

WELLINGTON BOOT

Traditional charm

Helen Bowditch jumped at the chance to try the Wellington Boot's new set dinner menu - and she was not disappointed

IT'S NOT often that I punch the air with joy whilst at work (except at 5pm on Fridays), but when the restaurant review list was emailed out to staff I allowed myself that celebration because my name was next to the Wellington Boot Restaurant at the Hotel de Havelet. Last time I was there I was all trussed up in a bridesmaid's dress with half a bottle of Prosecco in me and charged with looking after five-year-old flower girls and page boys. Hence, I couldn't really relax and enjoy the food, but I had keen recollections of juicy slabs of fresh fish and scallops and meringue puds. This time I took along my two journalist colleagues, Mark and Nigel, because they

don't get out much, and we were seated by the big windows with great views of the illuminated Castle Cornet and Havelet Bay. It's one of those views that reminds me of what a stunning island we live in, and how I frequently zoom past it in my car without stopping to experience and enjoy it. The Wellington Boot is upstairs from the Copenhagen Bar & Grill, and it is the older sibling of the two and more formal. It has a traditional atmosphere with proper tablecloths, napkins, chandeliers and excellent service, but it is also charming and unpretentious. We were there to try out the new set dinner menu, which has a choice of five starters, six mains and four desserts. I started off with the sautéed king prawns

in herb garlic butter with cherry tomatoes sat on an English muffin. This was a bomb of buttery goodness, the prawns tasted like I was sitting on the shoreline in Goa and the salad was bright and bouncy. Mark had the golden fried Brie with wild rocket leaves and cranberry coulis, and he wolfed it down and said that it was a tangy mature Brie with crisp and light breadcrumbs. Nigel's tomato and basil soup pleased him greatly because it was steaming on arrival and there was good texture to it because it had not been whizzed to a pulp. On to the mains, and I had the grilled fillet of salmon with a lemon butter sauce, new potatoes and vegetables. It was the biggest piece of salmon I'd ever been served and the glistening pink flesh tasted much better than anything you can buy anywhere. I was happy that the sauce came in a separate jug because the fish was so good that all I did was squeeze the lemon wedge over it. Also my belt is mysteriously on its last hole so it's very welcome when delicious food is healthy. The new potatoes had salt rubbed into the skins and were cooked to perfection, along with the vegetables. Mark was in a rhapsody over the beef Wellington, which is obviously one of the signatures dishes. 'I'm stuffed,' he yodelled, after enjoying the tender beef, pate and crispy pastry. Beef Wellington can be a tricky dish to get right, but here it was a showstopper. Mark also had paprika chunky chips, which he declared 'real and proper' because they were crunchy on the outside and fluffy on the inside. Nigel went for the vegetarian option which was the Indian style mixed vegetable curry with basmati rice and naan bread and he commented that the spicy heat was pitched just right and there was a good range of vegetables. Continuing with my healthy theme, for dessert I chose the espresso crème brulee with amaretto biscuit, my reasoning being



Tomato and basil soup.

that usually crème brulee is small. Huge ramekins of crème brulee emerged from the kitchen (Mark chose this one as well) and it was soft and luscious and dreamily sweet but with a good tang of espresso. The most important thing though was that there was a nice thick crunchiness when hit with the spoon. Nigel indulged himself with the chocolate mousse with meringue, and again he commented on the lovely texture because there were fine flakes of chocolate within the mousse, and it went well with the strawberries and blackberries on top. The waiters were very kind, welcoming and attentive, and I liked it that they used notepads to write down our orders because when waiting staff don't do this because it makes me worried that something will be forgotten. But there were no problems like that at all. The assistant restaurant manager said the menu was a celebration of the classics, using local and fresh produce. 'We make sure that we have lots of dishes on the menu so we have plenty of choices, and all the time, almost everyday, we're changing things on the menu. 'We're still keeping the main courses that were on the a la carte menu like the beef Wellington, steak Diane, scallops and king prawns - those dishes are especially popular, but it's good to add new things as well.' Guernsey has an established reputation for gourmet, affordable food and the Wellington Boot Restaurant is clearly the flagship of the Guernsey fleet. It's hearty, jolly, robust food, but with lots of healthy options too. One course from the menu is £15.95, two courses are £20.95, three courses are £25.95. There is also an extensive wine and drinks list.

top, which made a very satisfying noise when hit with the spoon. Nigel indulged himself with the chocolate mousse with meringue, and again he commented on the lovely texture because there were fine flakes of chocolate within the mousse, and it went well with the strawberries and blackberries on top. The waiters were very kind, welcoming and attentive, and I liked it that they used notepads to write down our orders because when waiting staff don't do this because it makes me worried that something will be forgotten. But there were no problems like that at all. The assistant restaurant manager said the menu was a celebration of the classics, using local and fresh produce. 'We make sure that we have lots of dishes on the menu so we have plenty of choices, and all the time, almost everyday, we're changing things on the menu. 'We're still keeping the main courses that were on the a la carte menu like the beef Wellington, steak Diane, scallops and king prawns - those dishes are especially popular, but it's good to add new things as well.' Guernsey has an established reputation for gourmet, affordable food and the Wellington Boot Restaurant is clearly the flagship of the Guernsey fleet. It's hearty, jolly, robust food, but with lots of healthy options too. One course from the menu is £15.95, two courses are £20.95, three courses are £25.95. There is also an extensive wine and drinks list.

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