

Where shall we go tonight?

What does one do if you want to go out for something nice to eat these days?

Well, this is Mr Grumpy's view to eating out.

My guide is not going to be everyone's cup of tea, I am controversial and in the past I may have stepped on a few toes!. But here goes, and let's give that AA Gill chap from the Times a run for his money.

Rural South Nottinghamshire offers a vast array of eating out opportunities from good pub grub to fine dining. I am not going to waste your time and mine talking about so called trendy eateries in the Nottingham city centre. Where does one park for a start? I live in Cropwell Butler, and if you don't own a vehicle then frankly you are stuffed !(pardon the pun).

On my recent culinary travels I came across a new Indian restaurant, off the A52 of all places, in what was once a Little Chef. 'Lalon' is its name and it offers fine Indian cuisine. Admittedly, when you park the building does not give you that 'wow' factor, but when you walk inside you find yourself in a well appointed establishment – a very relaxed atmosphere with a few sofas to sit and relax with a drink while you ponder over the menu.

Now, I have been used to the good old English version of an Indian restaurant, with flock wallpaper and grubby curry- stained tablecloths, This place is clean and fresh and you are made to feel at ease by the 'friendly staff.' The menu is new and modern, with no deep fried, gee dripping specimens or the 101 curries you would normally find.

I started off with the onion bhaji, as whenever I'm trying somewhere new I always go with what I know and love from other places I have eaten in the past. I was not disappointed with the crisp, well spiced individual patties. A thumbs up, and on to the mains with dishes like Goan fish curry and Old Delhi chicken tikka masala. It must have been the atmosphere, or I



was blinded by the evening, but I had no thought of going for my normal vindaloo and went for a Chicken Naga instead, a traditional Bangladeshi dish full of chilli and ginger, garlic and coriander. To accompany this was lemon cashew nut rice, and date and ginger Nan bread, which was out of this world. My mouth was full of Eastren flavour with every fork full. My overall view of Lalon was that I had enjoyed an excellent meal in a pleasing environment and with good company and I would recommend the restaurant as a great place to eat for that special night out.

But then it came to the part of eating out I hate? Paying!

Does one tip or not? And that's a subject on its own. Tipping, Well I have worked all my life and what little money I have in my pocket after all the bills I spend wisely. So I don't tip, why should I? It's not a question of being tight and I don't work in the so called hospitality trade.

Now you are going to tell me, "But all those waiters and waitress work very hard don't they" So do I, But no-one gives me a tax free backhand. It's always been the way - 10% gratuity on top of the bill. Well think of this. The girl at the checkout gave me a sweet smile recently while I was doing my weekly shop, but I did not feel obliged to give her a tip. No I did not. So, if people want a tip here's one of mine....

" Always get your potatoes in early".

It would not be a Mr Grumpy letter if I did not have a good old rant.

Anyway, with a couple of drinks a meal for two came to just a shade over £52. Not bad and, as we went Dutch, all the more better for my wallet.

Mr Grumpy

