

Ollivers Restaurant

It's three years since I last reviewed Ollivers Restaurant so I was delighted when the proprietors, Steve and Juliet Anderson, invited me to do another review for Seaford Scene magazine. I was curious to find out whether its excellent reputation still held.

I took along my colleague Cathy, and we were warmly welcomed by Steve. It was a Friday evening and the restaurant was already very busy. As we perused the menu, we were served a small plate of canapes to whet our appetites - cheese parmesan and bruschetta with sun-dried tomato mousse - delicious!

The current menu (June/July) looked so appetising that it was difficult to make a choice. To assist us, Steve in his convivial manner enthusiastically described all the dishes on the menu - clearly he is still passionate about cooking and food. Cathy chose the baked spicy filo duck parcel, served with a tangy mango sauce followed by an intermediate course of cranberry sorbet, and then locally caught sea bass in crispy breadcrumbs served with asparagus and hollandaise sauce. I chose the crab and salmon open tart, followed by the cranberry sorbet and a main meal of herby poussin filled with apricot and sage stuffing and glazed with a herby garlic jam. To accompany our meal Steve recommended a dry white Chilean Sauvignon for Cathy and a medium white Côtes de Gascoigne for me, which we had by the glass. There is an extensive wine list available including champagne, along with regular drinks from the bar. Whilst we waited for our meal we were served warm home-made bread rolls with plain and garlic butter. Meanwhile Steve continued to take time attending to his guests in his professional, friendly manner.

When our starters arrived we weren't disappointed. Cathy's duck parcel was huge and very tasty - rich, meaty duck with a light crispy filo pastry and fruity sauce. My crab and salmon open tart looked amazing and was very enjoyable - mildly flavoured crab and salmon on a crunchy pastry base stacked with a fresh pea-shoot salad, served with a beetroot and balsamic drizzle. It was a delicious combination. Our intermediate course of cranberry sorbet cleansed the palette perfectly.

The main meals also looked impressive. Generous portions were served with plenty of vegetables in side dishes - roast potatoes, red cabbage, courgettes and carrots, all beautifully cooked. Cathy loved the herb-crusted, fresh sea bass with tender asparagus and creamy hollandaise sauce. My poussin was divine - succulent, tender meat (off the bone, which made it even more enjoyable) filled with a sweet fruity stuffing and glazed in a light garlic jam. We were sadly unable to finish all the vegetables!

Our fourth course was dessert, and Steve reeled off an extensive list of hot and cold choices. 'Juliet loves making desserts,' he explained. There are too many to list here, but they include pavlova with pineapple and passion fruit, brandy-snap basket with banana and butter-scotch, Bailey's crème caramel, lemon posset, English sherry trifle, white chocolate mousse with a raspberry coulis, and mixed nut and maple syrup tart. I chose a rich chocolate and Cointreau cheese cake whilst Cathy was persuaded to try the 'posh jelly and ice cream', which turned out to be fresh fruit with jelly made from champagne! It was such a fun dessert; the jelly was full of bubbles and even had a champagne fizz. My chocolate cheesecake was magnificent - very rich and totally indulgent. I don't know about catching the train home, I think running home to work it all off would have been more advisable! We rounded the meal off with peppermint tea and coffee and complimentary hand-made petit fours - a delightful conclusion to a very enjoyable five-course meal.

Three years on I can honestly say that Ollivers still offers excellent food and service; in fact I think it was better this time with a menu comprising unusual combinations of subtle flavours and textures. "Eighty-five percent of our customers regularly come back so we like to look after them by introducing new ideas whilst creating enjoyable and interesting dishes", explained Steve.

Ollivers have also recently refurbished their private dining room with contemporary decor and wooden interior. It seats 10 people and is perfect for private parties and celebrations - where you can play your own music and make as much noise as you like without worrying! *F Tegg*

Price guide: 3 course £24.50, 5 course £29.95
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