

Culinary refuge in a moonlit Bay

We dined in comfort on a chilly night at a huge glass window overlooking the moonlit Firth of Forth with the lights of the city of Edinburgh sparkling in the distance.

The Bay Hotel menu offered mouth-watering items which should suit most tastes, and the presentation was eye-catching.

The service was slick and the atmosphere in the well-appointed dining-room, which had a complete make-over with pleasing Autumnal furnishings earlier this year, was warm.

And the food? We felt it was well worth the 40-minute trip across the stunning new Forth Bridge to arrive at comfortable Horizons Restaurant in the family-run hotel.

The Bay is 11 miles from the M90 motorway and is located on an easy-to-find, stunning, cliff-side location on the coast road between Burntisland and Kinghorn in the Kingdom of Fife. There is free parking.

It is within easy reach of the nearby towns of Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes, Dunfermline and also Edinburgh Airport and the south-facing views are over the two-mile Pettycur Bay Beach which boasts superb sands.

The Bay is also just over a mile from the picturesque harbour at Kinghorn but, sadly, pulses of rain prevented us having a pre-dinner walk in the village.

That did not, however, put a damper on the visit which

underlined the fact that we had driven past The Bay Hotel on numerous occasions and not stopped. Our mistake.

The hotel fronts an extensive caravan park with hundreds of vans clinging, limpet-like, to the cliff and the view from their verandas on a clear day is stunning.

Horizons is to the front of the building next to the hotel's 28 deluxe rooms and executive suites which are designed in a contemporary style. Some of the rooms, incidentally, are easy-access and suitable for disabled guests.

There is also a leisure centre with swimming pool, fitness suite, plus games and amusements, a retail shop, laundry plus indoor and outdoor children's play areas. A lure for families.

There is little doubt that we required the fitness suite after our substantial meal which began with tasty canapes served in the bright and comfortable waiting/drinks area. You just sink down into the luscious leather suites.

The menu changes regularly so ask on booking, but we were impressed with the choice.

Chicken and sweetcorn soup was perfect for a cold night and the King Prawn and avocado mille-feuille (like a vanilla or custard slice) with a balsamic glaze drew my attention.

There were six mains on offer but Blythe Marshall, the superbly efficient Food and Beverage manager, pointed us towards the tournedos of Scotch beef fillet with a woodland mushroom strudel.

Fish is a particular favourite and their haddock is locally sourced from nearby fishing village of Pittenweem. I could not resist it.

A choice of warm crusty bread with an onion bread was offered at the distinctive tables cut from tree trunks and lightly varnished while we waited for our starters, enjoying the view

over the calm sea towards Edinburgh.

The piping hot soup was packed with flavour. The King Prawns layered gateau-style was attractive but suffered, in my humble opinion, from too much pastry, however the onion and tomato salsa lifted the dish.

Blythe was 100 per cent correct with his pre-dinner description of the tornedos, a round piece of beef cut from the end portion of the tenderloin. It is apparently a regular on the menu and hugely popular with clients. I can understand why.

The substantial portion was perfectly cooked and it arrived with gratin Dauphinoise potatoes and delicately cut fingernails of turnip and carrot plus a rich ratatouille.

The mushrooms were encased in a dessert-style thin pastry and disappointed but the battered East Neuk haddock lived up to the billing.

The light and thin batter – created with soda water, I understand – proved an ideal cover for the fish which flaked on the touch of a fork and was a delight. The hand-cut chips also earned top marks.

We shared a light lemon meringue pie. Light is the correct description and it was ideal against the crunchy, sweet meringue.

Overall, this visit opened our eyes to a well-known establishment which deserves to be treated as a serious restaurant and not an add-on to a holiday park.

Two courses are £21.50 and three £26.50 and the price is inclusive of 20 per cent VAT. The friendly staff are primed to provide allergy advice so do give The Bay Hotel a visit and open a new Horizon on value eating on the attractive Fife coastline.

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