

Time @ the Bar

In the first of a new series, we get to know Matt Walker, general manager at The Beehive

How would you describe The Beehive?

It's fun, friendly and busy, yet relaxed and cosy at the same time. The restaurant is a great venue for functions and special occasions but equally brilliant if you can't be bothered to cook! I guess that my favourite thing about the place is that you can come in here by yourself and almost guarantee to see somebody you know. If not, you'll definitely know somebody by the time you leave!

What's your favourite dish on the menu?

It changes daily, sometimes twice a day, so it's difficult to say! During the recent cold spell I've enjoyed traditional heart-warmers like venison and black pudding sausages with mash and onion gravy, but there's always something I fancy.

When not at work, where can you be found?

In summer, I'm almost perennially in front of my barbecue, something that my South African relatives will understand! In colder, wetter times (ie the other ten months of the year), I'll usually be sat by the fire at home with a glass of red wine.

What do you do in your free time?

I love to cook and I find it a great way to relax. I also enjoy visiting the 'hive' as a customer and putting some time in on the 'right' side of the bar!

What's your dream job?

I've always fancied being the



ambassador to France. I visited the embassy when I was living in Paris and he has definitely got the most spectacular office I've ever seen!

Which is your favourite cuisine?

I am a self-confessed Francophile, so it would have to be traditional French 'cuisine' - the very country we get the word from!

What's your favourite drink?

Just about anything produced by Weston's Cider. I am a huge fan of Stowford Press but have recently started drinking the new Weston's Premium, which is basically a cider-flavoured Slush Puppy! We were the first place in the country to get it after the trials and there are still relatively few places that do it, but it'll be everywhere come the summer!

Wines – do you prefer new world or old world, and why?

It depends on things like what mood I'm in, where I am, what I'm eating and the weather. I'm rather partial to our Australian Shiraz-Petit Verdot at the moment and we've got a great Italian Pinot-Rosé, but you can't go far wrong with decent French reds either.

If stranded on a desert island, what three items would you want with you?

A sat-phone to summon help and a packet of cigarettes and a lighter so I could smoke while awaiting rescue (assuming of course that I was alone on the island and my shelter was at least 50% open to the air and no closer than three metres to any other structure)! ■