

BISTRO AT DRIFTWOOD

The perfect location

In its prime waterside spot, the Bistro at Driftwood offers a sumptuous menu coupled with stunning west coast views, perfect for watching the sun set

da nello
RISTORANTE ITALIANO

**Open from Tuesday to Sunday
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Lunch noon – 2.00pm
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3 course lunch menu £15.50
3 course dinner menu £25.95

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GUERNSEY summer evenings for me are all about great sunsets, tasty seafood, chilled glasses of wine and relaxing with great company. I want to cool down and unwind after a long, hot day at work but take in the scenery and appreciate the wonders that we have right on our doorstep. When I learned that the newly-refurbished Bistro at Driftwood was looking for someone to try out the menu, I jumped at the chance. Situated on Perelle Bay, it puts you in a prime location to watch the incredible west coast sunset and I just knew it would be a great evening. I asked my partner, Adam, to come along and our friends Martyn and Emma. On arrival, we were greeted by the hotel

manager and ushered to our table by the waitresses. Shortly afterwards the owner, James Le Fric, came over to introduce himself and tell us a little more of what the new bistro was all about. There are references to the hotel's name all around, with several bench seats made out of driftwood. Carefully hand painted in pastel colours, these benches are a quirky touch for what is an airy and fresh interior, all designed carefully by James' wife. Mint green walls and turquoise accessories create an ocean-like theme – perfect for when you are overlooking the bay. The restaurant decor is like no other in Guernsey and with the gentle hum of others talking as they dine, it creates a relaxed, modern day bistro atmosphere. As the drinks were

ordered, Rocquettes ciders for the boys, a crisp glass of pinot for me and an Appletiser for Emma, we started to look at the selection of dishes on offer. I say it often, but there truly is something for everyone here. There is an array of tasty seafood dishes, supported by what was a specials board like no other. You could tell that a lot of thought and planning had been put in to make the specials just that – special. But for those who like a meatier dish, there is a good selection. For starters, I went straight for the smoked salmon. There were a number of seasoned slices of Scottish smoked salmon with a side of salad leaves and it was served with a plentiful helping of gluten-free bread. Tasty and light, it was the perfect starter for me. Adam opted for a meaty starter – the duck



and orange salad. The confit duck and orange was served on mixed leaves with a raspberry vinaigrette – adding a sweet twist on the meaty yet citrusy dish. Perfect for those who like to invigorate their taste buds, the texture of the meaty duck was complemented by the crispness of the salad. Martyn chose an old favourite for many – the deep-fried Brie. Restaurants know that if they have Brie on their starter menu, it will be a winner. It's just one of those things that everyone seems to like. But while traditional, Driftwood's Brie is a slight twist on the classic – coated and fried in almond, Parmesan and orange zest crumbs while served with the popular Cumberland sauce. A fresh idea and one worthy of congratulations, Martyn said, describing it as very tasty. Emma ordered the French onion soup for her starter. She admitted that it would not have necessarily been her first choice, but she was in the mood for trying something new and she

was not disappointed. Lightly spiced with a dash of Tio Pepe, it was also accompanied by two decent-sized aged Gruyere cheese croutons and a side of bread. She really enjoyed it. As the chatter continued and the drinks flowed, it was then time for mains. This was a hard decision for all because of the many options – including the specials. I wanted to try one of those detailed specials and the fillet of plaice, stuffed with prawns, lobster and brandy cream, accompanied by sautee potatoes and garden vegetables, seemed to be catching my eye. With a plentiful helping, and a decent amount of greens, this was a hearty fish dish with lots of different ocean tastes, all complementing one another perfectly. The brandy cream was light yet tasty and the potatoes were well seasoned. Adam also wanted to choose a special and, seeing as we were close to a prime seaside location, he fancied everyone's, well mostly everyone's, favourite

shellfish – lobster. The half lobster was served with garlic butter, fries, salad and coleslaw. The dish was meaty, the coleslaw was creamy and tasty and the salad plentiful, he said. Martyn felt like going for another traditional favourite – steak. While again popular on many menus across the island, steak is not always an easy one to get right. But in Driftwood's case, they got it spot on. The 8oz sirloin was cooked just how he liked it and was served with mushrooms, cherry tomatoes and onion rings. With hand-cut chips on the side as well as a generous helping of peppercorn sauce, it was a fulfilling meal. Emma's choice for main was the pork escalopes. An idea taken from the best brasseries of Normandy, the grilled pork was marinated in cider and served with grilled apples, a peppery Calvados cream sauce, creamy mash and fresh vegetables. Emma said the sauce was sweet and tangy, accompanying the

pork beautifully. The mash was rustic, with chunks of potato, not too pureed, which is just how she likes it. The generous portion of greens also paired well. We finished our main and the sun began to set, the restaurant now full of patrons. With a window seat, we were in the best location to take in the beautiful colours of the sky. We really are so lucky, we all said, as we continued to enjoy our Guernsey experience. With the dessert menu presented to us, it was time to choose. This time it was Emma to order off the specials with her choice of Caribbean-style pancakes accompanied by rum and raisin ice cream, banana and rum syrup. The pancakes were light and fluffy and the sauce gave them a sweet touch while the coolness of the ice cream matched perfectly. Martyn's choice was the key lime pie. It came with a red berry

coulis and Guernsey cream. Martyn said the pie was bursting with citrus flavours but was sweet and light. A perfect palate cleanser, he added. For his dessert, Adam opted for the cheesecake. Another of his firm favourites, this was vanilla flavoured and served with strawberry sauce. All the dishes at Driftwood were beautifully presented. To round up my night, I ordered ice cream – two scoops of honeycomb and one of vanilla. It was a sweet and cool end to what was a lovely night. If you are looking for somewhere new, fresh, modern, out of Town and good value for money, I would definitely recommend Driftwood. Every effort has been made to make the ambience welcoming and the menu fun for everyone. And with the west coast view, it's also in a perfect location.

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