

IT'S PLANE TASTY

Eatery next to the airport serves up amazing food

BALLYROBIN COUNTRY LODGE

144-146 Ballyrobin Road, Aldergrove, Crumlin
Tel: 028 9442 2211

By Martin Breen

THE Ballyrobin Country Lodge restaurant has one of the best locations in Northern Ireland — just a few minutes from the doors of Belfast International Airport.

Every day, thousands of cars pass its doors and many, like me until recently, probably wondered what this charming rustic farmhouse was like inside.

Grub Spy

Certainly the entrance and decor is very inviting and I can testify that the food is definitely worth stopping for, either on your way to the airport or as a final destination on your holiday before you have to return to normality.

However, as I found, not all those who dine there are on their way to or from said airport. Many travel from further afield to sample their culinary joys.

It's little wonder then that Ballyrobin Country Lodge, an original farmhouse dating back to 1860, has been awarded a 2014 Certificate of Excellence by TripAdvisor.

Head chef Jim Mulholland has been keen to source his ingredients from local farming communities and this shines through on the menu from Ewing's fish to Silver Hill duck, chicken from Lisnaskea and steak from Moira and Fermanagh to locally sourced vegetables and potatoes.



CULINARY JOYS: The Ballyrobin Country Lodge boasts a mouth-watering menu

I was particularly glad to see Hannan Meats from Moira on the menu as I believe their Himalayan salt aged steaks to be the best I have ever tasted.

I am in good company as Hannan Meats also supply the Queen's favourite food store — Fortnum and Mason. British food writer David J Constable claimed a Hannan's steak "changed his palate and tastes forever" while Stephen Fry added his seal of approval too by proclaiming Hannan's premium beef "wonderful".

On the Ballyrobin menu they offer a salt aged 8oz beef rump steak from Hannan Meats with portobello mushrooms, roast cherry tomatoes and smoked

garlic oil sauce béarnaise with triple cooked chips for a reasonable £15.95. I was really tempted by this but as I had just had a steak a few days previously, I got my meat fix from a beef burger.

This was no ordinary burger though, as it was made with the previously mentioned salt aged beef and was served with portobello mushroom, seared sea scallop and triple cooked chips for just £11.95.

It was mouth watering reading it on the menu and it lived up to the bill, all perfectly cooked.

While my wife opted for sea bass which also got the thumbs up, my two children went for sirloin — one a very generous kids' portion of sirloin and the

THE FOOD

2 x salt and chilli squid	£7.90
Soup	£4.50
Steak sandwich	£10.95
Seabass	£19.95
Kids sirloin	£8.95
Onion rings	£3.95
2 x glasses of wine	£8.50
Jug of orange	£2.95
Pint of Tennets	£3.95
Total	£80.25

THE RATING

Service	★★★★
Food	★★★★
Decor	★★★★
Vegetarian	★★★

other a steak sandwich served on sour dough bread. Again, no complaints.

The chefs are also more than willing to alter dishes on the a la carte menu to suit vegetarians (although they have separate vegetarian dishes too) and those who are coeliac.

As we had also had starters (vegetable soup and salt and chilli squid which were both faultless) we skipped dessert, though they did sound very tempting with dishes like Seville lemon and ginger crisp cheesecake with clotted cream and Valrhonna chocolate and caramel tart with salted caramel ice-cream.

Ah well, gives me an excuse to return.

