

Editor Tony Rowen dines out in style

Terrific experience!

NOT surprisingly Highgate House, the Sundial Group's dedicated Conference Centre in Creton, is keen to show off the new Terrace Restaurant, which has been created as part of a £1 million refurbishment programme in just two months.

So when Marketing Director Jo Chudley invited me and a guest to 'experience dining in the restaurant' with her and James Bland, the Group Marketing Manager, it was an invitation I could not refuse.

The Terrace Restaurant is a contemporary, modern dining area that can accommodate up to 150 diners. The space was previously home to the swimming pool, with the surrounding pool terrace and 'pickle bar' being the location where guests would enjoy buffet breakfast and lunch. The pool has been emptied and covered, the partitions removed and the ceiling entirely redesigned to provide a contemporary, brasserie-style dining area that will serve all three main meals to conference guests.

It is a stunning room with plush, deep pile carpet, comfortable fabric armchairs and a feature wine wall. Delegates attending conferences could be forgiven for thinking they are in a top London restaurant.

Jo had reserved a table at one end of the restaurant, next to the wine wall, so we could see the whole room and gauge the reaction of other diners although the result was a foregone conclusion – you just couldn't help but be impressed by the environment and, as I discovered later, the food.

Award-winning Head Chef Lee Gaskins has created a simple initial menu with a choice of four starters, four main courses plus desserts and an extensive cheese board. All tastes are catered for with the main courses offering fish, poultry, meat and a vegetarian option.

Consideration will be given to extending it in the future but to be perfectly honest I don't think its necessary. It was a delight not to have to pour over a huge menu. The four of us were able to make our choices fairly quickly and sit back in anticipation – and we weren't disappointed. The food – and drink – were superb.

And it wasn't just because I was with Jo and James. I was able to observe other diners who were receiving exactly the same service from the attentive staff and were clearly enjoying their meals as well.

The Terrace Restaurant is a magnificent addition to Highgate House and associated with the refurbishment programme is a more intuitive layout to the busiest service areas, making it easier for customers to find their way around. Two new coffee lounges have been created in and around The Terrace Restaurant and Bar area, providing a much better breakout experience too. A finishing kitchen has been created behind the hot buffet station, and each morning a chef will be cooking eggs to order for breakfast.

The main-house dining rooms remain available for private hire by conference groups and private individuals wishing to commemorate a special occasion with an intimate, high-class dinner experience.



The Terrace Restaurant – a contemporary, modern dining room and a magnificent addition to the Highgate House facilities.

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