

Juliet's June Food Diary

I've no time for the Trip Advisor crew banging on about 'value for money' (VFM)

Nothing can better expose a keyboard warrior as knowing next to nothing about the restaurant business and even less when it comes to cooking. What most amateur food critics desire is much for little.

Diners in the West have always been willing to flash the cash for good quality and our East Coast thriftiness would be easy to blame on the extortionate and rapidly rising cost of living here, but yet Edinburgh folks have long been a tad on the tight side. Every Edinburger seems to have their favourite BYOB haunt (cos its cheap) which has resulted in many an eye roll from me. But if you can't beat 'em...

I pass Desi Pakwan, advertising 'Live Punjabi Cooking', on Leith Walk almost every day but when a trusted source (my mother) recommended it I decided to give the BYOB (and no corkage, thank you very much) place a go and never have I been more reluctant to recommend a good VFM restaurant. Because of the food, you say? Yes indeed, the food was possibly the best Indian cooking I've ever tasted. My lamb shank curry was beyond excellence and the Pashwari Naan fresh, tasty and generous. Peering into the open kitchen, a plethora of pans, spices and meats makes me wonder how the chef manages it all. The interior is casual but the atmosphere vibrant.

This is a restaurant clearly well supported by the Indian community. So why am I reluctant to give such a good offering a plug? Because the whole experience is such a bargain I don't want the two coats of paint crew to know about it. I recently tried another Indian restaurant at the opposite end of the economic scale but Desi Pakwan remains the one for me, not

because it's good VFM but simply because I enjoyed it more. I asked the waitress if the (clearly in charge) chef in the kitchen was Desi Pakwan himself? Desi is not a chap but the word for 'village' and Pakwan means food. I made a fool of myself so you don't have to. You're welcome.
desipakwanonline.com



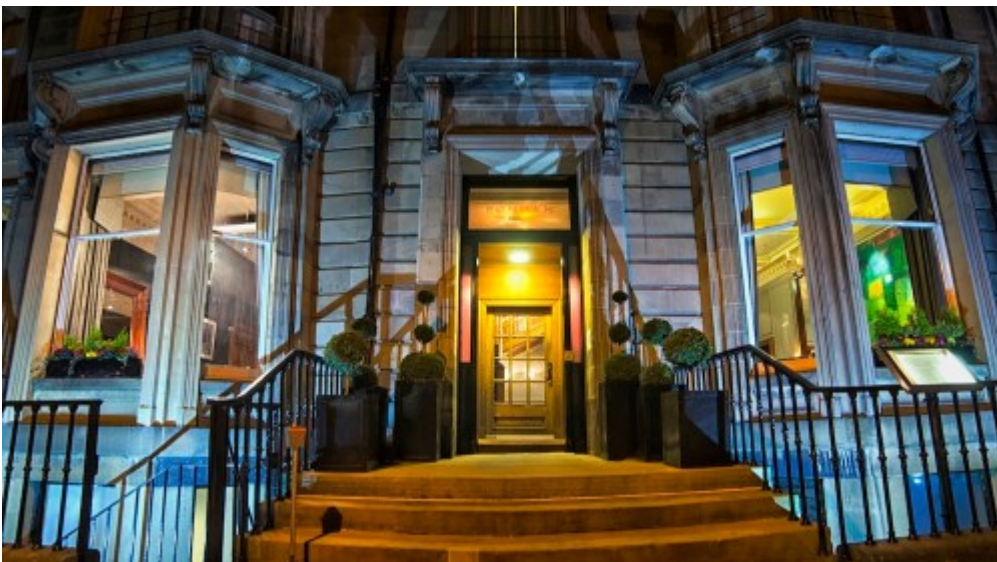
From Leith Walk fun to West End elegance. Hair brushed and parted, the Silver Fox and I headed to the splendid Bonham Hotel to celebrate this elegant townhouse hotel having had a facelift, which is a bit like saying De Beers might want to make their products more sparkly.



They've not stinted on the sumptuousness, that's for sure. Super comfy teal velvet cocktail chairs? Oh yes please. Not only did they invite many local residents to their grand reopening they even ran a bus through from Glasgow. Being half weegie myself I felt quite at home, especially when presented with the 'wall of champagne'.



The new menu at the Bonham is what you might call good VFM and it's definitely on my leisurely Sunday lunch wish list. "Do you ever see any famous people at these fancy dos you go to?" enquired SF. "Remember Darius from Pop Idol," I proudly replied, "Well I once went to something where his brother was a guest." I'm confident SF was suitably impressed.
thebonham.com



Hey fellow parents! The summer hols are coming up and eight weeks of entertaining your darling offspring awaits. I'm delighted to share the news that Chaophraya now has a children eat free offering. As long as one adult per sprog is having a main 12-5pm Sunday to Thursday, the darling fruit of your loins dines on the children's menu for nothing. Get the

little 'uns used to quality food early, I say and make it a treat for the grown ups having survived a morning at the Museum. VFM FTW! chaophraya.co.uk



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