

Matt and Cat's

ISLE OF WIGHT EATING OUT GUIDE

INDEPENDENT REVIEWS OF PLACES TO EAT OUT ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT

Matt and Cat share with you their thoughts and conclusions as they review eating and drinking houses across the lovely Isle of Wight. Nobody else on the Island has reviewed more, or better! From the most modest of burger vans, pubs and cafés to the grandest hotel restaurants, nothing is beyond their scrutiny.

Masala Bay, Ventnor (takeaway)

WE PAY attention when an Indian restaurant makes an effort to include some specialities of their own on its menu. One venue which does this well is Masala Bay in Ventnor. We genuinely like the food and ambiance



at this southernmost Indian - an accolade won from Blackgang's long-decommissioned Merlin's.

Our complementary poppadums survived the journey home without degrading into a bag of crisps or going unpleasantly soggy. We crunched our way through the seasoned 'dums but didn't bother much with the rather lurid green mint raita.

Our mains were chosen from the intriguing Nepali section of the menu. Dipali is the name Masala Bay gives to the traditional Nepalese chicken and chickpea curry. Two substantial breasts were dotted with what could only be a generous tin-load of the nutty pulses. The mild, creamy garlic and ginger sauce was runnier than the previous iterations of this dish Cat has enjoyed from that self-same restaurant, but the sweet red juices were soaked up by the note-worthy mushroom rice - with its tutti-frutti colouring - enabling Cat to chow forkful after pleasing forkful.

Lamb paprikash is a dish one would normally expect to find on a Hungarian or Serbian menu, so

Matt was determined to find out what the Nepali version would be like. To his delight, it was very good. A generous allowance of actual bone-in lamb chops was steeped in a rich, thick paprika sauce, and scattered with a bit of mixed fruit to give a real sweet-and-sour flavour. The meat was properly seared, so the smoky paprika and the BBQ-style blackened fat of the lamb chops made a genuinely interesting and enjoyable dish. If you are looking for the best place to enjoy Serbo-Nepali fusion food, you could do worse than look in Ventnor.

A saag bhaji was a tasty side dish that we shared, and the satisfying garlic naan, which had filled the car with a delicious smell of fresh bread and garlic all the way home, was great for mopping up the rest of our sweet and smoky curry sauces.

This takeaway did justice to the good standards we have come to expect from Masala Bay. It was reasonable value, easy to order and collect and, what's more, it was intact and tasty when we unpacked the meal at home.

Matt and Cat's bill

Chicken dipali	£11.95
Lamb paprikash	£13.95
Saag bhaji	£3.95
Mushroom rice	£3.95
Garlic naan	£2.60
Total	£36.40

Our Verdict

Score: ★★★★★

A decent place that we'd recommend

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Read the full review of this and other venues on our website

www.mattandcat.co.uk



TV appearance



Lei Hang, left, on Appley beach with her mother.

Island blogger's spendthrift ways feature on TV

By Dominic Kureen

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A WOMAN from the IW has been recognised for her spendthrift ways on a new Channel 5 reality TV show.

Lei Hang, from Ryde, appeared on season one, episode three of TV 'docu-show' Bargain Brits on Monday, January 25.

The show follows people on various benefits and investigates how they stretch their budget.

Lei said: "I think it is great to share these money-saving tips and tricks with people, especially during a time where many people have lost their jobs and are struggling financially.

"When I was younger, I had a

luxurious life funded by my parents until I got pregnant with my daughter Yasmin while I was doing a Masters degree in Infection and Immunity at UCL.

"I was married, then divorced after a year, with my financial situation changing drastically."

Lei started a blog named The Thrifty Island Girl during the first lockdown in July 2020 to share money saving tips with others.

Among the advice she shared in her small screen debut, Lei reveals how she manages to get her gas and electric for a knockdown price and how replacing washing powder and fabric softener with an eco-egg proved a wise transition.

Lei, who was born in Germany and has Cantonese parents, had her world turned upside down when daughter Yasmin was born with both two conditions.

She has Chiari malformation — a

condition in which brain tissue extends into your spinal canal — and Syringomyelia, which is the development of a fluid-filled cyst within the spinal cord.

Lei said: "If the end of my marriage caused me to rethink my life choices, it was Yasmin's diagnosis which really drove the point home that I wanted to become independent and self-sufficient, although I admit it was scary at first.

"I started on benefits and decided I wanted to find another way to support us, so I began to look at ways to save money and support both of us."

Having started a successful eBay business, Lei moved into affiliate marketing using her blog, where she uploads weekly advice for those looking to stretch their budget.