

C L A S S A C T

If you fancy a stay in a fashionable, boutique hotel with bags of character and exceptional food, then head to the Tontine. Liz Lamb checks in.

Roaring open fires, outstanding cuisine and a quirky yet stylish interior, The Cleveland Tontine is one of my favourite places for a weekend getaway.

I love that it is steeped in history, (the building dates back to 1804), that there's panoramic views over the Cleveland Hills and that it boasts a restaurant to rival any Michelin-starred establishment. I also adore the stylish décor—a mix of vintage 1930s and modern hipster—which is totally Insta-worthy.

Having gained a national reputation back in the days when the McCoy brothers were in charge, it was THE place to be seen in. Fast forward a few years and it is now run by Provenance Inns & Hotels, who also own the West Park Hotel in Harrogate and the infamous Black Bull in Moulton.

Any concerns I had that some of that Cleveland charm would be lost when it was sold have been allayed. The Tontine is still a place to cherish and apart from some positive upgrades (a new bar in the bistro and a noise-reducing exterior fence) it is, thankfully, largely unchanged.

After arriving at the hotel I was pleased to discover we had been booked into The Coach House. The bedroom is my favourite in the hotel. I love everything from the eye-catching, book-lined wallpaper to the jet-black furniture and the upper floor that features a huge, luxury bathroom.

It is here that I enjoyed a long soak in the roll-top bath before getting ready for dinner...but not before I had got those all important Instagram shots!

Suited and booted, my husband and I headed to the lounge area for pre-dinner drinks in front of the roaring, open fire. Decorated in hues of dark blues and greys, the space has the air of gentlemen's club about it.

After a cocktail or two, we headed downstairs to the bistro, which features a cavernous, stone fireplace as a centre piece and intimate, circular tables decorated with crisp, white tablecloths.

The mouth-watering menu features delights such as venison, Murton Grange pheasant and Yorkshire chicken and, as well as ala-carte, there is a market menu that offers two courses for a purse-friendly £21.95 and three courses for under £25.

For starters we enjoyed Scottish salmon with garden beets, horseradish and caviar (£7.50) and wood pigeon breast, puy lentils and celeriac (£10.95). The salmon dish was art on a plate. The

attention to detail was astounding—tiny mouthfuls of fish were decoratively placed around the plate and garnished with carefully-placed drops of jus and beet and finished with vivid, purple edible flowers. Though both dishes were flavoursome, it was salmon that had the edge thanks to the flavours that married well the perfect presentation.

Mains were just as impressive. I enjoyed the Tasting of Yorkshire pork, tender stem broccoli, apple and date puree (£18.95) while my husband tucked into the 10oz dry aged ribeye steak, twice cooked chips, confit of tomato, rocket salad and béarnaise sauce (£26.95).

If I thought the starters and mains couldn't be beaten, then I couldn't be more wrong. The absolute show-stopper of the entire meal had to be dessert. I opted for Taste of Apple, which was an assortment of crumble, panna cotta, apple macaroon, mini toffee apple and ginger bread ice cream (£7.95). It was served on a large white plate with the crumble in small, copper pan, a warm, apple-infused milk drink in a shot glass and the other accompaniments expertly dotted around (another Insta-worthy shot). The combination of ginger and apple crumble married well, and there was pops of flavour with each mouthful. This was a food porn at its finest and it tasted absolutely divine. It was the perfect end to an exceptional meal.

Next morning we enjoyed a cooked Yorkshire breakfast in the beautifully decorated morning room with views overlooking the hills.

If you haven't been to the Tontine yet—where have you been? It really is first-class. My parents and at least two couples I know have been on my recommendations and they loved the place too.

Great staff, amazing food and stylish surroundings too. What's not to love?

“
The best dessert
I've ever tasted.”

