

Between the hours of 7:30am and 10:30pm the only meetings Penny allows herself is with you. It's not so much a meeting, as an opportunity to exchange ideas and pleasantries, and for you to offer up a few words of thanks and encouragement for her imaginative array of vegetarian cuisine. Penny likes encouragement.

Every day she prepares a range of desserts that are as varied as the seasonal produce delivered to her door by local suppliers.

Things like rumbustious rhubarb tiramisu infused with the slightest hint of Cointreau. Or apple and apricot strudel jam-packed full of fruit with thick corpulent flesh. Perhaps breathtaking braised apricots and cinnamon drizzled with maple syrup will take your fancy. Or indulge in a wedge of lively lemon, orange and almond cake. Tuck into the summer pudding overstuffed with as many of the ripest, freshest locally grown berries she can lay her hands on. Or savour an apricot and oatmeal flummery lacquered with Greek yoghurt and slivers of plain chocolate. There are meringues, there are soufflés but above all else, there is love and attention to every detail.

PENNY'S MEATINGS ARE ALL ADJOURNED

This applies to her quiches too; something that apparently real men don't eat.

If it is to be believed, it's a sad indictment of modern man, made all the more frustrating when Penny broods over what goes into making hers.

First up: the cheese – not common or garden cheddar – oh, no, it has to be real vegetarian cheese and, of course, free-range eggs and a drop or two of fresh organic milk. This mixture is tenderly wrapped around tomatoes off a vine and leafy basil or spring onions perhaps; mixed peppers or oyster mushrooms; spinach or ceps, chanterelles and blewits; water cress or even peanuts. The whole melange is then restrained in a crumbly pastry base and baked for as long as it takes. Surely, after that amount of effort, it can't hurt to order up a slice and touch base with your feminine side.

Perhaps you now understand why Penny's days - and most nights - are meeting-free. If the truth be known, she just doesn't have the time. Or the inclination for that matter!

Penny's
OF WIMBORNE

Unusual, nutritious and utterly compelling vegetarian food.