

Dhaba36, a culinary surprise on our doorstep

It's not often you find a culinary surprise on your doorstep. Take a pace forward, Dhaba. Neighbours said it was quality and the reviews were good but, for some reason, we did not get round to giving it a try.

The restaurant, created from the former village Post Office, is tastefully decorated and comfortable and the menu online promised much. Among the phrases used in the about us section we noted: "Indulge in exquisite flavours, a tapestry of authentic Indian delights", "where tradition meets innovation" and, finally, "every meal is a celebration of culinary excellence".

Eventually, we got round to booking a table. Our loss. A comfortable five-minute walk from home to restaurant, we were warmly welcomed and then presented with the menu.

Having not been there before, we asked questions, several. Explanations were given and so we got down to selecting.

We by-passed the 12 starters listed on the night, including achari tandoori prawn marinated with ground spices and pickles, and the mouth-watering chilli paneer, cottage cheese cooked with mixed pepper, ginger, garlic, spring onion with green chilli.

Our concentration was the main course. I was tempted by the Goan king prawn, coconut cream, curry leaves with whole red chilli and mustard seeds, and the paneer makhani, Indian cottage cheese with tomato base butter and cream was also considered.

Instead, we picked a chicken biryani and a lamb Dhaba36, which was highly-recommended, and the dish of diced lamb cooked with ground spice and jaggary lived up to its hype. A garlic nan was suggested and accepted.

Before the attentive waiter left the table he asked if we liked our dish hot or medium, just to check, and we provided the feedback.

Drinks were ordered from the extensive bar and a few minutes later the superbly-presented dishes arrived. They looked great and we wondered if this restaurant could live up to the blurb.

Well, it did. I'd have no hesitation in recommending Dhaba36 situated in the heart of Balerno's Main Street and only a short walk from a No 44 Lothian bus stop.

Dhaba36 uses, where possible, locally-sourced ingredients and serves vegan dishes, caters for allergies, and you can order online and pick up. It also has a kids menu.

Dhaba 36, 36 Main Street, Balerno, Edinburgh Eh14 7EH: tel: 0131 259 5760 or info@dhaba36.co.uk