

By Katie and Sean Flanagan



A real dining **EXPERIENCE**

A beautiful Manor House built in 1635 and set within 22 acres, Stirk House sits in the shadow of atmospheric Pendle Hill and boasts a plethora of both modern and historic features - 38 bedrooms, leisure club with pool and for the historians, a priest hole and ancient forest trail.

We were greeted by Amanda Jane Arends, business development manager recently tasked with the hotel upgrade and the introduction of brand new restaurant - Prime. Amanda's enthusiasm for Stirk House is infectious and makes the perfect team when combined with Head Chef Chris Dobson's passion for delivering only the finest, seasonal, local ingredients.

As we entered Prime a wedding was in full swing, yet this did not detract from the peaceful calm that enveloped us. With its roaring log fire, relaxing background music, elegant decor and opulent furnishings, the new restaurant took our breath away.

Restaurant manager Jordan has seen many changes throughout her impressive 11-year service and is

delighted with the 70 cover restaurant. If you haven't visited Stirk House for a while, I would suggest that you too will be very pleasantly surprised.

We perused the menu with a large glass of house Shiraz and a pint of Marstons smooth (for the ale aficionados, Sean declared it to be a cracking pint). To start I chose Mrs Kirkham's Cheese Brûlée with seasonal greens. For Sean, corned beef hash croquettes served on a beetroot pickle. Both arrived piping hot and were absolutely delicious.

Chef Chris Dobson has introduced several seasonal Prime Chargers alongside the classics and Prime steaks. The idea being that you select your prime ingredient and receive a selection of three dishes. Sean couldn't resist trying

the Prime Pork Charger, this consisted of pork fillet and cider sauce, belly pork with crackling and apple purée and a ham, chicken and leek shortcrust pie.

This he exclaimed to be fabulous and I have to admit I was more than a little jealous when it arrived! My jealousy soon dissipated with the arrival of my Penny's, hand selected, 35-day, dry-aged 8oz fillet steak. Absolutely cooked to perfection, accompanied by a buttery, Portobello mushroom, tomato, fat chips and a jug of blue cheese sauce.

Puddings were recommended by Chef Chris, for Sean it was the sticky Eccles cake, perfectly accompanied by Mrs Kirkham's cheese and apple. Rhubarb (my favourite) and ginger cake trifle for me and wow was it good, beautifully presented and divine tasting. We finished evening with coffee and Chris's kafir lime chocolate truffles, (and a few regrets we hadn't booked a room!)

More than just delicious food, the atmosphere, service and attention to detail made this a real dining experience and we can't wait to return!

Stirk House Hotel and Restaurant

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