

Comforting times at Pan Haggerty

Some fine city restaurants have taken up residence at 21 Queen Street over the years - and Pan Haggerty is no exception. Karen Southern lingered there awhile over a pleasant weekend lunch.

PAN HAGGERTY is flying the good food flag on the Quayside with a lunch/early dinner menu which represents remarkably good value for money.

With two courses priced at an impressive £12.50 or a belt-busting trio for just £15, you could be forgiven for expecting a bit of corner-cutting here and there.

But neither quality nor service have been compromised at all, and what you get is honest, wholesome food in very nice surroundings.

Pan Haggerty's interior is upmarket but unpretentious – a bit like the service really – and the fact that the staff are so efficient and friendly, without being pushy, is a breath of fresh air.

Time and again restaurants hype up their wonderful foodie experience, but neglect to cater properly for customer service – leaving a nasty aftertaste in the mouth – so I'm pleased to report that Pan Haggerty has got the balance spot-on.

After a smiley meet and greet, we were ushered to a window seat, from which we watched the world go by while sharing warm slabs of fresh bread and butter.

The menu offers five choices each for starters, mains and puddings, including the intriguingly named floddy (or layered potato cake to the uninitiated).

Chosen by my dining companion, it came replete with bacon, applewood cheese and apple chutney, and made a tasty first innings.

I opted for a colourful, fresh salad adorned with slivers of rare beef, tangy blue cheese and red onion, and crunchy homemade garlic croutons, which was simply delicious.

There was absolutely no dithering over the mains, and my must-have was the crispy fried duck leg with duck egg. It's a mystery to me why this type of egg isn't more readily available, with its rich deep yellow yolk and pristine white.

Breaking into the yolk and letting it ooze over the rich gamey meat and sautéed Charlotte potatoes felt ever so slightly decadent.

My other half also enjoyed his diced pork belly – just the right consistency of



crispness and melt-in-the-mouth tenderness – which came with a bacon and black pudding salad and red onion jam.

Puddings included a naughty but nice fruit crumble, a chocolate and hazelnut espresso tart with ice cream, and cheese with chutney. As we had some serious window shopping in store, we skipped this course or we might never have made it up Dean Street, but I'm sure sweet teeth everywhere will be unable to resist.

I've always had a soft spot for this area of the Quayside, and I'm glad to say its historic heart has largely escaped the various fads and fancies of developers and planners over the years.

And now, as the nation's tastebuds swing back in favour of great English food, it has to be said that Pan Haggerty is in just the right place at the right time.

Pan Haggerty is at 21 Queen Street, Newcastle. Telephone (0191) 221 0904 or visit www.panhaggerty.com