

HOUGUE DU POMMIER

With delicious food, great service and superb surroundings, **Amanda Eulenkamp** and friends could not fault their evening at the Hougue du Pommier

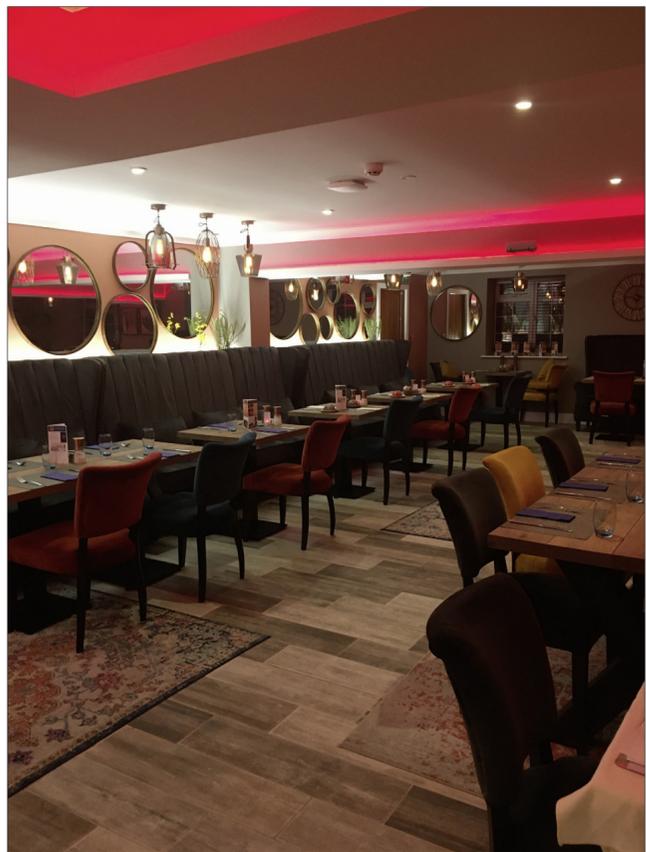
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Modernity has been injected into a traditional Guernsey farmhouse building at the Hougue du Pommier. (27460525)

A good night out

MY 'Guernsey Press Supper Club' group of friends leapt at the opportunity to review the food at the Hougue du Pommier. We all had fond memories of the Hougue of yesteryear, with its dark country furniture, but knew the property was under new ownership and had been refurbished. Full marks to the interior designer who has managed to inject modernity into a traditional Guernsey farmhouse building. Our pre-dinner drinks were served in a delightful snug, one of a series of rooms before the bar. Sitting on two oversized sofas, the four of us enjoyed a glass of wine while checking out the menu. As is usual on these nights out, our reviews were simple: each person had to have a different starter, main and dessert. On this occasion, it's fair to say we dithered because the menu was so tempting. Eventually we settled on our starter and main course and ordered from the excellent serving staff. It's easy to say that nothing is too much trouble, but this is genuinely the case at the Hougue du Pommier. Once we'd ordered, we settled back to catch up with each other, before moving to our table in the main restaurant. Our drinks were placed on a tray and carried in for us - always a nice touch. There really is a wow factor to the decor of the main restaurant. Deep sofa-style benches in tactile velvet are placed around the wall, with wooden tables and an eclectic mix of chairs opposite. The lighting is superb and is complemented by restful background music, adding up to an atmosphere conducive to a good night out. First up were our starters, all beautifully presented. Karen opted for the beef brisket bites. Normally it's served with horseradish mayo, but Karen asked if she could



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have ordinary mayonnaise. She declared the starter really delicious with a crunchy coating and a very soft and tender filling. Sian had chosen the asparagus arancini, which were deep-fried risotto balls with spinach, asparagus and mozzarella cheese. Like Karen, she proclaimed the starter extremely tasty, well presented and beautifully crispy. Guernsey crab cakes served with mango chutney was Ruth's choice. Full of bursting with plenty of crab and a crispy coating, Ruth said they were not at all greasy. She also thought the mango chutney tasted homemade, adding that there was plenty of side salad, too. Karen confessed to a little food envy as it looked so delicious. I'd gone for the duck spring rolls served with a hoisin sauce and pickled cucumber. At the risk of repeating my friends, this too was beautifully crispy. The rolls were packed with duck and the pickled cucumber was the perfect accompaniment. So far, so much more than good. Our main courses followed, again all beautifully presented. Ruth opted for the beer battered cod and hand-cut chips because, in her words, 'it's a great dish to compare'. The fish was 'absolutely on point', she said, adding that the batter was beautifully crisp and not too thick. She said that the portion size was perfect, always a plus with fish and chips because sometimes it can be overwhelming. Fish was the choice of the day with Sian choosing the salmon and me the roasted cod. Sian's pan-seared fillet of salmon was served with crushed potatoes, green beans and a tarragon sauce. Sian said that the fish simply disintegrated on the knife as it was so beautifully cooked. The potatoes were really lovely and buttery, with plenty of green beans and a delicious sauce. As she managed to clear her plate ('I didn't think I could eat it all, but I did!'), it's fair to say it was a success. My roasted cod had a herb crust and cherry tomatoes and was served with new potatoes and a mussel sauce. The ratio of cod to crust was excellent and

the flakes of fish were cooked to perfection. I'm not usually a fan of fish with tomatoes, so it may seem like an odd choice for me, but I really wanted to try it. It was absolutely delicious, the sauce was very delicate and it was a lovely light meal - definitely a convert to fish with tomatoes now. Karen was the only one to go for a meat dish, and her choice was the fillet of beef medallions served with potato wedges, broccoli and a thyme sauce. Again, she couldn't fault the meal, although she enjoyed the sauce so much she could easily have had more. Our waitress kindly asked if we'd like 10 minutes before our desserts, which was really appreciated. I opted for the tiramisu as, a bit like Ruth who will happily compare fish and chips in restaurants, I always think tiramisu is a good barometer. A slice of strawberry on the top and some coulis around the plate, this looked really good. It was extremely light and rounded off a delicious meal for me. Karen had slight food envy again as she spotted Ruth's bread and butter pudding with custard: 'beautifully soft, a nice amount of saltiness in the bread and butter pudding, delicious vanilla custard.' However, her cheesecake with strawberry sauce didn't disappoint. She said the flavour was superb, and the cheesecake itself was baked, absolutely delicious. Sian's mango mousse was light and tasty - in fact, we all declared the entire meal to have been beautifully light. At this point, the restaurant had emptied out of its other diners so I took the opportunity to snap a picture of the room. Even though we were the last in, at no point did we feel under pressure to hurry up - in fact, the complete opposite, as we sat sipping our teas and coffees at the end of a fantastic meal.



◆ To book a table, call 256531 or email pommier@ch.je, or visit www.channelhotels.com/hotel-hougue-de-pommier for more information.



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