



ORACLE restaurant review

# High tide for the Roslin Beach Hotel

The Roslin Beach Hotel needs little by way of introduction to residents in Thorpe Bay but may well present a revelation to those of Leigh. Impossible to miss, the hotel has been dramatically re-modelled and modernised from its erstwhile rose-coloured days and embraces its beach-front position more enthusiastically and sympathetically than before. This applies to the restaurant and bar as much as the hotel.

## A breath of fresh air

There is a lightness and beach-bleached feel about the décor both inside and out. Colourways reflect the beach it faces reinforced by sea-worn flotsam, driftwood and *objets-trouvées* fashioned into mirrors, lights and sculptures. Vettriano prints emphasise the marine theme.

An intangible aspect is the overall atmosphere. It's as if the hotel has taken a deep, refreshing, relaxing breath of Ozone. This extends to the management style. Callum, the manager, espouses the philosophy that there are no 'rules'. Intimidating it's not. Relaxed it certainly is. The customer is king.

The bar blends seamlessly with the dining area with the light wood and copper island bar. We sat and chatted with Callum at the Island Bar, armed with an aperitif of the house wines at a modest £3.20 a glass. (Hardy's 'The Riddle' Shiraz Cabernet £3.20).

We were ushered to a window table for two, looking over the decked patio and the estuary. The patio itself is resplendent with palms and pebbles and is protected from the unkind onshore breezes and traffic by a 7ft wall of glass allowing the south-facing aspect to be enjoyed to the full from breakfast to sundown.

Fresh Chrysanthemums and Roses set off the white table-linen, Lloyd-loom chairs, bleached wooden parquet floor. The lighting was soft, moody lighting with a spectacular view across to Kent. The menu is a suitably varied one, put together and presided over by the ubiquitous Wayne Hawkins with a firm hand on the skillet.



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It ranges from rather more adventurous offerings (unsurprisingly, many of seafood) to homelier fare like the Pipe & Port's own Steak & Kidney Pie, £10.50.

### **Chablis, Oysters and a Fillet Mignon. Life's a beach!**

Nibbling at a hot, freshly-baked Kaiser roll, one starter was chosen off the chalked-up Specials Board: a 1/2 doz. large, Maldon Oysters with lime and a dash of Tabasco (A King Prawn Caesar Salad will have to wait for the next visit) and Prawn & Crayfish Salad. Rocket and Marie Rose Sauce (£5.95) from the A La Carte. The Main courses consisted of a glorious Lemon Sole (another special) stuffed with salmon, prawn mousse & Beurre Blanc sauce (£14.95) and an 8oz Fillet Mignon, cooked to perfection, with Peppercorn Sauce (£19.95) and hand-cut French Fries with a light tangy & sweet Wild Rocket and Sweet Cherry Tomatoes salad to accompany. Pecan Pie with Cream Chantilly and a Lemon Meringue Pie (both at £5) with a cup of superb black Starbucks coffee capped the meal.

The Tides wine list is very reasonably priced and a good Chablis was chosen (Gloire de Chablis £21.75). A traditional Chablis, dry, fruity and elegant with distinctive Chardonnay character on the finish. The steak, however, demanded red wine and a large glass of Merlot with its rich, juicy blackcurrant flavours, (Le Caprice VdP d'Oc fitted the bill perfectly (£4.30p).



The service was prompt, friendly and attentive and a special mention must be made of our two waitresses, Lisa and Rachel. The difference staff can make to the enjoyment of an evening is too often over-looked. 90% full, the diners were a real mix with a sprinkling of lovers, family-groups, friends and businessmen.

Sunday Lunch is proving extremely popular requiring some 2-3 weeks advance booking to be sure of giving mum a break and the family a treat. Regular Events are planned almost weekly throughout the summer the details of which can be found on the Roslin Website.

The Eastern Esplanade is fast becoming a destination and becoming a bigger draw for the whole of Southend (and beyond). It's not before time; Southend enjoys seven miles of south-facing seafront with a bare handful of venues strung along its length. Tides at the Roslin is showing how to make the most of a great location.



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