

EG Food & drink

Restaurant review

Le Bistrot Pierre

'After talking about how we liked our steaks pink, but not blue, the waitress returned with two perfectly-cooked rump steaks sharing a plate with deliciously crispy and salty frites'

NOTTINGHAM has a lot of really good lunch options. I'm not really sure who started it – or if it's always been the case – but some of the city's best restaurants just seem to give their food away when the clock strikes noon.

Places that often need that "special occasion" to justify booking for dinner, like Iberico and Hart's, have superb lunchtime menus. But one of the most popular lunchtime destinations remains Le Bistrot Pierre.

Before its doors open at noon there is always a string of people lined up outside looking anxiously at their watches, eyeballing the waiters as they busy themselves with their last-minute preparations.

With a two-course lunch priced at just under £10 it is hardly surprising and I have enjoyed a couple of great lunches there myself.

However, I must confess I had begun to regard it as a "lunch venue" and it never really came on to my radar when looking for an evening eatery. So the other week I decided to put it to the test.

Walking into the restaurant on a recent chilly Friday night I was reminded how much I like its decor.

It's a perfect medley of funk and class with duck egg-blue panelled walls against dark wooden floorboards; it's quite understated but manages to make what is really quite a big restaurant feel intimate and warm.

Within minutes of sitting down, our waitress was with us and we promptly ordered a couple of glasses of prosecco before spending a few minutes discussing the food options with her.

Just as my friend was explaining, "I normally like my steak somewhere between rare and medium rare" (surely every chef's worst nightmare), another waiter turned up with our drinks. Our waitress had not even left our table and our drinks were there. That definitely gets a big tick.

Back to the steaks. It's always a tricky one – you can go to one restaurant and order it rare and it will come out cold, almost beating on the plate, while elsewhere it will be served perfectly pink and wonderfully juicy.

And Le Bistrot Pierre fell into the latter category – after talking about how we liked our steaks pink but not blue, the waitress returned with two perfectly-cooked rump steaks sharing a plate with deliciously crispy and salty frites.

We had also ordered some crunchy green beans which had been cooked with garlic and finished with almond flakes.

We could not fault the meal and Le Bistrot Pierre was promptly added to my little black book of

"great steak" restaurants. However, the starter was a bit more mixed.

Feeling like we wanted a bit of everything, we decided to share the Assiette Méditerranéenne, which was a platter of various goodies including a coarse pork pâté, sun-blushed tomatoes, honey-glazed chorizos, olives, cornichons, houmous and smoked salmon.

It all sounded lovely on the menu, and most of it was very good when it arrived, but it was a slightly odd combination.

The strong-tasting smoked salmon did not complement anything else and left you unsure what to follow it with and, while the tomatoes, chorizos and houmous were delicious, the pâté lacked flavour and went largely untouched.

Nevertheless, the steak more than made up for the pâté, and the dessert was also worth staying for.

We ordered four-mini desserts that came with the reasonable price tag of £5.90 and quashed all cravings of chocolate, fruit and sugar in one fell swoop.

The meal

Address 13-17 Milton Street, Nottingham

Starter Assiette Méditerranéenne for two people to share: honey-glazed chorizos, olives, cornichons, coarse pork pâté, smoked salmon, sun-blushed tomatoes in olive oil, houmous, French bread and Lescure butter

Main Two Pave de Steak 8oz rump steaks served with frites. Side order of green beans.

Dessert Cafe Gourmand: mini citron flan, mini tart-tatin, raspberry sorbet and mini chocolate torte.

To drink Two glasses of prosecco, a bottle of Carignan la Cadence, Languedoc Roussillon, France 2010.

The bill £76.20

Reservations 0115 941 2850

Web www.lebistropierre.co.uk

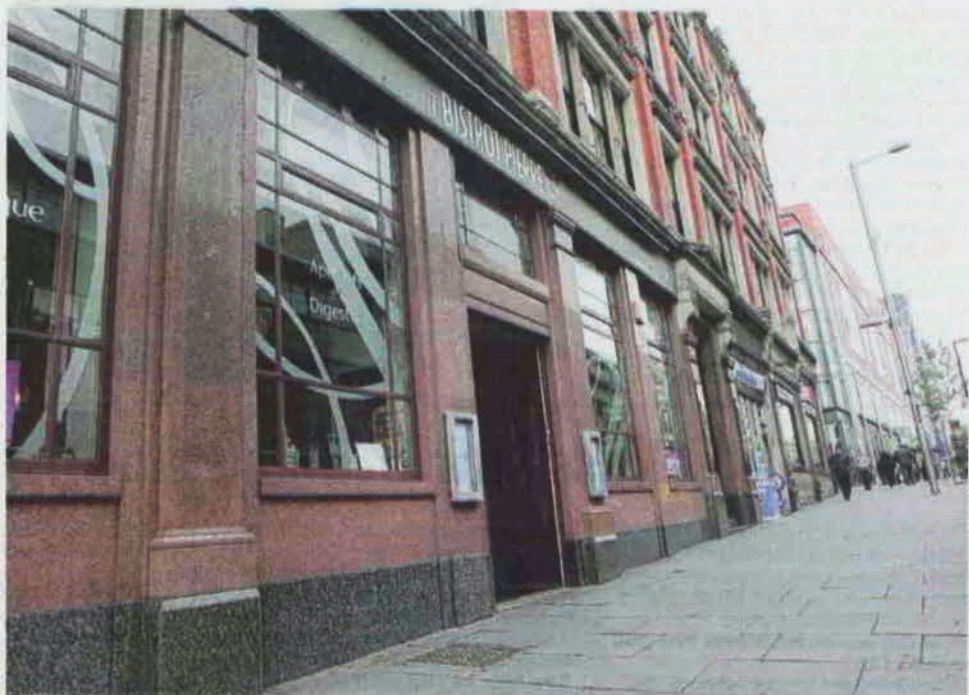
A mini citron flan, tart tatin, raspberry sorbet and chocolate torte decorated the large white plate.

Each was the perfect antidote to the other, bursting with rich and contrasting flavours.

Le Pierre Bistrot remains a firm lunchtime favourite for me but it's also a great evening destination.

Its menu is varied and the quality of the food is well above average without breaking the bank and while that remains the case, people will continue to queue.

Delia Monk



Evening destination Le Bistrot Pierre offers a varied menu without breaking the bank.