

RESTAURANTS

A couple more to consider. It's all good.

The Cricket Inn

Penny Lane, Totley Bents
0114 236 5256



First impressions?

The Cricket Inn, you say? Sunday lunch? Why not indeed? Especially when it's a cold winter weekend and you're tucking into the sort of food that gets you listed in the Michelin Pub Guide. From the outside the Cricket Inn is pretty impressive; perched in the corner of a field and surrounded by the countryside, it certainly looks like the sort of place to enjoy a pint or two as well as tucking into some serious nosh. The inside ain't bad either. Split into two different areas - one classic country pub with open log fires and wooden beams - the other a more an up-market dining room complete with chandelier, I was certainly impressed.

And the food?

With that Michelin Pub guide listing and a shed load of other gourmet recommendations, I had high hopes on the food front. The menu was tempting enough with a number of options worthy of contemplation. Between our group we ordered an 8oz steak

with chunky chips, some posh fish and chips served with Yorkshire caviar, roast beef and a steak and potato pie. It was a busy afternoon, so we were delayed in receiving our food but once it came, the presentation and the taste were up to scratch; the highlight for everyone being the fish and chips. With a light and crunchy batter plus fresh mushy peas, it was awesome. Likewise, the puddings were well presented and certainly a step up from average pub fair with the rum and raisin bread and butter pudding with caramel sauce coming out as the firm favourite.

The verdict?

The whole outfit was pretty flash and with clientele to suit, it left me thinking I needed a decent hair cut and a new wardrobe. Although the service wasn't great on this occasion, the pub was bursting at the seams, and I'd certainly be prepared to give them another shot. Well worth checking out.

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Cubana

34 Trippet Lane
0114 276 0475



First impressions?

Damn, this is one sexy place. Hidden away from the hordes yet still very much in the city centre, the emphasis here is on intimacy. Low lights, candles, authentic wooden décor, subtle salsa-esque soundtrack - you know straight away that if you bring your partner here you're in for something. A small bar and cosy eating and drinking areas add to the atmosphere which is incredibly warm and welcoming; you'll feel comfortable as soon as you walk through the door.

Sounding good. The food?

In case you didn't know, Cubana is a tapas bar, so if you're after a hearty meal then it might not be for you. If however you enjoy Mediterranean dishes of the highest order, look no further. We went for a wonderful set menu of freshly prepared cuisine which included amongst other things Feijoada (diced pork, smoked bacon, chorizo sausage and

black beans in a rich tomato and wine sauce) which tasted every bit as good as it looked, Tortilla Espanola (a mighty fine wedge of traditional Spanish omelette) and Albodigas, Cubana's famous meatballs which not only deserve their reputation but are almost a meal in themselves. To be honest, the food variety was fantastic and if I had more room, I'd sing the praises of every dish. The portions were bang on the button as well, just enough to share and leave you contented rather than full. Especially that meatball.

And the final verdict?

Hard to fault. Wonderful atmosphere, fantastically friendly service and top notch Spanish nosh. Live music of the highest order added to the dining experience and a quality House Red complimented the cuisine perfectly. Cubana is somewhere you can effortlessly spend an entire evening - especially if romance is on your mind.

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