



TABLE TALK

BY FALSTAFF

L'Almacera Restaurant in Teulada has long enjoyed a reputation for good food with its 'Taste of the World' special menu featuring recipes from around the globe but now, this cosy, colourful restaurant that was once used as the town's gaol in the 17th century, has been taken over by Colin Hill and his lovely partner Elaine Keating.

The talents of the new proprietors were brought to my attention by word of mouth from satisfied customers. What interested me most was that it was now open at lunch times as well as evenings. Seeing as I, like many people trying to watch their weight, prefer to eat my main meal at lunchtime rather than the evening, I decided to try out the new proprietor's cuisine. To this aim, and so that I would have lots of other meal choices at hand to try, I insisted my friends join me in this exercise.

The special menú del día, costing just 12 euros, is available not only at lunchtime but also in the evenings (then costing a massive 15 euros!). From a choice of six starters, I selected the deep fried brie with a warm berry sauce; Bryan had the melon and

Serrano ham ('cause of his cholesterol), Judith went for the homemade pâté with current bread, and the rest of my gang fell prey to the deep fried mushrooms with cheddar cheese dip.

Not only did everything taste great, the presentation was impressive. And the following main courses and desserts were equally pleasing to the eye.

In the interest of this review, I risked several attacks of forks trying to stab my hand as I insisted on trying everyone else's food.

This way, I had the opportunity to also try the homemade steak and kidney pie, the poached salmon with lobster sauce, the pork ribs with honey and mustard, and the lamb's liver with bacon and onions. I chose the 'minute' steak with pepper sauce (could have had mushroom sauce). There was also a vegetarian choice. All dishes were served with fresh vegetables of the season, roast and boiled potatoes.

The best thing about this meal was that the portions were sensible sizes; this was definitely a high-class cuisine at a pauper's price, and the desserts were just as enticing - ice

cream, homemade cheesecake and sherry trifle, and chocolate mousse. For those not having a sweet tooth, a wink at Elaine will result in a nice plate of cheese and biscuits.

This amazing 12-euro menu also includes bread and aioli, a glass of wine, beer, coffee or soft drink and tax.

I tend to be highly critical of what some restaurants expect their customers to eat. Now, after having frequented this restaurant a number of times, I would gladly eat anything that Colin cooked. This is a chef that knows his trade implicitly.

Colin, who started his career in food in the Army Catering Corps, and Elaine are well known in the area due to their take-away business in Moraira, however, here in the L'Almacera restaurant, Colin is obviously getting the chance to let his special talent and love for cooking shine through. And Elaine, friendly and highly personable, makes a wonderful 'front' person. You feel welcomed and looked after.

Colin chose to continue the 'Taste of the World' menu, previously so popular with the restaurant's clients so as not to disappoint anyone. This is a fascinating evening menu.

L'Almacera restaurant, Teulada

Starters include 'Germany' - assorted mushrooms in a tarragon and sweet mustard sauce in puff pastry parcels, and 'Brazil' - king prawns piri-piri style with garlic, chillies and spices served with Creole rice.

From the 11 main courses one could try 'Spain' - shoulder of lamb braised with garlic, pimientos, onions, tomatoes and wine, or maybe 'Thailand' - Thai-style cooked prawns in coconut curry sauce served with coriander rice.

And for dessert, how about 'Bulgaria' - assorted dark warm cherries in a blackcurrant and apricot liqueur sauce over apple sorbet with whipped cream and sprinkled with assorted nuts; or 'Jamaica' - rum and raisin ice cream with liqueur soaked raisins sliced banana, chocolate and Tia Maria sauce, whipped cream and again, assorted nuts.

And if that all sounds too much to eat at one go, Colin offers the choice of three courses with half bottle of house wine per person - 24.95 euros; two courses and glass of wine - 19.95 euros; one main course - 15.95 euros.

There is also a special Sunday lunch menu offering a choice of six starters and main courses to include roast beef,



Photo Bryan Kelley

lamb, steak and kidney pie, chicken, pork and salmon, plus a choice of desserts for just 14.95 euros. I intend to try that next.

The house wine is a very palatable Las Reinas.

In the meantime, Colin and Elaine have great plans for L'Almacera Restaurante. After their holiday in Thailand, where Colin spent much of his time researching new recipes, he plans to have a Thai-food evening some time in the future. Curry evenings with live music are also planned and, in the summer, on the open terrace, he wants to introduce barbecue meals and traditional spit-roast pork. It all sounds most mouth-watering.

However, at present, due to the total tantalisation of our

tastebuds, Colin and Elaine have lumbered themselves with my gang and me on a regular basis. We eat and drink and flirt (with the exception of Bryan, of course!) unashamedly with the handsome, young waiter, Sebi, who endures it all with good humour.

The L'Almacera Restaurante, Camí Benirrix (on the roundabout at the top of the town's dual carriageway) is open Tuesdays to Sundays, closed Mondays. With its Taste of the World menu, Sunday lunch menu, and fabulous affordable menú del día, this is a restaurant that's guaranteed to please.

Telephone 96 574 12 14 for reservations. (AB)