

# Osso Restaurant



Jonathan Trew makes it a family affair as he heads to Peebles' Osso for a meal that keeps his mum and his pocket happy



Osso Restaurant, Innerleithen Road, Peebles Tel: 01721 724 477 [www.ossorestaurant.com](http://www.ossorestaurant.com)

Now a good few years into her retirement, advancing age hasn't dimmed my dear old mother's powers of observation. In fact, the opposite would seem to be true. If there was a needle in a haystack she would find it, prick her finger and give the farmer an earful about leaving sharp objects lying around. On previous restaurant visits, cling film and scraps of steel wool are among the foreign bodies she has discovered. I'm not saying that no-one else would ever have found them, but let's just say that she is an enthusiastic and dedicated champion of customer rights.

For these reasons, I was feeling sorry for Ally McGrath, chef proprietor at

Peebles' Osso restaurant, long before our little party darkened his doorstep. One stray fingerprint on the cutlery or, heaven forbid, a wobbly table and it could all have gone nuclear. Instead, having carefully spooned the last trace of chocolate fondant from her plate, Ma Trew reckoned it was one of the better meals out she had had for a long time. Unusually, given a long history of rarely seeing eye to eye, I found myself agreeing with her.

Osso is a bit like the Tardis in that an unassuming, narrow frontage gives way to a long, seemingly spacious restaurant that looks more sophisticated than its exterior. The smart use of mirrors, low lighting and partitions make it feel bigger than it

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actually is but the overall impression is rather chic. It doubles as a tearoom during the day but the décor is much more city centre than something that might be used as a Miss Marple film set.

The menu is a bold mix of hearty tradition and exotic, but not reckless, experimentation. In the first camp, was a starter of homemade black pudding which was rich, crumbly and paired with peas and bacon. I don't want to appear mean, but I chose my crab and yuzu salad with cured cod on the correct grounds that I wouldn't have to share it. The delicate flavour of the cod and crab was pepped up with a spoonful of black olive tapenade which was folded into the fish. Crowned with a carefully coiffed tangle of yuzu leaves, it all sat in a little pool of bright gazpacho. Pleasantly chilled, it was a slinky dish that happily floated somewhere between sashimi and the sort of thing a

Spaniard might eat when the weather was scorchio.

Across the table, a shin of beef with wild mushroom risotto and garlic scapes was a terrifically robust, meaty dish. The beef had been shredded into sticky morsels and the garlic added a mild, almost sweet side to the rice. There were also warm words for a dish of rabbit loin with Skye langoustines. Wrapped in Parma ham, the lean rabbit was kept moist by a savoury layer which was echoed in a tower of confit rabbit.

Another winner was the vanilla panna cotta. A wobbly little soul, it was partnered by a Pimms foam and couldn't have been any more summery if it had leapt off the plate and asked if anyone fancied a couple of circuits of the croquet pitch.

Any restaurant meal with my mother that doesn't involve sobbing waiting staff and a running fight with the kitchen can be considered a victory but this was also a good meal on more conventional terms. McGrath's prices are so reasonable that they should make many a city centre restaurant hang its head in shame but the real strong point is the skilled, thoughtful cooking.

**how much?**  
At dinner, starters range from £5 to £7.50, main courses from £10 to £21.50

## hotspots

Edinburgh and Glasgow

**The Rutland Hotel**  
Edinburgh's renowned Rutland Hotel has opened its doors to reveal a newly refurbished venue, home to 12 boutique-style hotel rooms and the UK's first iBar.

1-3 Rutland Street, Edinburgh, Tel: 0131 229 3402 [www.rutlandhotel.com](http://www.rutlandhotel.com)

**BBC Good Food Show**  
Food lovers will be licking their fingers over the weekend Friday 31st October to Sunday 2nd November as the BBC's premier food show rolls into Glasgow. Gordon Ramsay and James Martin will be cooking up a storm in the demo kitchens while hundreds of local food producers show their wares.



SECC, Glasgow Tel: 0870 040 0392

Is there a restaurant you would like Jonathan to review? Then let him know, email: [critic@no1magazine.co.uk](mailto:critic@no1magazine.co.uk)