

food for thought



Cassidy's

Abbey Street
Tralee

Star Rating:



A warm welcome at Cassidy's

I WAS marooned in Tralee one evening last week on a freezing cold night and in need of sustenance. Just a few paces from my parked car was 'Cassidy's' restaurant which, the last time I had looked, had been 'The Cookery'. It's hard to keep up with this ever-changing world.

If it was warm inside, it would do, no matter what. The name might have changed but the décor seemed much the same as I remembered it — the familiar 'Olde World' look common to pubs and restaurants throughout the country. More importantly, it was warm.

I started with a bruschetta made with smoked mozzarella, tomatoes, and a basil and olive tapenade. The bread used was a ciabatta, which was fine, and the smoked cheese I liked.

For a main course, I had pan-fried free range chicken breast with creamed risotto cake and a Thai vegetable veloute. Multi-ethnic or what? We have Italian rice, a French sauce with Thai flavours, and a free-range chicken that could have trotted in from anywhere.

It was actually very good, and the combination of flavours and textures worked surprisingly well. The risotto was just a little on the dry side but this may have been the chef's intention so that he (or she?) could make it into a cake on which the chicken could perch.

The veloute was the making of the dish. The way its subtle Thai flavours blended with the smoothness of cooked butter and flour was most pleasant.

The most striking thing about Cassidy's is the price. I paid €27.50 for my two courses along with coffee and a glass of wine, which I thought remarkably good value. It brings it into the range of places that you can slip out to for a decent feed without breaking an arm and a leg.

It's not going to win Michelin stars, and it could do with a makeover on the décor side, but there is a niche for moderately-priced restaurants that is, perhaps, not adequately provided for.

It's about the price you'd pay for a Chinese and if we had as many places the likes of Cassidy's as we do Chinese, maybe more of us would come in from the cold.