

REVIEWING

restaurant reviews 2006

FEBRUARY

Parua Bay Tavern
Whangarei Heads Road

rating
OUT OF 10
7

The Jetty's menu is small and simple... appropriate for its location and hours of trade. The service was a touch too casual at times, but we felt at home... At \$60 a head (including drinks), The Captain felt comfortable enough to give Mrs Captain the best birthday present she could wish for – \$20 for the pokies!

MARCH

Tai Tong
206 Bank St, Regent

rating
OUT OF 10
6

... the meals were generally a "good nosh" and good value. There's no shortage of food here and we left feeling full but not gluttonous. An evening meal at Tai Tong is unlikely to break your bank. Ours totted up to about \$40 a head... The major disappointment was the level of service...

APRIL

Marina Pizzeria*
Marina Rd, Tutukaka

rating
OUT OF 10
7

The service... best described as 'self service', though wait-staff were clearly identifiable by funky blue shirts... Since no reservations are taken, it's a case of turn up and be prepared for anything, except restaurant-style service... Just as well the tasty delights made up for it.

MAY

The Beach House
Cove Road, Waipu

rating
OUT OF 10
8 1/2

First impressions count. When we walked up the wooden ramp to the bar/counter we immediately felt a nice surprise was in store. Friendly people on duty; about 25-30 happy-looking customers sitting at sturdy, wooden tables with plush padded chairs.

Linen tablecloths and napkins. Quality cutlery and crockery. Interesting large artworks on the walls. Tiny lights on the ceiling, mimicking a constellation... service throughout was prompt and courteous.

At \$68 a head The Beach House Restaurant delivered well above expectations.

JUNE

Café Mozart
60 Bank Street

rating
OUT OF 10
6 1/2

Café Mozart supplied an OK meal at a reasonable price (\$58 a head, including drinks). We certainly couldn't say the servings here were ungenerous, but things didn't really gel on the night. Is Café Mozart stuck in a time warp, as indicated by the olde worlde trimmings?

The service, style and presentation of cuisine were all just a little too tame and tired to be considered either memorable or contemporary...

JULY

Portobello
Riverside Drive

rating
OUT OF 10
7

We received excellent service from no less than four people and, other than a wine glass left empty for a while, it was prompt and efficient throughout... A pleasant evening of good fare and friendly people in a warm environment on a cold night... the evening cost \$72 a head. But large hotels have to pay those big overheads, like heating bills, somehow.

AUGUST

Best Café Awards

Judged solely on votes received from the public over eight weeks in May-June.

1st McCafe (Bank Street) 1,447 votes.
2nd Caffeine (Water Street) 1,025 votes.

SEPTEMBER

Reva's
Town Basin

rating
OUT OF 10
6 1/2

... attempts to catch the eye of any of the wait-staff to replenish same, and to request the dessert menu, failed repeatedly.

After sitting at an empty table for around 15 minutes, finding it impossible to think (let alone talk or attract help), our night out came to an end. Time to settle the account... The food had been reasonably good but the service was not...

OCTOBER

Tonic Restaurant
239A Kamo Rd

rating
OUT OF 10
8 1/2

But on the night the Spy Team rocked in with no appointment the food quality, variety and preparation was excellent; table service from two very busy yet unflappable waitresses was informed, friendly and generally efficient...

At around \$85 per head including wine, Chief of Spy Finances might want to raise an eyebrow in concern...but you just close your eyes, present the zip-zap and say, "Well done, Tonic. Good things come in small packages."

NOVEMBER

Shiraz
Walton St

rating
OUT OF 10
7 1/2

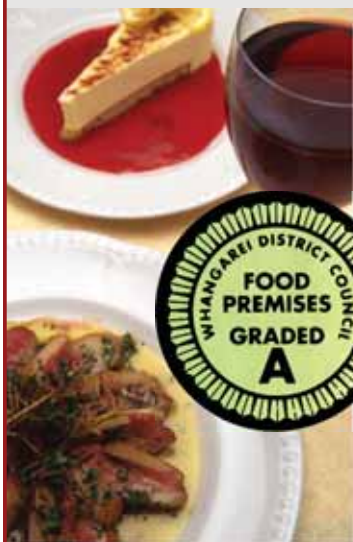
Everyone expressed satisfaction with the quantity and quality of the food presented on the night. The interior is smart and functional, designed to please all age groups and is suitable for families, small groups and business functions...

Table service was not impressive on the night, though, particularly given the fact that there were fewer than 20 diners including we seven.

But the food was different from the norm and seemed to just keep on coming... It cost \$45 a head, including three bottles of wine. ■

*now under new ownership

Is your favourite food shop a top scorer?



Whangarei District Council is one of a number of councils that grades food premises to encourage sound food hygiene practices.

To find out how your favourite food place is shaping up, either look for the Certificate of Registration displayed on the wall behind the counter or visit Council's website www.wdc.govt.nz.

The certificate will bear a grading sticker. Grades range from an excellent "A+" down to a not so good "C." Brand new premises will carry a "new premises" sticker because we allow a two month settling-in period

before grading these. Premises graded A+, A, or B+ are sound performers, while B graded premises typically need to improve cleaning and food hygiene practices or may need to train staff.

"C" graded premises will generally fail in a number of aspects and typically will require immediate repair to kitchen surfaces and perhaps cleaning and improvement in the way that food is managed.

Such premises require immediate follow-up by Environmental Health Officers to ensure that improvements are made to protect consumers and may even be closed under a Council by-law until the premises or practices are upgraded.

Council's Environmental Health Officers undertake regular inspections of 360 registered food premises in the Whangarei District, to ensure that food operators are complying with the Food Hygiene Regulations 1974.



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