

# The View review

**Cassi Kingshott** *visits a restaurant that has to be seen to be believed*



Lemon drizzle cake with elderflower granita

**Scene Restaurant • Norton Park • Sutton Scotney • near Winchester • S021 3NB  
01962 763000 • [www.scenesrestaurantandbar.co.uk](http://www.scenesrestaurantandbar.co.uk)**

Last night, I dreamt I went to Norton Park... The sweeping drive to the magnificent 16th-century Manor House and adjacent ultra-modern hotel felt as though it belonged in the opening paragraph of a famous novel. The beautiful grounds stretched away into the distance as we walked into the contemporary main reception.

Besides the stylish Scene restaurant, there are many areas at Norton Park in which to eat, including a remarkable outdoor terrace enclosed with canvas walls and heated in winter, the Scene bar, and a private dining area overlooking the walled garden. 'You can order from any of our menus,' says restaurant manager Scott Hollywood (yes, that really is his name), 'and have it served in the bar or in the beautiful gardens in the summer.'

After a perfectly chilled Tio Pepe in the lively bar, we chose to eat in Scene restaurant. I find menus that ramble on rather off-putting: by the time you get to the end you need a reminder about earlier options. But the menu at Scene was perfect with an excellent variety of



Rosary goat's cheese on a beetroot tart

just enough tempting dishes to make choosing feel rather indulgent. My friend started with a delicious smooth chicken liver pâté with plum and apple chutney and toasted brioche. The chutney apparently added a real zing to the rich pâté. I am passionate about root vegetables, selecting the local Rosary goat's cheese on a beetroot tart. This was the softest, most delicate goat's cheese, and the flaky pastry was wafer-thin. Delicious.

Norton Park's chef, Gavin Frampton, is keen to use fresh local produce in his kitchen and sources as many ingredients as possible from Hampshire suppliers. 'It sometimes means that when a dish is very popular, like the venison casserole tonight, we run out because we use independent local suppliers who can supply the best, but in smaller quantities,' he explains.

I rather like that, and there was still much to tempt us, including swordfish and monkfish. Spoilt for choice, I followed my starter with baked smoked haddock on creamy mashed potato, topped with a soft poached egg – the egg cooked in the traditional way in a pan of water with a drop of vinegar. Torn between steak from the grill, or grilled port and leek sausage with mash, fine green beans and onion gravy, my companion chose the second option and finished with a clean plate, remarking that they were the best sausages ever. Scott told us this was one of their most popular dishes.

A glass of excellent Rioja, at perfect room temperature so that it tasted sweet and pungent all at once, went down very well. And I noticed that, unusually, the menu not only indicated vegetarian dishes with a little 'v' but



**Chef Gavin Frampton**

thoughtfully also those that are naturally gluten free (g). Also featured was an impressive range of four different types of mustard.

The menu really is written so well that it's impossible to resist, so we caved in and tried two exquisite puddings. My friend ordered lemon drizzle cake with elderflower granita. I couldn't resist a creamy panacotta with pistachio-crustured baked plums. Mmm. What more is there to say?

Clearly, food is taken very seriously at Norton Park. I'll be dreaming of delicious panacotta for a long time to come. **v**

**Our meal without drinks came to around £48.50**

**Norton Park** is offering a range of fabulous options for celebrating the festive season, with special offers on overnight stays for partygoers. The 13-bedroom Manor House can be hired for private parties.