

food & fun

table talk

FANCY A BITE? WE'VE TESTED SOME OF THE SCRUMMIEST PLACES IN WALES

Reviewers: Chiara Rinaldi, Simon Farrington, Charlotte Laing

TIDE'S RESTAURANT

ST DAVID'S HOTEL & SPA, HAVANNAH STREET, CARDIFF. 029 2045 4045

This was the first time I'd eaten at St David's since executive chef Wayne Assom took over last summer. Turns out, he's doing a great job. Our starters of roasted duck salad and smoked haddock and clam chowder were light and full of flavour, and my main course rump of Welsh lamb with pea mash and honey vegetables was a sensation. For desserts the star was the bread and butter pudding – a thoroughly modern and full-of-flavour take on the traditional dish. Something that ran through the whole meal was a great sense of balance – exactly the right amount of everything on the plate and just the right blend of flavours. It's pretty rare to find that actually, even at much more expensive restaurants. Stunning setting too. **CL**
Dinner set menu, three courses £35



THE MARKET PLACE

66 THE HIGH STREET, COWBRIDGE
01446 774800

While the name may not have changed, the new owner of The Market Place, Peter Marriott, and his head chef son Tim have ensured that virtually every thing else has. Since buying the place before Christmas, Peter has capitalised on the charm of the Grade II listed building. A log burning stove and candles give an intimacy to almost every table. The starters were inventive, tasty and beautifully presented. A warm salad of black pudding, new potatoes, pancetta, red onion marmalade and rocket was exceptional, the pan fried sardine fillets with anchovy goujons a close second. You could argue that it's hard to get a roast beef or slow roast Welsh leg of lamb wrong, but you do know when it is beautifully cooked and well presented as this was. But it was the puds that blew me and my dining companions away: the Panettone bread and butter pudding, ice cream and Drambuie syrup was stunning, the sticky toffee pudding moreish, the lemon tart beautifully 'tartish' and the coconut semi-freddo with chocolate shavings and pistachio tuille, delish! The Market Place is a warm and beautiful restaurant, with quality food and attention to detail. I wish the Marriott family every success with this venture. **SF**

BRASSERIE CENTRALE

CARDIFF MARRIOTT HOTEL, MILL LANE. 029 2039 9944



This place was awarded an AA Rosette just weeks after re-opening following a £400,000 re-fit so expectations were high. I began with a warming French onion soup with gruyere-topped toasted French bread. My partner had a pork and apricot terrine that contrasted pleasantly with sweet tomato relish. For main course, the confit canard of duck was cooked nicely with light crispy skin and tender flesh but its flavour was overpowered by the chorizo

in the accompanying bean cassoulet. I had serious food envy over the chef's special: char-grilled chicken with the Nicoise salad. Dessert was a smooth and rich chocolate mousse topped with a layer of cream for me, while my partner devoured crème brulee. Enjoyable rustic French cooking with minimum fuss, and right in the centre of the city. Well worth a visit. **CR** *Three course dinner £25-£30, without wine*