

# Ducks – great location, website and food but.....

Ducks, built originally in 1638, sits at the heart of a sleepy village of Aberlady near a wildlife reserve on the East Lothian coastline near Edinburgh. It is, according to the website, recognised as one of the leading providers of accommodation with gracious East Lothian hospitality.

It has 22 “cosy” rooms – more about them later – and there is no doubt that the bar has atmosphere, so does the restaurant.

The lunch menu is good. Breaded haddock (£12.95), beef burger on Brioche bun (£12.95), chicken breast, tomato and mozzarella (£12.95) or minute steak baguette, caramelised onion, mustard mayo (£12.95) as well as other tasty treats including full breakfast (£10.95). Vegetarian full same price.

There are sharing platters as well plus vegan pancakes, sliced banana, seasonal fruit compote and maple syrup (£5.50). Basically, something to suit most.

Surroundings are light and airy and the bar had three real ale pumps on the day we visited like Landlord as well as keg beer. There is also a wine list and the staff are friendly and most accommodating. We had youngsters with us and the staff were most attentive.

We stayed overnight. That’s where the hotel needs to sharpen up. A wee bit of TLC would not go wrong. White pebble dash wallpaper, old-fashioned wood cabinets in the hall along with spare lights and heaters.

There are pictures of golfers – this hotel is on what is tagged Scotland’s golf coast, hence the link – but our room was in desperate need of a facelift and certainly a wee dab of Pledge.

There was dust on most of the dated furniture and tops of mirrors, and you could not miss the dust on the TV remote. Inexcusable really.

Threadbare carpets and window frames in need of paint were also evident. Small things perhaps but they do affect the look of the place and it was difficult to work on a laptop in the room. The wi-fi was easy to access, however.

The bathroom shower was a feature, pumping out lots of hot water at the touch of a button, and the cupboard space was adequate. The bed was a tad hard but we slept well ahead of a hearty full Scottish breakfast which included some fresh, succulent raspberries, packed with flavour.

This hotel caters appears to cater for tourists and walkers on the John Muir Way, plus, from the evidence of our stay, a number of parties of male golfers. They might not have been so critical of the dust deposits or the dated furniture.

Staycations are still in this Autumn and word-of-mouth is an important part of marketing. We left disappointed that something so elementary and noticeable had been overlooked. Sadly, we found the actuality did not live up to expectations created by the stylish website.