

## FOOD REVIEW

# LA CUEVA, IPSWICH 'DELICIOUS FOOD... AND SPARKLY COCKTAILS!'

Danielle Lett samples dishes at one of the town's newest restaurants

Ipswich does many things well, and one of its biggest draws has to be its vibrant food scene. It seems there's always something new opening up in the town centre, which is great for a foodie like myself.

And after walking past it a couple of times, I knew I had to check out La Cueva on St Nicholas Street one evening.

A restaurant, bar, and lounge, La Cueva markets itself as a 'contemporary environment surrounded by art, comfort and beauty'.

As soon as my mum and I walked in, it ticked all three boxes straight away. It's an elegant space with high-end vibes. Think white table clothes, indoor blossom trees that tower up high, colourful canvas art on every wall, and ambient lighting throughout.

We walked in, confirmed our reservation, and were taken straight to our table by our server for the evening, Samantha.

As we sat down, we got stuck into the enormous drinks menu. If you enjoy a tippie, you'll have fun pawing through the list. The wine menu features nearly 60 champagnes and sparkling wines, reds, whites, rosés, and digestifs.

As well as standard spirits and a range of draught beers, there's also an extensive cocktail menu on offer. And I mean extensive. There's around eight pages of various mixed drinks, so whether you're looking for something with a vodka base, a gin cocktail, something with a tequila kick, or a frozen tippie to cool down with, there's definitely something to wet your whistle.

And for anyone who fancies an earlier bite to eat, it's two-for-one on all cocktails Monday to Thursday until 7pm.

I ordered a glass of the Ellas Ridge 2020 New Zealand sauvignon blanc (£7.25), while mum kept it light and went for a half of Heineken (£2.50).

We're both big seafood fans, and agreed we needed to have the fish sharing board as a starter (£20.50). Fresh and plentiful, it comprised of smoked salmon, poached salmon, prawns, crab, marie rose sauce, and a selection of freshly baked breads.

The perfect way to begin a meal on a summer's day - it was tasty and filling, (but not too filling), and featured a good selection of

locally-sourced fare. If you're not a big fish fan, there's also a meat board or a veggie board as an alternative. And if individual plates are more 'you', there's a wide range of starters and small plates to satisfy any taste, including honey whipped goats' cheese, pan-fried scallops, soup of the day, roasted vegetable arancini, chicken wings, and panko chilli prawns.

For mains, while the beer battered fish and chips, and pan-fried stone bass were incredibly tempting, we opted for meat instead. I ordered the herb-crusted pork fillet with pork belly (£18.95), while mum ordered La Cueva's 8oz prime beef burger (£14.95).

Mine was cooked to absolute perfection. Tender, soft, and with a bit of pork crackling on top, it was incredible. It was served in a delicious red onion jus, and accompanied with caramelised apple and a side of bubble and squeak.

The burger was served in a toasted brioche bun with maple bacon, Swiss cheese, pickles, and tomato chutney, alongside a portion of seasoned hand-cut chips. Mum thoroughly enjoyed her burger, and before she cleared her plate, offered me a bite. The sweetness of the maple bacon and chutney paired brilliantly with the rich prime beef, and if you're a big burger fan, you certainly won't be disappointed.

After two incredibly satisfying courses, we could barely move. But the dessert menu was calling out to us. We're both 'savoury over sweet' kind of people, so usually dessert is a 'one plate and two spoons' deal - but we couldn't resist.

There's plenty of variety on the dessert menu, including berry chocolate pot, a trio of ice creams and sorbets, warm chocolate brownie, and pear frangipane tart - but we opted to share the lemon cheesecake (£8.50), which was served with raspberry sorbet and ginger crumb.

Beautifully presented, the portion size was perfect. Lightly citrusy, it was smooth and the raspberry sorbet was the perfect accompaniment.

As we slowly finished up our dessert, we thought it would be rude to not have a couple more drinks. I ordered another glass of the New Zealand sauvignon blanc (£7.25) while mum ordered off the



Lemon cheesecake and raspberry sorbet  
Pictures: DANIELLE LETT

cocktail menu. Unsurprisingly, she went for the Pornstar Martini (£10.95) - her favourite. When her drink arrived, I got immediate drink envy as it was covered in edible glitter. For any of the girlies reading this who love an Instagrammable drink, this is the place to come. I wish I'd gotten my own cocktail now, looking back on it.

The photo ops didn't stop there though, as our server Samantha came back over to us and as we asked for the bill, she leaned in and said 'you've got to check out the bathroom'.

I quickly made my way upstairs and was shocked at how cool the bathroom really was. It's got art all over the walls, a flower wall

(perfect for selfies), and a vanity area with mirrors (perfect for said selfie prep), seats, and sofas. As someone who loves taking photos on a night out, this is the perfect place to do that.

I came back downstairs, half a dozen selfies later, and settled the bill. It came to £82.35 - which I thought was more than reasonable. On the pricier side of things, yes, but it was a great experience, and definitely one of Ipswich's fancier establishments.

I can't wait to go back - next time I might have to go just for an evening of small plates and cocktails. I need to see how many of their cocktails come sprinkled with edible glitter.





**ABOVE:** The fish board

**LEFT TOP:** The herb crusted pork fillet and pork belly

**LEFT BELOW:** A pornstar martini - topped with edible glitter

**RIGHT:** Inside La Cueva



Our reviews are conducted without a restaurant's prior knowledge and are an independent account of our visit