist destination due to its rich wildlife, stunning scenery and boat moorings.

You occupy a prime town centre site - is it important to you to be at the heart of the community?

It is absolutely vital. We love our location and feel very much part of the community. We are always keen to maintain this and hold several events throughout the year.

Is food a big part of what you offer?

Definitely! We take great pride in producing fabulous, well balanced food in a comfortable pub setting. We have just been awarded 2 AA Rosettes which is hugely important for our progression. We want to keep pushing forward but, most importantly, keep our customers happy.

What's going to be on the menu this summer?

It will continue to evolve as new produce comes in and others finish for their season. We will definitely see plenty of salads and lighter dishes on our specials board. We smoke a lot of meat and fish ourselves in our Big Green Egg and these go perfectly with a light salad on a sunny day. We are also introducing a snack menu which will be perfect to graze on whilst enjoying a cold beer or glass of wine in our garden.

Do you support local food and drink producers?

In this region we are very lucky to have some outstanding producers who we work closely with. That way we know exactly where our produce comes from and can ensure the quality of what we offer.

Have you seen a surge in interest in craft beers and other artisan drinks in recent months?

The biggest trend recently has been in gin, and craft beers have definitely taken off, appealing to a younger market and also to women. The growth in the gin industry has led to customers looking at more premium products throughout the spirit world in general. We're waiting for rum to peak in the next year or so.

How are the bedrooms going?

Very well!. The first four rooms have been open for two years and are incredibly well received by both business guests and tourists. We are now furnishing a further three bedrooms that have been renovated in the old town hall building, which will open in August. This means that we can appeal to larger groups, say fishing or shooting parties and families attending weddings at one of the many nearby venues.

How important are events, say music evenings, to what you do?

Our events range from gigs to beer festivals, summer fun days and our really popular winter blues tropical party, where we crank up the heating and dress for the beach to party the night away with cocktails and live music in cold February! It's important for us to offer such events to show that we are not just a pub or a restaurant, but a venue that caters for everyone.