

# The View review

Dia Newland doesn't travel far to find the perfect *tavolo per due*



Tudor Popieiu, the pizza chef

**The Grey Hound • Broughton • near Stockbridge • Hampshire • SO20 8AA  
01794 301714 • www.thegreyhoundbroughton.co.uk**

I last visited The Grey Hound at Broughton a few years ago. An extensive dog walk in the countryside had us searching for a much-deserved coffee and it must have been just prior to its closing down because I remember it as a rather dusty, rundown place. It took a while, and large-scale refurbishment, before it was rejuvenated into an Italian dining pub, and I was looking forward to seeing the changes and tasting the food.

The drive to Broughton was a delight, the countryside stunning and The Grey Hound easy to find, situated on the main road through the village. Sometimes a renovated pub can feel, well, just 'done up', particularly a themed revamp, but not in this case. Andrea and Ian Bentall have successfully evoked the atmosphere of a *ristorante*, with clean, cool lines, and the locals were enjoying their pint (or espresso) in the snug area, just as they would in Italy.

I am not particularly a connoisseur of Italian cuisine, but the rich sauces and herbs, pastas, and mains suggest to me a people who don't just 'eat to live'. With five courses to choose from life could get complicated but

*'With a pause for breath, we investigated the pudding menu'*

the menu was simply stated with both Italian and English explanations of each dish. Our charming waitress, Harriet, was on hand to explain further, should the need arise, and as she has Italian in her blood she is truly *simpatico*. There was a board to check for any dish of the day.

My husband John chose antipasto to start and, as is often the way, the moment it arrived I coveted it for my own: Italian cured meats were arranged with marinated vegetables, stuffed capers and Parmesan Reggiano. However, my potted south coast crab, anchovies and quail egg was in front of me immediately and I was happy. Both were delicious (I was allowed a taste).

It was a difficult decision to make, but knowing our limitations, we boycotted the pasta. I had set my heart on trying agnello con crespelle di melanzane and salsa di pepe verde, as lamb is a favourite of mine. The description on the menu reads: herb-crusted 'Hinwood' flock lamb, aubergine crespelle, spinach and a green pepper sauce, and sounded too good to miss. It didn't disappoint. The lamb, from the Hinwood flock used to manage local chalk downland, was flavoursome and tender, the vegetables complementary and the sauce rich and gratifying.

Situated in the restaurant, the wood-fired clay pizza oven was imported from Italy. Part of the fun of choosing from the varied pizzas available was watching the pizza dough 'thrown' before cooking. Tudor

Popieiu, our pizza chef, did a splendid job and it wasn't long before John was tucking into his quattro carne (bacon, smoked sausage, ham, pepperoni, tomato and mozzarella) pizza. The dough was thin and crisp with a generous topping and we considered the community lucky to have the pizza takeaway service that Ian and Andrea offer.

With a pause for breath, we investigated the pudding menu. *Dolci gelantina di anguna* with pistachio sounded ideally light to follow my main. The delicately flavoured watermelon jelly was exquisite and paired wonderfully with the ice cream and pistachio. What a lovely take on a nursery pud. My husband fared no worse; his *torta di cioccola* and café was a rich chocolate and coffee pie, with light, buttery pastry.

The Grey Hound is a finalist in this year's UK Italian Pub of the Year award. I am not at all surprised. The chef, Richard Girdwood, creates beautifully cooked and presented food. It is no wonder that while we were drinking our coffee we discussed the friends we would bring next time. Besides, I've got to go back for the pasta. **V**

**Our meal for two, without drinks, came to £48.65**



**Watermelon jelly with ice cream and pistachio**



**Tossing the dough, all part of the experience**