

# Lime House

## with extra zest



by **Francine Clee**



**Y**ork's Lime House Restaurant is building a formidable reputation for excellent food. It's already bagged a brace of honours from the York Tourism Bureau, whose judges voted it Best Eating Place in 2003 and 2005. Nominated again in the 2006 awards, it was due to find out on November 10 if it was a three-time winner.

Back in July, owners Adam and Catherine Fisher were nominated in UKTV's Local Food Heroes campaign, and last year the restaurant featured in the ITV series *Raw Chefs*, on north-east restaurants passionate about local produce.

So the Lime House had plenty to live up to, and we were expecting to be seriously impressed.

A good wine list is a start, and the Lime House selection is so popular that the Fishers run a cellar so that customers can enjoy their favourites at home.

There's a wide selection of fizz for those in celebratory mood, and we dithered over the idea of a prosecco but, this being a school night, we went for the pinot grigio (£14). If we'd wanted to push the boat out there was a tempting Chablis Premier Cru on offer at £29. Red wine ranged from a tempranillo at £10.75 to Barolo Paigallo Vigna La Villa, Fontanafredda at £45.

It was refreshing in more ways than one to be offered a jug of free iced water instead of expensive bottles. It almost made up for the fake gladioli in the window and the cheap laminate flooring.

Our other style tips: ditch the 60s-effect light-fittings-cum-ceiling fans, and give the tired rest room a bit of a lift.

But the food's the thing in a restaurant, when all's said and done; and at the Lime House, they do it well.

White and wholemeal bread came first, with non-mucked-about butter; then the starters arrived.

The Thai red curry crème fraiche that finished our crab and avocado timbale was well-balanced, giving warmth without overpowering the meat.

We'd have liked our scallops a little more well-fed, but any disappointment evaporated when we saw that the Lime House is that rare and wonderful thing, a restaurant not in thrall to the rocket leaf. Almonds and beans gave texture to a salad involving, among other leaves, red chard and frisee. Lemon hummous lay beneath, packing a refreshing citrus punch.

There was just the right interval before the main courses arrived. A terrific choice here: among the options, sea bass with crushed basil new potatoes, braised fennel, balsamic roast tomatoes and aioli; fillet of pork with sweet potato bubble and squeak and an apple and sage jus.

Our pot-roast partridge, moist and intense, came with shallots, bacon and roast root winter vegetables. It was a thing of beauty, and our side order of mustard creamed leeks was a welcome counterpoint to the sweetness of the roast.

We could, however, have done without the side order of new potatoes to accompany our savoury bread pudding. This was packed with flavour from a creamy cheese, spinach and wild mushroom medley, but boy, was it hefty. Its sharp salad accompaniment was an intelligent idea, slicing through all that richness.

We left a large proportion of this dish to have room for pudding; the dessert menu looked fantastic. Full marks for seasonal food – Hirst orchard apple soufflé with blackberry ripple ice cream, damson crème brulee. Great-sounding cheeses, too.

But women love chocolate, and we weren't going to turn away something billed as a trio of chocolate delights.

Ladies, they were fabulous. A brilliantly executed chocolate pudding, crisp on the outside and oozing rich chocolate sauce; a delicate, trembling crème brulee and a divine ice cream studded with what we decided were fresh blackcurrants. The pistachio and raisin ice cream, our second pudding choice, was outstanding. The Lime House make their own ices, and they're glorious.

Dessert wine fans take note: you could have had a glass of I Capitelli (Roberto Anselmi) at £5 a glass, or maybe an Aleatico di Puglia (Francesco Candido) at £4.25.

We settled for coffee and the bill which, with a ten per cent early-bird discount came to £59.94.

The Lime House Restaurant, 55 Goodramgate, York. Open Tuesday to Saturday for lunch and dinner. Bookings recommended; phone 01904 632734.

