Perfect conditions at PISTE

Diners at a Cheshire Life business women’s luncheon were delighted by everything at Piste in Tarporley

WORDS BY JANET REEDER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIRSTY THOMPSON

A restaurant called Piste just has to live up to its name – so there was plenty of après ski style hospitality when the venue hosted the latest Cheshire Life Women in Business Ladies’ Luncheon.

Nantwich Food and Drink Awards’ restaurant of the year enjoys a fabulous location at the centre of pretty Tarporley village and was the perfect place to be welcomed with a glass of champagne and elegantly constructed canapés.

The hand-picked guest list turned the spotlight on local lawyers, business women and entrepreneurs, who had the chance to network in a chic and relaxed venue in one of Cheshire’s most sought-after villages.

Why Piste? Well the name of the restaurant is a bit of an in-joke, admits James Hughes, who has been co-owner alongside his brother-in-law and head chef, Paul Bebe for the past 18 months. ‘We’ve spent a lot of time skiing in..."
the Alps and loved the idea of giving the restaurant an aprés ski feel,’ he says. ‘At night time the downstairs bar area is buzzing. It is here that people can dine more informally if they wish, while upstairs it is more of a restaurant atmosphere but we are very much about cooking with superb ingredients.’

Carrying the Alpine theme through to the decor, mountain images adorn the downstairs walls. On the whole, everything has been kept simple and elegantly rustic, rather like a posh bar in a French village.

Upstairs the mood is contemporary-meets-traditional country house so walls are given the wow factor with statement wallpaper and stags’ heads. The interior was designed by James’s sister Lucie, making it very much a family restaurant.

Says James: ‘We initially were looking at pubs and bars but when we came here we just loved the site and it became very much a family business, as my sister is married to Paul and my dad was daft enough to lend us the money to do it. ‘All of us just love good food, good service and good value and that’s what we want people to enjoy at Piste. It’s got a great bar area, but it can equally be where people take afternoon tea during the day, while upstairs there’s the more formal dining of the restaurant.’

Following the drinks reception downstairs, the ladies made their way via the wooden staircase to the first floor. James reveals that the building is actually the tallest in Tarporley and if you count the cellar it has five floors; fortunately nobody was required to build up an appetite by scaling all of them!

For the lunch, chef Paul had devised a fresh and seasonal menu featuring seared carpaccio of Aberdeenshire beef, pickled baby carrots and chestnut mushrooms, purple truffle potato crisps, horseradish mascarpone and baby herb salad.

For mains, oven roasted fillet of wild salmon, parsley crumb, saffron potatoes, baby vegetables and green pea velouté...
Only the most weight-conscious could resist the deliciousness of a baked vanilla cheesecake, lemon curd and fresh raspberries and compote.

The vegetables had been locally sourced from Chester Produce and the meat was from award-winning Aubrey Allen. After-dinner coffee, accompanied by delicious homemade fudge, was from Vettori.

Although the lunch was a ladies’ only affair, one man had been allowed to join the gathering, Nick Gent from Rodney Densem Wines. He had expertly paired the beef with a delightful Septima Malbec Rose Argentina and the salmon with Coorong Estate Chardonnay from Australia, both of which he’d intended to evoke the feeling that warmer weather was on its way. Both these wines and the champagne donated by Pernod Ricard were a complete success.

‘I wanted to get you in the mood for summer,’ explained Nick. ‘So we have a Malbec rose wine which is a little like a chilled red and goes perfectly with the beef and an unoaked Chardonnay with tropical flavours and a buttery taste.’

And as the sun streamed through the windows of Piste, it was possible to imagine that those summery days were just around the corner.

FACT FILE

PISTE WINE BAR AND RESTAURANT: 55 High Street, Tarporley, Cheshire, CW6 0DP
01829 732 483 www.pistetarporley.com

Style of venue
French rustic with contemporary élan. Stripped wooden floors, heritage hued paintwork and statement wallpaper.

On the menu
Seared carpaccio of Aberdeenshire beef, pickled baby carrots and chestnut mushrooms, purple truffle potato crisps, horseradish mascarpone and baby herb salad.

Oven roasted fillet of wild salmon, parsley crumb, saffron potatoes, baby vegetables and green pea veloute.

Baked vanilla cheesecake, lemon curd, fresh raspberries and compote.

Ambience
Chic, relaxed, elegant and sophisticated.

Service
Excellent. Even last-minute dietary requirements were cheerfully dealt with.

Opening Times
Monday-Thursday 11.30am-9.30pm
Friday-Saturday 11.30am-10pm (for food)
11am-12am for drinks