

# The Chequers

Rubbing shoulders with The White Company; Whistles and Mint Velvet amongst others, The Chequers in Marlow was perfectly placed for a girls midweek lunch as I caught up with a friend.

We sank into our chairs in view of the impressive Butchers Block- complete with antique chic fixtures, and an old butchers bicycle. This scene would not look out of place in a glossy magazine like Elle Decoration or Living Etc. and I couldn't help fantasising about shipping it off, lock stock and barrel to my kitchen which is under renovation, or at the very least adding it to my Pinterest dream-kitchens board!

Victoria, our lovely waitress explained the menu. Starters are priced at £3.50 to £8 and include delicious sounding options like Crab, chilli & coriander linguine; Hot asparagus, poached egg, hollandaise & herb crumbs and Prosciutto, melon & honey dressing.

Reluctantly we skipped starters- not virtuously I hasten to add (This is after all a girl's day out) but to allow room for pudding - we had to forgo options like the Grilled Seabass and Moules, and decide to go for the 100 day aged, grain-fed Australian beef. Steaks range in price from £18 to £22 for 8oz. We are beckoned over to The Butchers Block by the Zhorzh (pronounced George) the head chef, who talks us through the options and explains that you can choose your own steak, the cut and size, and exactly how you would like it cooked plus of course the sauce.

**“The sirloin gave some of the top London steak restaurants a run for their money.”**

My friend chooses a ribeye steak served with piquant Chimichurri sauce, accompanied by Triple cooked chips. Zhorzh explains that the ribeye is lightly marbled with an even distribution of fat, and will be cooked rare to arrive at the



customer's plate medium rare - this turns out to be good advice as it is cooked to perfection. "I haven't tasted steak this good since America where they really know how to cook it" enthuses my friend.

I chose a medium rare sirloin with Maître d'hôtel butter, that was exceptional, and meltingly tender. My knife sliced through it like butter and it was perfectly complemented by a rocket and parmesan salad. The sirloin gave some of the top London steak restaurants a run for their money. We both had (a small) glass of red wine, served in a huge goblet - a light bodied, succulent raspberry and subtly

spicy Rioja Crianza, and a full bodied Malbec recommended by Victoria, which had a rich, red fruit aroma and was delicious with the steak.

For dessert, my friend chose the Hedgerow mess, a delightful concoction of meringue, creamy vanilla ice-cream, blackberries and raspberries. I couldn't resist the lure of chocolate and settled on the Hot chocolate honeycomb pudding. This arrives piping hot and served in a skillet - light as air sponge with a decadently rich melting chocolate middle and served with toffee-like honeycomb on the side, it was wonderful.

We both vowed to return soon en famille, knowing that our other halves would love it here. The children's menu included favourites like Crispy southern chicken with corn on the cob, Spaghetti and Bangers and mash whilst Mini steak aficionados can have the Minute steak cut from the Butchers Block with fries.

**TLB verdict:** Go for excellent food and good service- be sure to try the fabulous steaks- and do check out that Butchers Block!