

MOORE'S HOTEL

Zoe Fitch and friends sample the popular summer seafood menu at Moore's Conservatory restaurant

Fresh and light

THE new seafood menu at Moore's Hotel has proved so popular it is being extended until the end of August, so if you've not had the chance to go yet, I highly recommend making use of the extension.

I was invited to go and try out the menu with three of my friends, Caitlin, Monty and Megan, and when I told them it was a four-course seafood menu, they could not have been more excited.

We walked in and were greeted by smiling staff who were very attentive and clearly had a good rapport with other diners in the restaurant.

The conservatory room of the hotel is bright and spacious and catered for lots of happy customers of all ages. The tables were always full but the room never seemed crowded or particularly noisy. It was nice as well to overlook the outside dining space through the large windows on the Pollet side of the restaurant.

The summer seafood menu had a great variety of seafood based dishes, from crab, to lobster to blackened sea bass. Staff were pleased to give us plenty of time to mull over the menu and change our minds several times as everything took our fancy.

I chose the tian of local crab to start, which was beautifully fresh and light and went well with the side of turmeric coral tuile, guacamole and thousand island dressing.

Megan opted for the Thai-style mussels and our friendly waiter was happy to

report to the chef Megan's many dietary requirements (just joking, she's only lactose intolerant), but it was reassuring for us to know the dishes could be adapted to suit any allergies or needs.

Monty went for the Herm oysters, which came with caviar. She said the blend of spices matched up perfectly and the whole presentation of the dish was very impressive.

Caitlin chose the fritto misto and really enjoyed the contrast of the various seafoods - scampi, king prawns and devilled white bait - with the crispy batter. And they weren't shy with the portion sizes, either.

As a palate cleanser, Caitlin and I had the seafood and udon noodle soup, which was lovely and warming and was packed with prawns and other seafood meat as well as the thick noodles.

Monty and Megan's watermelon sorbet was made with Midori liqueur and was a really refreshing interlude for what was to come.

Megan's seafood platter was everything a seafood lover could dream of: mussels, Greenland prawns, oysters, king prawns and a whole chancre crab.

She said it all tasted very fresh and moreish and had a great variety all in one dish. Monty's lobster thermidor turned heads when it came out. Served with a light mustard, brandy and cheese sauce and timbale of rice, it was all she could have hoped for and more.

Describing it as creamy and rich, she said it was nice to have some prawns in among

the chunks of lobster, too. As a pescetarian, Caitlin is more than used to having fish for dinner, but she said the Cajun blackened sea bass was cooked absolutely perfectly and paired brilliantly with the mango salsa and sweet potato fries.

I went for the half lobster and prawn salad, which came with some gorgeous buttery new potatoes.

The amount of meat on each of our dishes was almost shocking, but it was all so delicious there were clean plates all round. As well as the actual seafood, the chef had clearly given careful consideration to what sits well with the meat to really complete the dishes.

I know what you must be thinking, 'How on earth did the girls manage a dessert after all that?'

But despite the dishes being large, they were so fresh and light we didn't even think twice about wanting one of the fabulous-looking puds.

I chose the cheese plate, which came with a little bit of everything; blue, Brie, Cheddar and a particularly delicious soft spicy cheese. It also came with a chutney which went really well with all of the cheeses and crunchy crackers.

Caitlin had the baked Alaska, which she said was light and fruity and a great way to finish the meal. Monty's knickerbocker glory was glorious indeed, full of cream, ice cream and fruit. And Megan chose the best of all, a pina colada cheesecake which was a fun modern twist on a classic dish.

It was so light and fluffy compared to the buttery biscuit base and we all dug into that one.

All in all it was a fantastic evening, great company, even better food, fantastic venue, brilliant atmosphere and really

considerate staff.

It was so nice to see others in the restaurant enjoying their meals, and to be able to produce such a variety of dishes to such a high standard was really impressive. And all four courses for £29.95? Well it would be rude not to, eh!

We certainly will be making good use of the extension through July and August, and the lovely manager Stephen Purtil told me there will be more dishes added to the menu - so keep an eye out for that. If seafood doesn't quite float your boat, there is plenty else on offer with gorgeous-looking dinner and a la carte menus to choose from as well.

◆ To book, telephone 724452



Half-dozen Herm oysters.



Tian of local crab.



Thai-style mussels.



Chef's watermelon sorbet with Midori liqueur.



Seafood and udon noodle soup.



Fritto misto.



Cajun blackened sea bass.



Lobster thermidor.



Pina colada cheesecake.



Cheese plate.



Baked Alaska.



Above, seafood platter (for one) and left, lobster and prawn salad.



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