

Head chef Alvaro Monter puts the finishing touches to some of his food



Enjoy The View

MANY new restaurants and bars claim to be adding something new to Brighton and Hove's food and drink scene.

But The View, in Western Esplanade, Hove is a genuine original - combining a daytime family-friendly café space, an evening a la carte menu, bar area and the tremendous seafront setting which gives the venue its name.

Formerly the Babylon Lounge, The View is the result of six months of renovations by the venue's original owners.

THE VIEW
Western Esplanade, Hove
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The bar is the only part of the Babylon Lounge which remains following the extensive refit. With its wooden cladding on the outside and the driftwood-style features complemented by deliberately mismatched furniture on the inside, The View has a feel of an informal seaside bar.

But its ambitious menu of modern European cuisine is designed to attract curious local foodies along the coast from Brighton city centre.

"We could see a big gap in the market in this particular area," says part-owner Ali Kosari, who ran the Babylon Lounge for ten years.

"We wanted to provide somewhere that I could invite my family and four-year-old son to eat together, but at the same time could invite business colleagues for a meeting, or a special guest for an evening out."

He regards the concept behind the venue as unique in Brighton.

The gorgeous seafront location is underlined by the fact the lapping waves can be seen from throughout the restaurant. There are an additional 180 covers outside on picnic tables to supplement the 150 inside.

The Venue is designed to be welcoming, with no attitude, as exemplified by the friendly and attentive staff at Monday's special Valentine's event.

Although the floor space is large, the seating has been arranged so guests don't feel like they're rattling around, creating an intimate atmosphere. Ali freely admits the venue is spending a fortune on candles to create the right night-time feel.

"I genuinely think there is nowhere like this in Brighton," he says. "We're the only licensed venue that can serve alcohol on the beach from Shoreham to the West Pier."

"We are not in a tourist area, so we are looking to attract Brightonians and local residents all year round."

Ingredients on the menu, which was created with venue's new Spanish executive chef Alvaro Monter, are sourced locally wherever possible, with all the fresh fish coming from the Hove fishmonger's hut only a few yards down the esplanade.

Among the new concepts being launched by The View are a range of gourmet pizzas, with unusual options including eggplant, featuring a topping of courgettes, aubergine and sun-dried tomatoes; Wild Boar; and the Strawberries pizza, eschewing cheese in favour of strawberries, kiwi fruit, pineapple, peach and cream.

There is also a pub classics menu - with old favourites such as bangers and mash and burgers - a range of all-day breakfasts, a children's menu, Sunday roasts, and an extensive wine list.

The daily lunch 5-6-7 menu offers one course for £5, two for £6, and three for £7.

Those bemoaning the loss of the Babylon Lounge will be happy to hear that the downstairs function room will be hosting the regular Friday salsa night and monthly African night and retains its late license to 5am.

"Now people can come upstairs and enjoy a drink away from the music," says Ali. "We are redecorating the function room as we speak. We can cater for private functions, including weddings and civil partnerships. The floor below even has its own separate entrance."

The View is also launching its own year-round seafront kiosk in four weeks' time, which will be selling the luxury Loseley ice cream range.

words: Duncan Hall
pictures: Liz Finlayson
published: The Argus, February 18, 2011

SAMPLE THE MENU

ALL-DAY BREAKFAST - served with tea or coffee available to 6pm
Traditional English breakfast
from £6.80

LUNCH-one cours £5, two courses £6,
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STARTERS

Soup of the day
House salad
Prawn cocktail

MAINS

Cannelloni
Pollo Milanese
Bangers and mash
Pasta of the day
Dessert of the day

A LA CARTE FROM 6PM TO 10PM
GOURMET MENU
SUNDAY ROAST MENU £8.95