A TASTE OF... HUNGARY

In my quest to locate an unusual restaurant I have found what I believe to be unique. With very frequent, fast transportation services into London, if travelling to the Capital is required, then London is now within easy reach for a great day out or short break.

Always searching for somewhere different, the Gay Hussar ticked all my boxes. This celebrated Hungarian restaurant, in London’s Theatre land, serves a menu boasting many specialities, with fine Hungarian wines. Victor Sassie was proprietor of the Gay Hussar for 34 years. After opening the restaurant in 1953, politicians and celebrities dined there. Distinguished customers, including T.S. Elliot, Barbara Castle and Michael Foot became regulars. The building dates from 1680. The political cartoonist, Martin Rowson, began drawing the famous patrons and the gallery of 60 caricatures is admired to this day.

Manager, John Wrobel, can be justifiably proud of the Gay Hussar, as he and his excellent staff carry on the tradition of this exceptional venue. Spread over three floors, with a club-type atmosphere, the Gay Hussar continues to attract political people, journalists, writers and artists. Book shelves are stacked with first editions, which all adds to the ambience.

Head chef is Carlos Mendonca, who, with his team of great chefs, produces the finest cuisine, Shlim is head waiter and has the timings ‘spot on’. My choices of the chilled wild cherry soup – a delicious, divine start to the dining occasion – followed by fresh asparagus and bacon salad, which was tender, tasty and balanced, made the lead-up to the main course of Chicken in a creamy paprika sauce and galuska, perfect. Superb cuisine, cooked to perfection, plus entrances and presentations, made the experience very memorable indeed. Desserts of rum cream and walnut
delicacy followed – again, a splendid delivery by Shlim. The wine chosen was Tokaji Muscat Blanc 2006 – Superb! John and his staff know many of the customers personally, having formed a relationship with their clientele, over the years.

Some of the excellent products, plus splendid wines and liqueurs, are supplied by Lucien Lanci, of Malux Hungarian Food and Wine, which has an impressive range available. Coming to Britain, from Hungary, during the 1950’s, Lucien imported for leading department stores, bringing the best quality products to the UK. In 2007, his daughter, Audrey, joined Lucien, after a very successful career in fashion.

A romantic table for two, plus receptions, celebrations and parties etc, can all be accommodated for, with ease, at the Gay Hussar, along with all dietary requirements. This venue is very, very worthy of a visit – in fact, several.

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As always, enjoy!
Trevor Langley