

HOT TABLE

West Thirty Six

I have to admit, after a bank holiday of foodie indulgence I wasn't primed for a slap-up feast. So it was with a slightly guilty countenance that we blew into West Thirty Six on a ferociously windy Tuesday evening. But as the enthusiastic staff welcomed us into the building – a beautiful townhouse boasting dining areas, lounges, private party rooms and outdoor spaces aplenty – we resolved to battle on.

It may sound like a New York hipster hangout but it is in fact the latest launch from Robert Newmark, the brains behind Beach Blanket Babylon. Grilled meat, cocktails and tip-top service – this man knows how to cater to a crowd.

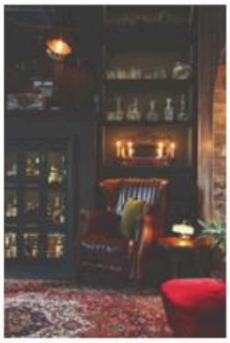
The menu is described as US-accented British fare, aptly illustrated in the ground-level brasserie by shelves laden with Colman's mustard, HP Sauce, Ketchup... and Tabasco. Lots of Tabasco. For the grub itself, chefs use the best British produce and cook with natural fuels and charcoal. It's an admirable ethos and one that's clearly working as they've been packed with punters since opening back in February.

After a cheeky glass of Champagne – served in a saucer not a flute (thumbs up from those of us who don't possess button noses) – we ordered two glasses of crisp Italian white and starters with nods to both sides of the culinary pond: crab and avocado trifle with rye toast for me and fiery chipotle chicken wings for him. The latter's blow-your-head-off sauce was the standout here – perhaps all that Tabasco should've been a clue.

Round two and again we took geographical sides – and unwittingly adhered to outdated gender stereotypes. I chose the delicately feminine lemon sole, while he plumped for the macho rack of ribs. My beautifully soft fish was balanced perfectly by crispy sea kale and tarragon butter, while my date's fall-off-the-bone ribs came with a sauce laced with hints of Indian spice that lifted the dish a treat.

As if we needed them, sides of artichokes with broad beans and blonde broccoli (a new one on me) were knockout too. Finally, after polishing off a "chocolate bar peanut crunch" – a kind of posh Snickers – and a citrus meringue tart, we were ready to throw in the towel.

It had been a struggle but – troopers that we are – we'd survived. As we braved the gale still blowing outside, we agreed salad for tomorrow's supper would suffice. **AB**



DETAILS

36 Golborne Road, W10 (020 3752 0530; w36.co.uk)