

The View review

Cassi Kingshott dines in luxury reminiscent of an ocean liner



NV Restaurant & Lounge • 129 High Street • Southampton • SO14 2BR
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Walking in through the vaulted entrance hall – the heavy bronze doors held open by a door(wo)man – you know you’re entering somewhere a little special. As our coats were whisked away by a second attendant, we couldn’t help but pause and gaze in amazement at the ornate dining hall laid out before us. For this is exactly the effect that NV Restaurant has upon the first-time visitor.

NV is one of Southampton’s grandest and most impressive buildings. In the mid-19th century a great banking hall, it now reflects a bygone age of elegance. At the far end is a well-stocked bar, and an impressive staircase leads to a second floor. The whole effect is of being onboard a luxurious ocean liner.

With such an expanse available, the tables are set out with plenty of space between each providing room for the many waiters on hand to move around effortlessly and quietly. We had five people in total to serve us; one to present the menus, one for the wine list, one to offer bread rolls, one to take our order and another to serve each course. The layout also provides a degree of privacy for each table, something you don’t always find in high-street restaurants where you often, unwittingly, become a party to other diners’ conversations.

We visited NV on a Friday, which was a



Brie and roasted red onion tart with wild rocket pesto

Show Nights evening. This means that, in addition to the *à la carte* menu, there was also the special event menu, which changes monthly, and we decided to select from that as there were plenty of tempting options. I chose brie and roasted red onion tart with wild rocket pesto to start and my companion chose smoked haddock and prawn fishcakes with lemon and chive hollandaise. I rather wished I had chosen the fishcakes, too, as they looked so appetising and apparently tasted wonderful.

The service matched the impressive surroundings. Empty glasses were quickly removed, side plates taken away after the first course and frequent polite enquiries as to whether everything was to our satisfaction. The atmosphere was, though, quite relaxed. There were two tables of around ten, obviously celebrating a special occasion, and this added just the right amount of atmosphere to the hall.

For my main course I enjoyed a perfectly grilled fillet of salmon with asparagus and lemon butter sauce, which was moist and flaky. It was a real treat to have fresh asparagus out of season. Sometimes imported vegetables can be disappointing in flavour but this was excellent. My companion had chosen roasted loin of pork with honey glazed apple and grain mustard jus. This was accompanied by pork crackling which he confirmed was really crispy and full of flavour. I must admit I helped myself to some of the delicious little roast potatoes served with the pork. They were very moreish and we finished these off between us. There was also a small side dish of fresh seasonal vegetables to share.

A glass of chilled Pinot Grigio was perfect with the fish. A beer – well a couple of beers in fact – seemed to go down well with the roast pork.

I chose dark chocolate cheesecake for pudding, a creamy, light concoction, but could not resist tasting my companion’s sticky toffee



Smoked haddock and prawn fishcakes with lemon and chive hollandaise

pudding with custard, which had a luscious caramel flavour.

NV’s elegant and awesome surroundings give the chef a lot to live up to. Award-winning chef Andy Taylor-Rose is to be congratulated on a successful menu of good-quality ingredients prepared and served to an excellent, matching standard.

As we sipped espressos, the lights dimmed and the evening’s very accomplished entertainer – Andy Foster – began a repertoire of well-performed classic songs with guitar and saxophone. The atmosphere of an enjoyable evening on board an ocean liner was complete. **V**

Our meal was selected from the Show Nights Menu at £25 per person plus drinks: this menu is £27.50 on Saturday evenings

Dining at NV

Every Friday and Saturday evening there is live music and a full programme is shown on the NV website. NV also offers a lunch and *à la carte* menu. There is a private dining room and an outside terrace for the summer months.