

MOORES CONSERVATORY

Bring on the spring

Juliet Pouteaux and friends were in for a treat when they sampled the new menu at the Conservatory Restaurant at Moores

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Please call for reservation (01481) 721552
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AS WINTER'S grip on the islands finally loosens, Moores Conservatory Restaurant has drawn up a special spring menu to help tempt islanders out. The chef kindly gave us a preview of the set menu, which is running on Fridays and Saturdays throughout March. Tempting our friends with young children can always be a bit of a challenge, but when my mates Mark and Andrea were offered a chance to try the menu they were quickly booking a babysitter and checking the night bus timetable to come and join myself and partner David for the evening out. So on a blustery Friday night we pushed open the doors and entered the warm, light lobby of Moores Hotel. The conservatory was cosy and softly lit and we were soon seated and being served a selection of white and brown bread by the friendly staff, who were on hand throughout the meal to help us.

We each went for different starters to make the most of the menu. David opted for the carrot, ginger and turmeric soup. In recent weeks he has been making some of his own soups and he said he was sure to be taking some ideas from this one to try at home. He especially enjoyed what the turmeric brought to the dish, which softened the sweetness. Mark ordered the chicken lollipops, which came with a small salad and a barbecue sauce. He enjoyed the unusual presentation and quickly polished them off. Andrea went for the asparagus, pea



shoots and beetroot salad, with marinated goat's cheese pearls and a black sesame seed dressing. My meal started with the crab rarebit. The crab was in a lovely creamy sauce on top of a toasted muffin. The egg was a lovely touch, and it all worked really well with the pea shoots, balsamic glaze and cherry tomatoes. Then it was on to the mains and Mark dived into enjoying grass-fed Irish ribeye steak, which came with a rich Diane sauce, mustard-flavoured mushrooms and hand-cut chips. He said the steak had a 'melt-in-the-mouth' texture and he also really enjoyed the chips, saying they were a perfect cross between chips and crispy roast potatoes. Andrea definitely made a good choice with the pan-fried turbot. She said it was rich and buttery, but it was the sauteed potato gnocchi, with crispy pancetta, that had everyone crowding around her plate. Fortunately she was generous with sharing the little bundles of flavour. The cauliflower, sweet potato and chickpea curry had everything David enjoys in a dish. He said it was packed with spices, which had been carefully added to ensure the heat of the powders did not drown out their flavours. Unfortunately bad weather meant the hake was unavailable, but the chef kindly slotted in a nice fillet of cod instead for my main, which came surrounded with mussels and clams, as well as a saffron fumet sauce. I adore seafood and this dish really does give you a bit of everything. The cod had a very delicate, mild flavour, but that meant it did not drown out the seafood

flavours of the mussels and clams. The saffron was also given a chance to shine against the other tastes on the plate. It was fortunate that the desserts were all quite light, after the generous mains. Mark's cheesecake was flavoured with lemons and blueberries and he said it was packed with flavour. Andrea's orange and white chocolate mousse came in slices, making it easier to share with friends. She said the orange complemented the creamy dish and the passion fruit coulis made it all feel fresh. David went for the cheeseboard, which came with several options, including Cheddar and blue cheese. When it comes to desserts, I really enjoy something warming, especially in winter. And the strawberry and rhubarb bread and butter pudding is certainly perfect for that. The sweetness and sharpness of the fruit played off each other so well, and the swollen, warm sultanas were like little sweets in the dish. At the end of the meal there was a chance for coffee and a lovely, crispy chocolate chip cookie - a nice light end to the evening.

◆ The full menu costs £25.50 for three courses and £22.50 for two courses and coffee. It is on offer every Friday and Saturday throughout March. Call 724452 to book a table.



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