



Metro January 2006

The Dinner Detective

Walking into the large room that is Room, I felt like something out of children's series The Borrowers. The space was enormous and the ceilings high enough to make people look tiny and it was fitted with the most enormous lights I have ever seen.

Looking closer to eye-level, I saw the bar was crowded with people sampling cocktails and spotted a DJ in the corner, which immediately led to, admittedly highly-prejudiced, concerns about the quality of the food.

Peering round the side of the bar we saw the dining room was packed with Christmas partygoers, but we were led to a table for two which was far enough away from the rowdiest of guests and made me grateful for the obvious effort staff had gone to in planning seating.

And the music which had concerned me turned out to be pleasant background - certainly audible but not detracting from conversation.

The menu was simply priced at £5 for all starters and desserts and £15 for all main courses except steak at £20, but choosing food was still complex as the menu offered us the names of traditional British fayre and descriptions that sounded like anything but. Realising we were struggling a bit, our waiter offered help and we accepted gladly.

To start, I went for the Waldorf salad, which arrived as a small round blue cheese topped with pear slices and with a crushed walnut dressing. My companion chose toad in the hole, a homemade game sausage with mini Yorkshire puddings and caramelised red onions. Both were delicious, though the sausage and red onions were so outstanding I would choose them in future.

My main course was called tikka masala, and consisted of two fillets of sea bass, marinated in tikka spices, served with a lentil dahl made with coconut milk and mini onion bahjis. All of the ingredients were absolutely delicious and went well together.

My opposite number went for a fillet steak with bearnaise sauce, which was cooked to perfection and came with delicious chunky chips and vegetables, which made the knife and fork look tiny. I finished off with lemon meringue pie, with honeycomb parfait which was a yummy interpretation of the classic, while my companion opted for the ice-cream, which tasted homemade.



We left about midnight and the bar was still full and the music still going strong, which made me think Room might be more of a venue for a night out than just a meal - and a good night out at that. It made us feel small in stature, but we enjoyed the food so much we certainly went home a few pounds larger.