

Divine Dining

**REVIEW BY WENDY PRATT
AND JOHN CLARKSON**

St. Martha and St. Vincent are the Saints of food and drink – very apt we thought considering our divine dining experience! Martha and Vincent was very easy to find at the far end of The Grove in Ilkley. My partner and I were welcomed by Javier De La Hormaza, and felt very easy and relaxed from the beginning. We were soon enjoying pre-dinner drinks at the bar and chatting to Javier and his staff, as if old friends.

Welcome drinks

Considering a choice of three, I opted for a Bombay gin and tonic, while John had a glass of house red – a Californian Merlot Blackstone which he readily gave the thumbs up! Our immediate reaction to the overall effect of the restaurant was the striking décor, which was black and cream, very modern, crisp, yet warm and friendly. The tasteful way in which the vine leaves have been used on the windows and menus was very apparent.

It was clear to see the pride and enthusiasm that Javier had in his new venture and rightly so, we were to discover. The restaurant has been open since April, and Javier and most of his staff have previously worked at Ridding Park in Harrogate. The menu changes seasonally and they pride themselves on using local, fresh foods where possible and class their style as modern British and chic.

Starting well

We were shown to our table where we enjoyed nibbling at a selection of delicious breads to dip into chilli and garlic oil, while we awaited our starters. John discussed the wines with Javier, and opted for a slightly fuller bodied red than the house, an Argentinean, Malbec Kaiken, Mendoza. This was a superb choice. Our anticipation was not a disappointment as our eyes feasted on the starters. I had chosen Caramelised King Scallops on homemade potato bread, crispy pancetta with green asparagus vinaigrette while John went for the Poached Smoked Haddock, glazed in stout with rabbit and tomato salad. The silence and smiles, showed the enjoyment in the wonderful fusion of flavours. It was refreshing to see that most of the starters could be also ordered as a main course.



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Admiring glances

Other dinners also enthused about our main courses as John's sizzling 15oz local Rib of Beef arrived, served on hot Yorkshire granite. It came very rare, and cooked to John's liking. It was accompanied by homemade chips, a side order of sautéed fine beans, shallots and crisp pancetta. I went for the Roast Chicken Jardinière, fresh tarragon and confit potatoes – mouth watering and full of flavour. The crockery was intriguing, as each dish had a different shape plate or bowl, which



added to the character of the food.

For dessert, John chose the Champagne Rhubarb Cheesecake, compote and ice cream, while I decided to have Martha's Topsy Cake. Both were light and flavoursome. The presentation and attention to detail were faultless. All the staff were friendly, helpful, very informed, knew when to fill our wine glass at just the right time, but were never intrusive. Our feast came in around eighty pounds including drink, which was well worth it considering the quality of the food and excellent service. Martha and Vincent have a terrace available, when the weather permits. They are in the process of preparing their new light summer menu, with an emphasis on lighter food, summer salads and simplicity through fresh ingredients – which we are looking forward to sampling!

Contact them...

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