



Cafe Avanti

[Jan 19 2008](#) by Tam Cowan

Tam Was Suitably Impressed By The Fine Food And Decor At This Newly Opened Cafe Avanti 13 Townhead Street, Hamilton.

Based on the number of restaurants I've reviewed (and, more importantly, enjoyed) I recently named Perth and Ayras two of Scotland's top culinary hotspots.

But even though I'm a Motherwell man born and bred - which means the rest of this sentence is like a stake through my heart - I think it's only fair to add Hamilton to my list.

Off the top of my head, I've written up quite a few places in the town - Carrigan's, The Manzil, Andiamos, Anya's, Santa Lucia, Peter's Seafood Restaurant, Rodeos - and I'd have no qualms about making a return trip to any of these places.

But now there's a new kid on the block - Cafe Avanti at the bottom cross - and, in a town where you'll never be stuck for something to eat (unlike dear old Motherwell, I'm afraid), I think I've found another good addition to the social scene in Hamilton.

It's located on the spot formerly occupied by Don Jose, a wee Italian joint that seemed to have been on the go for about 200 years.

One major refurb later (a quick inspection of the sparkling toilets and I bet you'll feel ashamed of the ones at home) and Cafe Avanti has risen like a phoenix from the flames.

Talking of flames, I can tell you it boasts Hamilton's only wood burning stone baked pizza oven which was apparently imported from Modena in Italy.

To be honest, though, I'd sooner pay £10.95 for a good pizza than, say, £7.95 for a shabby effort.

And make no mistake, thanks to the aforementioned fancy Italian oven (and a chef who clearly knows what he's doing); my garlic Italian sausage pizza was superb.

In fact, unable to finish it, I can tell you there was almost a fight at the table to see who got to take the rest home.

The pizza was thin and crispy with just the right amount of toppings - a bit like the foccacia my mate Graham ordered for his starter.

Elsewhere at the table, Chick and Peter started with the mozzarella sticks (too uniform in size to be anything other than frozen, but still very tasty) and I really enjoyed the Italian sausage and borlotti beans cooked in a red wine, onion, garlic and tomato sauce.

Moving onto the main courses, the pizza, as I say, was exceptional and Peter enjoyed nothing fancier than a filled Panini and a bowl of homemade chips from the lunchtime menu.

Both items hit the spot, though, and the chips were particularly good. In fact, I think it's quite unfair to describe them on the menu as French fries.

While the Cafe Avanti menu is largely a pizza/pasta affair, a couple of daily specials (beef, chicken, seafood, etc) are always available and Graham and Chick both opted for the 10oz Thai-style marinated rump steak.

Having been lovingly marinated for a good 48 hours, the beef was beautifully moist and tender - more succulent than prime fillet, in fact - and there was lots of it. This dish was served with noodles and veg, but both sundry items were overshadowed by the wonderful beef and I just hope the £16.95 price tag doesn't put people off.

Cafe Avanti was very impressive.

Overall, though, very good. And I just wish we could have stayed longer. Unfortunately, though, Chick had an appointment at the dentist to see about his wisdom teeth.

And as anyone in Hamilton who knows the guy won't be surprised to hear, he was getting a couple put in...

TAM'S HOT PLATE AWARD

CAFE AVANTI

Address: 13 Townhead Street, Hamilton

Tel: 01698 285500

Open: Seven days 10am to 10pm

Wheelchair access: Yes