

## Bar 166 Horsforth

Becoming a bit of an institution in Horsforth, Bar 166 on Town Street just keeps getting better and better. I admit that it is h2b's local, we often meet there for a quick drink after work, or if we're having a lunchtime meeting it's more often than not the place we choose. It's also a great place to take clients with the introduction of a smart function room upstairs, which can cater for business lunches and meetings with conference facilities and also private parties for any occasion. Complete with its own bar, it's well worth looking at if you need a venue.

I have eaten here both in the bar (where they serve great tapas) and the bistro at lunchtime, but on this occasion we were eating later (table booked for 9pm on a Friday evening). When we arrived the bar area was packed, but one of the great things about Bar 166, for me, is that it doesn't seem to attract the younger drinking crowd, most of its clientele is over 25, well dressed and convivial. The bistro is actually separate and was three quarters full when we arrived at 9:20. The menu, which is handy, as all starters are £5, main courses £12, Side Orders £2 and then the steaks from the grill vary. The menu we chose from is due to change shortly (they run for about three months), but it was very versatile with meat, fish, seafood and vegetarian options all available. Their meat and vegetables are also sourced locally.

My partner decided to try the homemade Tomato and Basil Soup to start, I passed but did partake of the hot, crusty bread and butter that it came with. For mains we chose Lishman's Champion Sausages, Mash Potato and Red Onion Gravy and a 10oz Rib Eye Steak served with Onion Rings, Mushroom, Fresh Leaf Salad and Peppercorn Sauce (£14). There was a little wait between the starters and the main course, but the atmosphere was lively and it gave us a chance to enjoy the wine (a very nice house French Merlot) and chat.

Bar 166 is owned and run by a young, dynamic team who have great taste (or their designers do!). The bistro is a luxury combination of chocolate and cream, dark wood floors, comfortable leather chairs, nice cutlery and ambient spot-lighting which changes colour to add to the mood. It was lively but not noisy. There are only about 15 tables in the bistro so there is a feeling of intimacy, but you can't book unless you are a large party, so go early on a weekend, secure your table and then take a drink in the bar.

The mains arrived and I do have to say I haven't enjoyed a main course so much in a long while. I had a cold and hadn't smelt a thing in weeks but the meaty aroma of my steak managed to cut through it all and get my taste buds interested. Presentation is an important factor and it looked and tasted great.

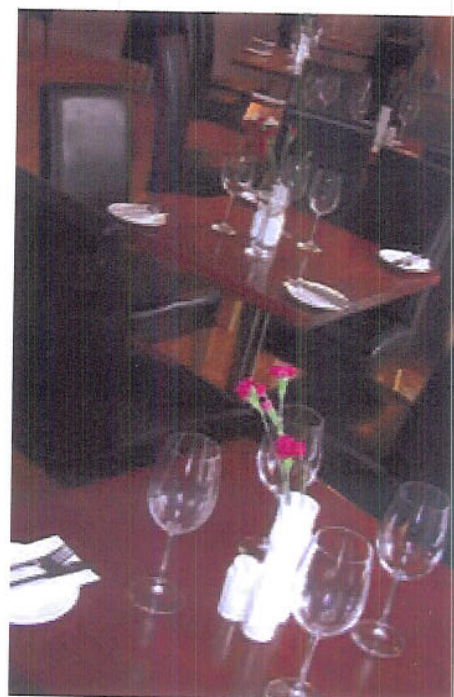
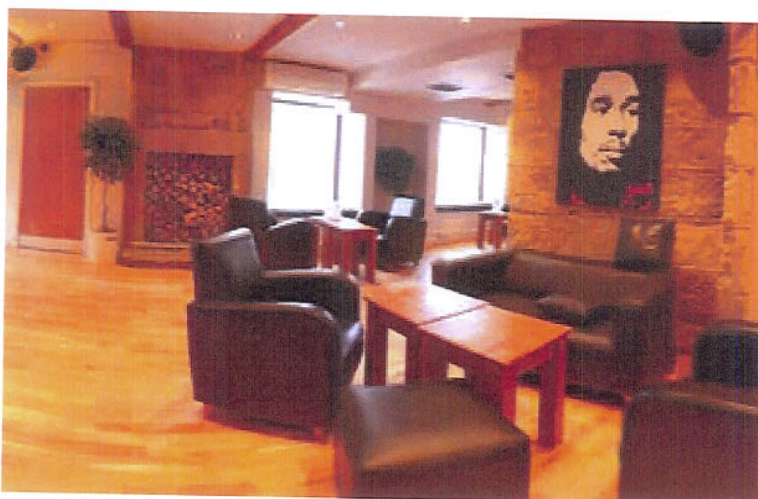
I actually really enjoyed the fresh leaf salad with slivers of red onion, peppers and a really tasty dressing. After the absence of salad for quite a while (it's not a favourite of mine in the winter), it worked really well with the steak. The home-made crispy onion rings and the pepper sauce were fabulous. The sauce was served on the side and was different to many pepper sauces I've had before, it was divine, piquant but not too hot. My only complaint was that there could have been more because everything got dipped in it; and that included THE BEST BISTRO CHIPS EVER. Now this accolade, for me, used to belong to Monkman's when it was on Pool Bank and was once my favourite restaurant. I happened to mention this to the barman, as I was telling him how great the chips were, and he told me that the head chef at Bar 166 used to work at Monkman's! There you have it then, that's maybe why I liked it so much. Coincidence? Probably, but it doesn't detract from the fact that the food at Bar 166 is excellent.

I ordered a couple of side dishes, just so that I could tell you about them, as there was certainly plenty on a main course to satisfy even a hearty appetite. If you can manage them the Honey Glazed Parsnips and Thyme are just as they should be, crunchy on the outside and soft in the middle. The Minted Garden Peas were 'very minty', (this was my answer when I





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asked for a comment, I suppose it serves me right!). And the Homemade Skin on Chips, as they are called, I have already told you about. You must try them before you die, they really are that good.

The Champion Sausage and Mash recieved a very positive response, and again was a large portion (three sausages sat on a generous bed of mash and smothered with tasty onion gravy). He just about managed it, but on top of what amounted to a whole loaf of bread (less one slice) with his soup, it's not really surprising he couldn't manage a dessert.

I always think at least one of you should try each course when reviewing a restaurant, even if you are completely satisfied (aka. stuffed), so, with him being unmovable and not being one to shirk our responsibilities, it was down to me. So an order for one Sticky Toffee Pudding with

Butterscotch Sauce, a latte and an Italian coffee (Amaretto and cream) was despatched. Truthfully, I had overdone the main course to truly enjoy the dessert, which was a shame as it was really good; however I did manage to finish off the butterscotch sauce (always a favourite).

It was coming up to 11pm and we were one of the last to leave. The dining experience here was wonderful, the food, the service and the atmosphere were all top class. Bar 166 is, in my opinion, the best place to eat in Horsforth. Try it and see for yourself.

Category: £20-£30

Atmosphere ★★★★★  
Food ★★★★★  
Service ★★★★★  
Value ★★★★★

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