

After all, Penny's the luminary who diligently scrutinizes the raw produce that enters her restaurant every morning. The person who makes a critical examination of everything local suppliers send her way. And the one who takes full responsibility for every vegetable concoction dished up - be it breakfast, lunch or supper.

Every morsel must be unmistakably, meticulously, miraculously fresh, otherwise Penny knows, only full well, that her reputation will receive microscopic attention. And that's something any chef - vegetarian or otherwise - holds very dear to their heart: a sound reputation combined with good memories. Both attributes leave discerning vegetarians with a reason to return and sample again.

Vegetables are the lifeblood of Penny's restaurant and for that reason one of her signature soups is made from locally grown field mushrooms, chanterelles and bluewits and fat, juicy lemons. The result is unpretentious and un gimmicky. Others include tender lentils, blue cheese and celery, tomato and orange; all evoking the seasonal smells and flavours around us.

The same applies to the pistachios in the rissoles and the Dutch white cabbage in the orange and

THAT'LL MEAT WITH PENNY'S APPROVAL

date coleslaw. The avocados in the guacamole must be tender and creamy and the rhubarb in the Tiramisu can't afford to be stringy. Neither can the leeks in the leek and mushroom tagliatelle; a classical unimprobable combination fused with a velvety sauce.

Penny makes her risotto with parmesan and rocket pesto and roasted pine nuts. She also blends fresh rocket into her penne and the ripest aubergines into her melanzanie. Her lentil stew with curd cheese is intensely savoury and satisfying. In fact, moreish some would say.

The tahini in her humous and the bulgar wheat in the tabolah appear to touch the same culinary spot of most vegetarian aficionados who frequent the restaurant. At least that's what they tell her.

Penny stamps each dish with her distinctive seal of approval, even if that means sampling the Guinness in the beer and hazelnut bread before you've risen from the land of Nod. And, as she casually says - with a twinkle in her eye - if it doesn't taste fresh, there's always another in the fridge. Begorrah!

Penny's
OF WIMBORNE

Unusual, nutritious and utterly compelling vegetarian food.