

# Grub Spy



*Weafer & Cooper  
Glasthule, Co Dublin*

**T**HE biggest challenge for any restaurant – when it dares a traditionally simple dish such as shepard's pie, Irish stew, roast chicken etc – is that it must soar above anything the customer can do at home.

✦ About eighteen months ago myself and the boss were traipsing around Bailieborough in Cavan when a peckish hunger suddenly overcame us. As luck would have it, we were outside the Bailie Hotel where a two-roast buffet lunch was being served.

I enquired if we might have a couple of sandwiches. A straightforward and simple request but what arrived minutes later blew me away.

The chef had cut steaming slabs of rib roast and shoved them between thick slices of buttered batch along with a pot of Coleman's mustard on the side. It was a delicious concoction that melted in the mouth.

I can still taste it; I can still see it, and I would happily go all the way back there ... for a simple beef sandwich. ✦

Fast forward a couple of weeks back when the boss and I dropped into Weafer & Cooper in Glasthule in Dublin. We were met with a warm, inviting atmosphere – buzzing with happy families devouring great-looking pizzas.

The menu was equally inviting and our eyes immediately settled on two 'simple' dishes –

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'Beef Stew' and 'Italian sausages with creamy mash & onion gravy'. Sounds delish, bring them on I said! And they did ... in what looked like two soup bowls, fine for stew, but bangers 'n' mash?

The boss said her stew tasted fine but nothing remotely memorable, and the addition of a pastry cap was just an annoyingly pointless affectation. But worse was to come.

Never in my life had I seen such a tragic attempt at bangers 'n' mash. The sausages looked like tiny wrinkled todgers lost in a pool of brown sludge.

How it looked might not have mattered so much if they at least tasted good, but they actually tasted like wrinkled todgers (not that I'm into todger tasting you understand) and all I could think of was somewhere recently a pig has died for no good reason. The mash was excellent but I have to say the experience was like 'anger fuel' to me.

The Rioja was great, the service was great, and the bill was very reasonable. But would I go back though – well I suppose that's up to the chef and how he handles his todgers. ●

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