

The View London Review



Review by **Bill Buckley**

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This pub/restaurant in a suburban street is only moments - but might as well be miles - away from bustling Fulham Broadway. Passing trade must be nonexistent but with assured cooking, friendly service and contemporary styling, its longevity is surely guaranteed.

The Venue

Owner and chef, Olivier Lavigne du Cadet, bought the gastropub, The Farm, in spring 2010 and has changed the name, menu and décor to great effect. Entry to the 70-cover restaurant is found via the bar and lounge where a further 40 can eat. It's all in keeping with the boutique hotel feel, with dark woods, groovy light fittings and feature wallpaper walls. There's a tiny white-walled courtyard to the rear, the huge glass doors to which can be flung open in summer.

The Atmosphere

The South West London bush telegraph has been busy ensuring plenty of civilised, 20 and 30-something Fulhamites are in attendance. Service is charming and informal.

The Food

Expect French-based cooking light years ahead of the usual gastropub predictability. Beetroot carpaccio (£5.50) is a light, pretty starter of concentric circles of purple and golden beets, baby spinach leaves, a tangle of sharp, grated apple 'spaghetti', crumbled pecorino and toasted pine nuts.

A substantial, creamy pot of mussel chowder (£7) features girolles and cubes of spud. There's little evidence of the promised saffron, the dominating flavour instead being thyme, but it sure hits the spot.

Mains impress, too. A grilled ribeye (£20.90) arrives cooked just as requested. It's a tad chewy, as is the way of this cut, but the expert charring is delicious. Dauphinoise potatoes are gratifyingly unctuous and decadent, with decent onion rings and peppercorn sauce completing the plate.

Fish and chips (£12.50) features haddock in beautifully crisp tempura batter. Skin-on chips are brilliantly crisp yet floury inside and a minted pea puree is elegant, with the (obviously) homemade tartare sauce a silky standout and zinging with capers.

The pastry on the chocolate tart (£6.50) is impossibly thin and crisp, and the filling deeply chocolate rich. There's a decent blob of cream, and a sprinkling of that Blumenthal-esque must-have, popping candy, which you'll either consider as a so-last-year, mouth-tingling distraction, or just great fun.

The clementine trifle (£5) works well too, with gloriously boozy citrus cream atop moist sponge. One tiny suggestion is that chopping up the fruit segments would be an improvement; it's nigh on impossible to cut them at the table in their creamy sea, so you end up with either a whole one or none at all in each mouthful.

The Drink

Hurrah, hurrah and thrice hurrah: every wine from the global list, except three pricier Champagnes, is available by the glass and carafe. Prices start at £3.80/£10.50/£15 for a Spanish Tempranillo or Verdejo, rising to a not-too-scary £45 for top red (Chateau Bonnange Fruits Rouges) and £85 for Ruinart Blanc de Blanc Champagne. Chenin Blanc Good Hope, Stellenbosch (£4.50/£12/£17) is a robust, refreshing, rounded bargain whilst the Merlot Casa Azul, Rapel Valley from Chile (same prices) is plummy, smooth and almost as exceptional.

The Last Word

This lovely neighbourhood restaurant would be best described as offering local destination dining, were that not a contradiction. The three-course prix fixé menu (£19.50) is a steal, whilst the a la carte (about £40 with wine) still represents splendid value at a restaurant that locals should feel very lucky to have.