



From The Birmingham Post & eat-the-midlands – Some details may change

Please mention www.dinewithus.co.uk on booking.

The Baraset Brann is another Paul Hales/Paul Salisbury M&B venture – Replicated by the newly refurbished Lyttleton Arms, Cock at Wishaw, Orange Tree, The Farm near Solihull...etc etc. If you have been to any of these, then you'll know the story. Modern. good looking places with equally modern and good tasting food.

At the moment. they seem to be going like the clappers.

In my view. this expansion of the empire is excellent news as it's all quality stuff. The layout has been changed. with the bar area converted to dining space - as it used to be in its previous BB days when it was an Italian restaurant.

The conservatory has become the bar and is packed with comfy sofas. The look is slightly different from their other places. though the feelgood factor remains the same.

Here, there are mighty granite-topped tables, lots of oak and pewter and the youthful. pretty staff - shipped in via the Hales/Salisbury white slave trade - sport pervy leather aprons. (Actually. they're not pervy at all. it's just that pervy and leather seem to go so naturally together in a sentence.)

The food is as no-nonsense and appealing as ever - pizzas. pastas. grills. lots of fish. salads. Not that they're all the bog standard norm by any means. The pasta dishes include lobster ravioli and an upmarket macaroni cheese with gorgonzola. ricotta and baby spinach while the fish section has more lobster (grilled. with chips). sole meuniere and a platter of fruits de mer.

Actually. the menu says it's a plateau but I'm guessing that was a mistake - one of a few here. including a pizza with 'pomodoro'. another with 'pequillio' peppers and a 'panzanella' salad. Boys. boys. let me get you a spellchecker for Christmas.

But you get the upmarket idea. I started with a tatin of caramelised shallots and goat's cheese (£6.75) - a winning combination of deliciously sweet. juicy shallots and melting cheese on excellent crispy pastry. Substantial for a starter but impossible to abandon.

J had melon with Bayonne ham and salsa (£7.95). a quality plateful of simple but topnotch ingredients at their prime. Other choices included confit of duck. foie gras and quince terrine. snails with garlic and parsley butter and fried chicken livers with Puy lentils and pancetta on onion toast.

Choosing a main course had been even more difficult. My tempting pasta. pizza and salad choices aside. the meat and fish fest offers the odd retro touch (weiner schnitzel) and an occasional oddity (suckling pig - a horrible thought. even for most non-vegges. surely?).

Mostly. though. it's classic fare. with chateaubriand. fillet and ribeye steaks alongside veal T-bone chops. spit chicken and spit-roast Gressingham duckling.

J had beef pavÃ© courguignon (£11.95) - two great hunks of tender. flavoursome meat alongside an artistic swirl of creamy mash. Enough to keep even the most ravenous diner quiet.

My pastini of wild mushrooms. Madeira and parmesan (?£0.95) was just as hearty. Heavily

fragranced with truffle oil and pungent with powerful flavours. it was very rich and generous with proper fungi. I couldn't hope to finish it but was very tempted to ask for a doggy bag. A side order of perfectly-cooked cabbage, leeks and peas was the perfect green and fresh antidote to all that richness. The side dishes are pricy here - our combo was £3.25. while mash or chips are both £3 and slow-roast veg £3.50. Ouch.

Again, the desserts went untested - though it was interesting to see that they include 'coupes' which seem so trendy. The ones here are proper posh, including Devon fudge, vanilla ice cream and glazed oranges (£5.95) and champagne and strawberry ice cream with poached peaches (£6.45). The other puds feature a cappuccino parfait, chocolate fondant and vanilla creme brulee.

Coffees were quite enough for us, thank you very much.

Baraset Barn is another winner and probably has the best location of all the Pauls' pubs. There's even al fresco dining if the weather's up to it. Give the TV a miss - you know it will only be *How Clean Is Your Nanny* or some such nonsense - and go and give it a try.

NB...This review was a 'snapshot in time' and all dishes & details may change. Please ask for details but mention www.dinewithus.co.uk on making your booking.

BARASET BARN
PRIME STEAKS • CHOPS • ROTISSERIE • SEAFOOD
COUNTRY PUB & GRILL

The Baraset Barn
Pimlico Lane, Alveston
Stratford upon Avon
Telephone: 01789 295510

Further testimonials taken from the Baraset Barn website www.barasetbarn.co.uk

"Beautiful food in a beautiful place. There is nothing to improve!"

DB, Stratford.

"Have loved all of your pubs so far and looking forward to many more additions to the chain."

JJ, Staffs.

"I frequently send our VIP visitors to the Baraset Barn for lunch and the feedback is always positive – excellent food."

JC, Stratford

"Just wanted to let you know our group had a spectacular time Tuesday night. Mark and Nicki did a wonderful job – the food was terrific, service was top notch – it just could not have been better. We thank you very much for organising everything so well.

We will definitely be back, as I'm sure many others from our party will be!"

ML, Detroit, USA