



# THE BLACK LION

A traditional pub on the north bankside of the Thames. By **Christina Farr** and **Marina Kolobova**

A few years ago The Black Lion was the sort of grimy boozier Withnail and I might go to drink pints of piss. Allegedly haunted by 'the Hammersmith ghost' it was a remote pub in the middle of nowhere with a dark reputation and a spooky past. However, since experienced new manager Chris Kemp has stepped in it's become Hammersmith's quirkiest and possibly finest pub.

Regularly running nights of eccentric entertainment, it prides itself not only on the freshly prepared cuisine but also on public house pastimes. They even have a psychic come in to read the fortunes of their punters on some nights. It was with high expectations we joined a group of hardcore locals for The Black Lion Valentine's programme – a 'Blind Mate' night hosted by Miss Silly Black, a Cilla impersonator whose humour was as dark as her name. Though it wasn't a show for the easily offended, the prizes were worth the Valentine's Day humiliation. As contestants we won a bottle of champagne and the whole thing was, as Cilla would say, "a lorra lorra laughs."

The staff made us feel like part of the Black Lion family, offering full table service and some excellent banter. The roasted vegetable and feta cheese baguette (£6.60) we ordered was warm and crusty served alongside a fresh green salad drizzled with olive oil, while the cherry tomato and goat's cheese tart was so light it melted in our mouths (also £6.60). The moderately priced Chilean Sauvignon Blanc was the perfect accompaniment to the creamy profiterole dessert, which floated divinely in a mild chocolate sauce (£5.00).

If you're looking for a new foodie venue, then try the L'auberge at the Black Lion which opened recently. The French restaurant is located in the refurbished 'skittle alley', and you can sample the extensive wine list.

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