

Classic dish let-down in busy bistro

We were recommended Le Bistro and on booking online it was even more attractive as it was promoting a 30 per cent discount on food on a Saturday night.

No wonder then that it was packed and they were turning people away.

It is situated in West Parliament Square, just off Edinburgh's world-famous Royal Mile, and in the wood-panelled former headquarters of Lothian Region.

I covered meetings there and much is the same. The restaurant is on the ground floor.

It is noisy, not stuffy with welcoming staff and a decent sized menu.

The wine list is on the wall and it should satisfy most I opted for classic French dishes. The onion soup with crusty, cheese-coated bread topping was a joy, the flavours merging beautifully.

Pity that the chef had not applied the same to the cock au vin. My view of this classic French dish is of chicken braised with wine, lardons, mushrooms, and optionally garlic. That's how I make it with the rich sauce being a major part of the dish.

A red Burgundy wine is typically used, though many regions of France make variants using local varieties, such as coq au vin

jaune, coq au Riesling, coq au pourpre or coq au violet, coq au Champagne.

It arrived. The coloured and tasteless juice had a handful of vegetables slopping around a chicken breast topped with superfluous, in my view, greenery.

There did not seem to be a synergy between meat and sauce and so it proved.

I was hungry so consumed the depressingly disappointing dish but I could not understand how a French restaurant in the heart of one of the world's leading tourist destinations could get this dish so wrong.

My wife's steak was, however, beautifully cooked and well-preserved with salad, but another criticism here.

Her cream and pepper sauce was extremely watery. Possibly other people like it that way, but we don't.

Moving swiftly on, the chocolate bomb with various nuts at the base was a glorious indulgence but they offered nothing for a lactose intolerant like me.

The warm, fruity cabernet sauvignon at £23 helped wash away the disappointment and it was ideal for a cold, grey and wet Edinburgh night.

Staff, to be fair, listened to my view on the coq au vin. My view, of course, could be in the minority but we enjoyed the atmosphere.

However, I would be reluctant to recommend this restaurant to healthy eaters as the portions were a tad small.

Overall, it is a good central meeting place, with welcoming staff and, with 30 per cent discount on food, it is an option to consider.