



Newly MINTED

The Journal enjoys the best of British cuisine at a stylish new restaurant in Sutton Coldfield

Left: cutting-edge design at Mint restaurant. PB10677-3453JO
Below left: trifle, one of the traditional British puddings on offer. PB10677-3425JO
Pictures: Paul Barber

Sub-zero temperatures had not deterred diners on the bitter Tuesday evening we decided to try Mint Restaurant, one of Sutton Coldfield's newest culinary offerings. Mint only opened in early November, and the initial buzz was still very much in evidence, with diners lining up to enjoy the best of British cuisine served up by an enthusiastic and efficient team.

Everything about the restaurant, which is situated in Little Aston, oozes style and sophistication. As our waiter informed us while he prised us out of our winter layers, the owners have meticulously researched and carefully chosen every last piece of the décor to get the overall effect just right.

Our coats were magicked away into a hidden cupboard in the wall and we were shown to our table in the upstairs dining room – a cosy space roughly the same size as an average living room.

We ordered drinks and were swiftly presented with a basket of home-made bread to whet our appetites while we made those all-important decisions about what to eat.

The menu – printed on the reverse side of the table mats – was a veritable feast of warming winter dishes showcasing the best seasonal produce. Even with just five choices of starters, I was torn between three of them, and similarly could have happily enjoyed every main course. But after a quick conflagration with my partner it was potted Loch Duart salmon for me and thyme roasted wood pigeon for him.

Presented in a little dish on a huge white plate, the salmon was pink and flaky, delicately flavoured and accompanied by some toasted bread and pickled cucumber, which provided a nice contrast in flavours. My partner – after getting his head around eating pigeon for the first time – was equally impressed with his tender pink wood pigeon and the side salad of Savoy

cabbage and hazelnuts, which offered a wonderfully robust flavour. A big fan of the fresh bread, he soon polished off the first lot and asked for seconds, which our waiter promptly provided.

Onto our main courses. I had chosen the honey roast Gressingham duck, with chestnut purée and roasted figs, while my partner went for the blade of Scotch beef with horseradish mash and winter root vegetables – perfect feel-good food for this time of year. The dishes arrived, elegantly presented, accompanied by an additional serving of roast new potatoes and a green bean and broccoli mix. Fourteen hours of cooking time meant the beef was meltingly tender, and the mash was a delicious combination, with the powerful flavour of the horseradish tempered by the creamy potatoes. My duck was perfectly pink, with crispy skin, and had additional red cabbage and a fondant potato which were very good indeed.

We were both full almost to bursting, but a quick glance at the dessert choices dispelled any thoughts of leaving before we had sampled one of the delectable puds.

My partner immediately plumped for the traditional bread and butter pudding – this being his own signature dish and he wanted to see how Mint's version compared – while I opted for the plum pudding.

After a short wait our desserts arrived, again simply yet stylishly presented, and we tucked in. My plum pudding was packed with moist juicy fruit and the accompaniments of rum butter and brandy custard lent a suitably boozy air to the proceedings, but it was the bread

and butter pud which really stole the show. Light and creamy, with just a thin layer of bread topping a thick custard and an almost crème brûlée-like caramelised top, my partner declared Mint's efforts had set a new benchmark for bread and butter puddings – praise indeed! And I had to agree; it really was a fantastic choice.

Mint Restaurant promises straightforward dining, celebrating great British food, and on the strength of our evening I would have to say they have got off to a very good start.

As my partner put it, they have taken simple ideas and transformed them into some really special dishes with top notch execution. We headed back into the cold night feeling well fed and contented, and the happy mutterings about that superb bread and butter pudding continued long into the journey home.



Mint Restaurant: 52 Thornhill Road, Little Aston, Sutton Coldfield.
Tel: 0121 353 0488. www.mint-restaurant.com

Price range: ££ (see below)

Great place for: Great British dishes in a stylish environment

Enjoyed most: That dreamy bread and butter pud and the friendly service

Would have liked: a little more elbow space between the tables

£ – main dishes average below £10

££ – main dishes average £10-£20

£££ – main dishes average above £20

Unless otherwise stated, Journal restaurant reviews are undertaken anonymously

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Have a Mint Christmas

Dinner from 6.30 Monday to Saturday

Sunday Brunch from 10am

Sunday Lunch from Midday

Still taking bookings for New Year's Eve

"Our dishes were unpretentious but prepared with a great deal of care and attention; the wood pigeon was the most flavoursome I have ever tasted"

★★★★
(Metro)



52 Thornhill Road, Little Aston, Sutton Coldfield B74 3EN

0121 353 0488

www.mint-restaurant.com

Email: info@mint-restaurant.com