

SAUMAREZ PARK CAFE

Loved by locals

Danielle Kenneally takes friends and colleagues to enjoy the fare at Saumarez Park Cafe

WHAT better way is there to revel in the freedom we can all now enjoy, now that we're out of lockdown, than a perfect sunny day in the park? Heading to Saumarez Park, alongside three friends and colleagues on a Saturday for an early dinner at Saumarez Park Cafe, followed by a lazy Sunday stroll and a picnic with another friend was a weekend well spent. Impeccable service and friendly faces welcomed us at the family-oriented cafe that has flags and teddy bears draped from the ceiling. It's a unique place that has been serving families for decades and for a number of my companions, it elicited nostalgic memories. A Guernsey institution that is loved by locals now as much as when it first opened.

There's a distinctly Italian feel to the menu and the staff, who have a lot of Italian heritage, so we begin with bruschetta with cheese and prawns and tomatoes and baguette with spicy oil, followed by our starters – vegetable soup, minestrone soup, pan-fried mushrooms served with garlic butter and a smoked salmon platter. All amazingly well-prepared and displayed, with flavour to boot. Helen and Nigel said their soup had great texture and was creamy and flavoursome. Ady and I practically shared the salmon and mushroom dishes, as we couldn't decide which we preferred, they were both so good. I would possibly say the mushrooms took the lead but it was a close call. We all enjoyed the bruschetta cleaning off every morsel that was laid out before us.

For our mains, Helen had a spicy vegetarian burger and chips, Nigel had home-made beef lasagne served with chips, part of the cafe's summer evening menu, Ady had one of their specials, the crab and lobster linguine, and I had the spaghetti carbonara. We all enjoyed our mains, which



Beef lasagne. (28461082)

were all filling and warming, in the way you would want to feel after a fully-packed week of life. Fresh and reassuring sustenance that you would fully expect of a family-oriented cafe. Dessert-wise, the winner, in my opinion, was the tiramisu, which was Helen's and as much as I could have stolen it off her, I settled in with my chocolate brownie in cream, which was also amazing. Nigel said his apple crumble in custard was homely with the added cinnamon, a nice touch to the moist crumble and nicely tangy fresh apples, while Ady's strawberries and cream were a homage on a day that would have seen the Wimbledon women's final.

This could also all be rounded off with a coffee to ensure that after all that food, you can still make it to your car or to keep you awake for the walk home, such is the effect of a hearty and filling meal. The proprietor, Salvatore Cacace, who has been established at the cafe for more than 20 years, came over to chat to us while we relaxed and explained that they had been able to open up again since lockdown several weeks ago for initially takeaways and then completely. He said the local support had

really helped them. 'Although in the summer months there are some tourists, it is really the locals that support us,' he said. 'They're what keeps us going and we've been really grateful for it, we want to serve families for many more years to come.' He said the community spirit is what gives the cafe its heart. 'Our aim is to appeal to families, so we have a garden in the back with a bouncy castle for kids to enjoy,' he said. 'It's not quiet in here but that's how we want it, families can enjoy the park and come and enjoy themselves here too. It gives them the option not to have to cook but still enjoy some home-made food.'

He added that there was plenty of choice for people to pick from, from the traditional such as a sausage, egg and chips to the healthy, such as ham salad, and from the cultural Italian pasta, such as spaghetti ghiontona to seafood, for example fresh local crab salad. 'We want to appeal to all tastebuds,' he said. 'When you go somewhere to eat you want to have variety and we have so many regulars that come time and time again and they can have something new every time.' We all left satiated and ready to



Minestrone soup. (28461063)

work it off with a turn around the park in the glorious sunshine. But it did not stop there, because the next day I returned to enjoy a generously-packed picnic from the cafe of tuna pasta salad, a sausage, egg and chips to the healthy, such as ham salad, and from the cultural Italian pasta, such as spaghetti ghiontona to seafood, for example fresh local crab salad.

As July is National Picnic Month, it is good timing and for the many couples, families and friendship groups the island over, it is another way to enjoy the green parts of our island in weather that showcases its natural beauty. For summer weather that brings out the relaxed hippy in us all, the option to wind down after a busy day or even week at work by slipping on your sandals and picking up a ready-made picnic to head outdoors with your nearest and dearest, is one of pure joy. So get yourself outside and along to Saumarez Park Cafe, the culinary possibilities are gastronomic.



Strawberries and cream. (28461107)



Hors d'oeuvres: bruschetta, cheese prawns and tomato. (28461047)



Discover places to eat and drink in Guernsey



Veggie burger and chips. (28461080)



Mushrooms in garlic butter. (28461074)



Apple crumble and custard. (28461084)



Vegetable soup. (28461059)



Spaghetti carbonara. (28461076)



Salmon platter. (28461072)



Tiramisu. (28461101)

'When you go somewhere to eat you want to have variety and we have so many regulars who come time and time again and they can have something new every time'

Proprietor Salvatore Cacace



Chocolate brownie. (28461086)

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A generously-packed picnic from the cafe. (28460752)