

# MUDDY GOES WATERSIDE RESTAURANT!

## 1 AUG 2016



*Main Bar at T&K*

I eat at places that have great food. I eat at places that have gorgeous cocktails. I eat at places that have a fabulous atmosphere. But it's not often I eat at places that have all three. Roll up the Tap & Kitchen in Oundle. A buzzing bar you can catch up with your girlfriends over several Mojitos or a dimly lit restaurant you can go to on date three and decide you've now moved into the stage where you can pretend not to order pudding then eat all of \*his/hers (delete as appropriate). When you arrive, you pull up into the car park of Oundle Wharf, which houses a few other fab local businesses ([Nene Valley Brewery](#), [Nene Extreme Adventures](#), [Gorilla Firm Cycling](#) and [Errismore Flowers](#)) and although car parks aren't usually the prettiest of welcomes, when you walk around the side, there's loads of outdoor space, greenery and even water.



*Al fresco dining & drinking*

Tap and Kitchen is as it says on the tin, a waterside restaurant and bar. But it's actually a whole lot more than that. It's a bit of London cosmopolitan in a historic Northamptonshire market town. Oundle is famous for its Georgian streetscapes and lovely limestone buildings, yet the industrial, contemporary Tap and Kitchen complements it's more historic landscape.

There's an outdoor wood fired grill, served until the weather is biblical, and it does posh BBQ style fare such as hanger steak open tortilla with chimichurri, spicy pulled pork, grilled halloumi with pesto and Moroccan chickpea, feta and carrot (amongst other super sounding, tasty treats).

Inside the decor is modern/vintage (is that even a thing?) or maybe bohemian/cool. It was bustling on a Friday night, but it's a large space so the tables aren't too close together (a tiny bugbear of mine). There's a sizeable bar area too and we pulled up a pew for a pre dinner drinkie (gin and tonic since you ask, but I did spy some pink fizz)!

On the website the food is touted as unpretentious and honest dishes, simply cooked with ingredients that are sourced locally, where possible. They make pretty much everything in-house, from pasta to puddings through to chutneys and sauces, and even homemade bacon, sausages and cured meats, nom. I love the whole 'eat local' vibe, and at Tap & Kitchen they get even more kudos for operating a swaps' board, offering to exchange fresh, seasonal produce with local growers for credit in the bar or restaurant (love, love, love that idea)!

Tap & Kitchen won Best Restaurant 2015, at the Northamptonshire Food & Drink awards, so I was expecting the food to be pretty darn good since there are a fair few delicious eateries in our fair Shire. The menu is **changed daily** with delish sounding choices like beetroot carpaccio, pink peppercorn, goats curd mousse, mixed leaf & toasted seeds (£12) and pan roast cod loin, pesto prawn linguine & honey roasted hazelnuts (£14). Although not pretentious, they're not your standard meat and two veg, and I for one do like a bit of a bang up the backside of a 'samey, samey' menu.

As there were three of us eating (one of the Mudlets and him indoors), we got to try a selection of starters and mains that were all bang on. The miso baked aubergine in particular, was bloomin' handsome, and the Moroccan chickpea, pomegranate seeds & molasses with feta cheese salad was light and super tasty. Mr Muddy went for the Tap & Kitchen special hanger steak (prized for its flavour), and he didn't talk throughout the main course, which is always a good sign! The pork belly (Mini M) and fish (me) were thumbs up from all of us (we all ended up tasting each others, but still couldn't finish it all)!

We really went to town on the sides and each main dish includes a choice from the sides menu, which means no more swapping your chips for salad (as if ; ) and you get to taste more things (I very much like this option and think all restaurants should take note). The hand cut skin on chips with rosemary salt and T&K ketchup were crispy on the outside and fluffy goodness on the inside, and the buttered cabbage and chorizo was lush (hungry yet?). I couldn't squeeze in a pud, but I did manage an espresso martini while Mr M indulged in an old Fashioned (his fave, although I had to have the majority as he was driving). Mudlet managed a pud though (of course she did), and gobbled it up before you could say peanut butter parfait, crumbly goodness and fruit coulis!



*Peanut butter parfait, salted caramel & raspberries*

All in all I had a terrific (love that word, am aiming to use it much more in my everyday convo) night at the Tap & Kitchen. The staff were super friendly, especially the general manager Dan Coshan, who cut his teeth in some very cool establishments in that there London, and the ambiance was brilliant. I loved that there were kids in there, daters, big groups and even lifestyle bloggers (ahem), there really was something for everyone. If you make it down there, mention Anna-Lou at Muddy Stilettos, because I'm hoping for an invite back sometime very soon ; )

### **THE MUDDY VERDICT:**

**Good for:** Food lovers wanting the real deal but without the palaver of fine dining (if indeed you do find fine dining a palaver); anyone after a restaurant with genuine atmosphere; romantics on an evening; larger groups who will be fine in the space offered. Perfect outdoor space, where you can even walk around the canal. Great just for a drink too (although you'll be seduced by something foodie on the menu), the bar has beers from their sister and neighbour Nene Valley Brewery and there was a wide range of other drinks, and a really good wine list, many of which are available by the glass (love that, as many places only offer a house by the glass).

**Not for:** People who want to be in Oundle itself or don't have wheels to get there (it's a little bit out of town). But you can always grab a taxi, or get yourself a Mr Muddy, I mean I can't drive, who would review the espresso martini!

**££:** Pretty reasonable for what you get (quality and quantity), starters around £6/7, mains £12 up. Special lunch st menu two courses £12 or three courses £15. Wine around £5 a glass.

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