



On a quest for perfection:
Only the best will do for chef



Tam Cowan

NO PRIZES for guessing that these directions to Broughty Ferry were given to me by someone from Perth: "Aim for the centre of Dundee and keep driving until the smell dies down."

Charming, eh? But the good people of the City of Discovery shouldn't be too upset. You see, this nasty little jibe was the work of my mate Tommy and, if you clocked the state of the spectacles he later removed from his top pocket to read the menu, you'd probably end up feeling sorry for the poor boy.

Honestly, folks, Jack Duckworth would have binned them years ago.

The lenses were thicker than the hard-back copy of Methuselah's memoirs.

And, on a clear night, I believe Tommy can hang out of his bedroom window and enjoy a wonderful view of Sydney Opera House.

Fair play to the guy, though. Within 20 minutes of leaving Perth, we arrived at Cafe Montmartre on Brook Street and were soon tucking into a rather superb meal.

Regular readers will appreciate that I've been spoiled rotten recently – in fact, last time I reviewed a sub-standard restaurant, Colonel Sanders was probably still a private – and I must confess this was yet another top-notch establishment.

A French/Algerian joint, the elegant canopy above the window of Cafe Montmartre and the atmospheric Gallic music definitely pointed us towards France.

And for the Algerian touch? Well, the waitress kindly offered us a selection of king-sized reefers the minute we sat down.

Nah, only joking. That's just my way of shoe-horning in a mention for an absolute honey called Nicola.

Bright, totally efficient and really chatty, she's just graduated from university and will soon be starting a career in Stuttgart.

Cafe Montmartre's loss is most definitely Germany's gain.

Call me old fashioned – hey, what the heck, call me sexist if you want – but I'm convinced that a cracking wee bit



£71 on wine? That's nothing: Diners in Broughty Ferry enjoy the good things in life – just like Tam Cowan

Tam got a taste of France – and all within sniffing distance of Dundee at Cafe Montmartre in Broughty Ferry

of gear serving the food is great for your digestive system.

Quite frankly, I don't think it's any coincidence that I was recently served a ghastly meal by a waitress who, if she had been unable to find the corkscrew, could have opened the wine with her tail.

Anyway, Nicola was an absolute babe (even the fact that she's a Rangers fan didn't put us off) and the menus she handed out were almost as mouth-watering.

The food sounded great and, thankfully, beneath the baffling French description of every dish, there was a good, stout English translation.

There was also a good, stout jug of Scottish tap water on the table – fresh and ice-cold with big wedges of lemon – so congratulations to Cafe Montmartre for bucking the trend and refusing to fleece the cash customer with £4.50 bottles of H₂O.

Talking of drinks, I'm not the least bit fussy when it comes to wine, although I do keep my fingers crossed that the feet which trampled the grapes weren't covered in corns, verrucas or bunions.

If I drink white wine, the share price of Rennie's tends to go through the roof over the next couple of days while I recover from the most horrendous acid indigestion.

But the Chablis Premier Cru ordered

by my radio sidekick, Stuart, was sheer nectar and we quickly scoffed three bottles of the stuff.

Sadly, this particular beverage doesn't cascade freely from Scotland's taps and the wine bill, I'm ashamed to admit, was £71.

The food itself, though, isn't overly expensive with starters £3.25 to £6.95, main courses £9.95 to £18.95 and desserts all under a fiver.

I started with a fantastic fillet of tuna with garlic and lemon. Chargrilled to perfection (not too pink) it was a large, meaty slab of fish and, if Broughty Ferry boasts any vampires, I was never in danger thanks to the oodles of French garlic. (Apologies once again to anyone who came within 350 yards of my

mouth last Thursday morning.) Tommy's pan-fried king prawns in garlic and herb butter were "rerr" while Stuart described his home made spicy chargrilled sausages as "a port manteau of exotic spices".

Guess which one of them is the Channel 4 media poof?

For the hard of thinking, here's another clue ... Stuart's main course was Cous Cous Royale.

Yes, folks, that's right. Cous cous. In a restaurant barely a few hundred yards from the middle of Dundee. Surely there's a local bye-law prohibiting that sort of behaviour.

Just for the record, the cous cous (a wheaty, grainy North African dish which looks a bit like rice and probably tastes like something that's been swept from the bottom of a pigeon loft) was served with chunks of chargrilled chicken, some more of the fabulous spicy home made sausage and a couple of tender lamb cutlets.

With an intriguing bowl of spicy vegetable broth on the side – the idea



Shelling out: King prawns



Gone fishin': Mixed seafood



Ask for the menu again: Male diners place orders for more food just to get another close-up of the beautiful waitresses at Cafe Montmartre

is to pour it over the cous cous – the dish suddenly looked rather appealing and my 54-year-old pal finished the whole lot.

From the choice of 10 or so steaks (nothing but prime Aberdeen Angus beef), I hit the jackpot with a faultless fillet smothered in a nippy peppercorn sauce.

The chips – thin and crispy straw fries – also hit the spot.

Meanwhile, Tommy was struggling with his main course tuna fillets – but only because the enormous plateful was “more like a shoal”.

I doubt even John West has seen this much tuna.

Just like my starter portion, the fish was absolutely delicious and it’s something you definitely must try when visiting Cafe Montmartre.

(Actually, if my memory serves me correctly, the tuna only appeared on the specials board – so go on and do the decent thing, chef, and get it on the main menu).

Desserts? Well, what can you say?

The vanilla and raspberry creme brûlée was crunchy on top, smooth and creamy underneath.

Tommy’s chocolate mousse was delicious, though perhaps a shade rich after his Captain Ahab-style battle with the monsters from the deep.

Stuart’s mystere – a hazelnut and meringue creation – was probably the pick of the bunch.

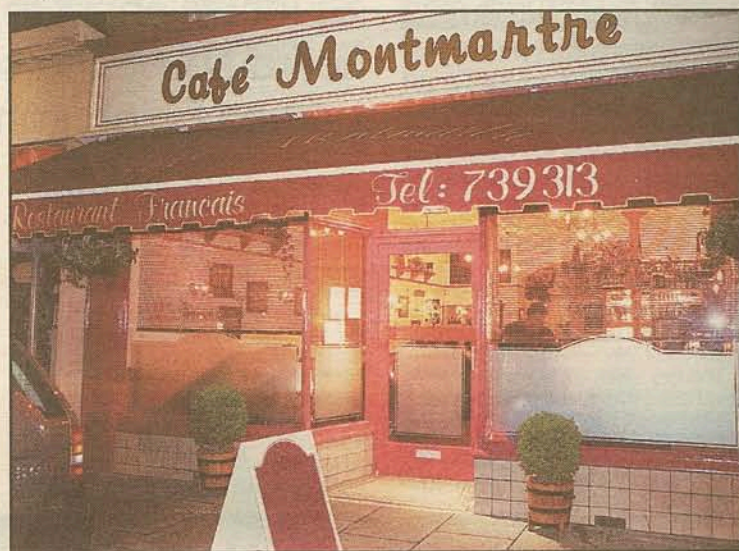
Totally stuffed, we sat back in our chairs, loosened the belts a notch or two – and shamelessly ordered a portion of cheese and biscuits.

Hands up, this was sheer greed and, sure enough, we pecked at the plate like an anorexic field mouse – an anorexic field mouse that’s allergic to cheese.

Still, you can’t blame us for wanting to spend an extra few moments in this fab restaurant.

Directions back to Perth? No problem.

Aim for the centre of Dundee and keep heading south until you see the first hitchhiker with three thumbs.



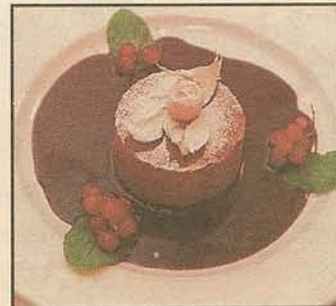
French flair: Cafe Montmartre is a big favourite in Broughty Ferry



Skewer deal: Chicken cous cous



Ice-cream dream: Three sorbets



Sweet treat: Chocolate mousse

Restaurant tips

Cafe Montmartre
 289 Brook Street,
 Broughty Ferry,
 Dundee
Telephone: 01382 739313
Open Monday: 6-9.45pm,
 Tuesday to Saturday:
 12 noon-2pm and 6-
 9.45pm.
Bill for three:
 (including nectar)
 £163.