

A very Contini Christmas

Raise a glass to a Contini Christmas

How could I refuse an invite to a Contini Christmas food safari? This evening was an opportunity to try some of the splendid Christmas fare at Victor and Carina's three city centre restaurants all in one night.



We began at The Scottish Café, their newly refurbished eatery situated beneath The National Galleries at The Mound. Despite being on a safari of sorts I was more than happy to go inside and escape the wildlife of the Christmas markets.

Greeted with an Edinburgh Gin Spritz and some mini Christmas crackers, which thankfully didn't include hats, we sat down to a starter of Belhaven Smoked Salmon, Katy Rogers crème fraiche, capers and soda bread.

One of my favourite things about the food here is that they

embrace the providence of the produce and don't over egg the pudding, or the salmon, for that matter.

It's lovely when restaurant owners share the glory with their suppliers and for round one of our tour, a traditional starter was no sad ghost of Christmas past.

Main course beckoned and we all hiked up to Cannonball at the top of The Royal Mile. With elegant Christmas trees outside and a splendid view of the Castle, I was very taken with this cosy restaurant. My glutes were also most grateful, for the walk to Cannonball from the foot of The Mound is rather hilly and I'm convinced they have temporarily been raised by at least a centimetre. The exercise was much needed when I saw the scrumptious turkey dinner laid on for us.

The juicy meat was naturally free range and accompanied by caramelised East Lothian veg, skirlie stuffing and redcurrant gravy. The food was expertly cooked and the atmosphere civilised and warm. You definitely feel in the heart of the Old Town when dining here, and mercifully far from Christmas shopping.



Our safari being near the end we hadn't spotted a lion, but noted a few shivering tourists on a ghost tour. The final stop was Contini on George Street for some winter Negronis and a tasting range of desserts, the Tiramisu being my favourite, as I needed a literal pick me up after dining so extravagantly.



Now we all know Edinburgh is awash with restaurants but I'd recommend the three Contini establishments because they offer great value for money. Elegant settings, attention to detail

and top local produce make for an all round winning combination. That combined with the ultra professional but warm and friendly service really does make their restaurants a cut above.

If you're not going to treat yourself before Christmas why not put a gift voucher request on your Santa list if you've been good this year? And for us naughty tikes, we could always request an afternoon tea to ensure being home before curfew.

If you're shopping for a food lover Carina Contini's Kitchen Garden Cookbook would be a most welcome gift. Beautifully written with gorgeous photography, there's plenty of inspiration here.