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Latin flavours at Buenos Aires

I confess to being a total newcomer to Argentinian food having neither visited the country, nor having been to any of the Argentinian restaurants which in recent years have sprung up in Europe.

So it was with eager anticipation that I visited Buenos Aires Restaurant which recently opened in Purley.

First impressions were good. Step inside and there is an attractively decorated and well laid out restaurant with wood floors, hessian walls and an eye-catching bar area.

Now I would normally balk at the idea of having a TV on the bar, but as this one featured Argentinian bands it immediately lent the restaurant a Latin American atmosphere.

The service was excellent with smiling attentive waiters on hand to make sure everything was to our liking. Once seated, we were served a selection of warm bread, green olives and a selection of spicy dips.

We skipped ordering a starter but for those with larger appetites there is an excellent choice.

Take your pick from Argentinian beef pasty (£2.50) or grilled Provolone cheese (£4.50) or hearts of palm with Spanish Serrano ham (£6). These are just a few from the wide selection on the menu.

One thing I do know about Argentina is that it is famous for its beef, so it is no surprise that Argentinian prime steak

is a major feature of this restaurant and it cooked in Argentinian style on a grill.

Take your pick from prime sirloin, rib eye, fillet or rump – or order a selection of four cuts for two (£27) as we did. When Buenos Aires says it only serves quality steak it means it – in fact my husband said it was the best he had had in years.

We ordered a salad with this and Spanish-style fried potatoes, but you could if you wish order a sauce of your choice too. There's onion and red pepper, mustard, pepper and blue cheese.

Worth trying too is the first class selection of Argentinian wines. We chose a Malbec at £12 a bottle which was deliciously smooth and the perfect accompaniment for the steak.

We did make room for a dessert. I tried the homemade crême caramel (£3) while my husband ordered bread pudding (£3). Both were truly delicious.

Buenos Aires also serves tapas from Thursday lunchtime to Sunday afternoon.

These include sausage cooked in red wine (£3) to Andalusian-style battered hake (£4) and offer diners the perfect Spanish/Argentinian lunchtime experience.

I would certainly recommend this restaurant. It offers first class food, service, excellent value and something just that bit different. Give it a try.

Tamasin Coates recommends trying something a bit different



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