

Il Calice – Style, Class and Sophistication in the heart of Edinburgh



When the editor of the esteemed Edinburgh Reporter asked if I wanted to write a review for Il Calice, Edinburgh's newest wine and cocktail bar, I accepted on the basis that someone has to do the tough jobs for the capital city's leading local news website.

I headed to Picardy Place in the capital on Saturday evening, with the city centre bustling with rugby aficionados after yet another heartbreak for Scotland against Australia. But the fight through the kilted and gold-shirted crowds was certainly worth it as Il Calice offered a superb choice of wines, inventive cocktails and sumptuous Italian inspired small plates – perfect for a Saturday night.

Il Calice is situated at 4 Picardy Place, opposite the city's Omni Centre and in the shadow of the soon to be redeveloped St James centre. It's a listed Georgian townhouse in the process of renovation with the ground floor bar and eatery now open to the public.

The word that came to mind when I entered the impressive entrance was style. There is an elegance and class about Il Calice which sets it apart from similar wine and cocktail bars. It may seem a small point to some but being greeted by warm and welcoming staff means a lot to me, as my regular grumblings about customer service elsewhere would indicate.

The extensive selection of wines, sourced by owners Ronnie and Kyle Reid, is impressive. But then as wine-importers you would expect nothing but the best from father and son. They are keen

for their customers to be able to sample the very best wines from around the world and if you're a wine connoisseur there is no better place in Edinburgh to be.

There is also a wide range of impressive cocktails, mixed and poured with an expertise you would expect from such an establishment.

Although fine wine and cocktails are its main theme, Il Calice also offers high quality Italian-inspired dishes. A particular mention for the grilled chicken dish which impressed my wife – and it takes a lot to impress Mrs Smith, believe me!

There are ambitious plans for four luxurious bedroom suites on the upper floors of the building – if the wines, cocktails and food are a guide they will be luxurious indeed.

It's good to know that, in the age of more and more fast-food outlets and buffet-style help-yourself restaurants, style, class and not a little sophistication still matters to some. Il Calice has this in abundance. It's close proximity to Edinburgh's Playhouse makes it an ideal location for pre-theatre drinks. Drop by soon – you won't be disappointed.

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Edinburgh Reporter review: *****