



# Chinese at its best

THE fragrant delicacies offered from the Orient have long been adopted by the British as a staple part of our diet.

However, with the wealth of Chinese restaurants now opening their doors, the search is on to find an establishment that offers something a little extra for its customers than the run-of-the-mill competition.

And Yi Ban Chinese restaurant in Eastcote does just that.

When I paid a visit for dinner, I was expecting the usual sesame prawn toast, sweet and sour pork balls and egg fried rice offerings that come as standard fare so I was more than pleasantly surprised to be introduced to a range of flavours and textures that will certainly see me returning for more.

On the evening we visited, we were unfortunately heavily delayed by London traffic and arrived at the restaurant feeling frazzled and hungry. But the friendly welcome from every member of staff, and our quick seating at a beautifully laid table complete with fresh flowers and wonderfully ornate golden cutlery, immediately swept away the pressures of the recent journey and showed us that we were in for a treat.

Yi Ban's menu is extensive and there is plenty of the traditional Chinese dishes to pick from if you are not feeling adventurous and prefer to stick to what you know. However, the staff are keen to tempt your palate with something a little different and, if you so wish, they are happy to choose your dishes for you once they have found out what your likes and dislikes are.

They certainly chose well for us, starting off our meal with an array of mouthwatering dishes that included homemade Thai and Japanese fish cakes; the restaurant's own speciality of juicy spare ribs with a plum sauce and coated with a sprinkle of sesame seed; salty and spicy soft shelled crab in a light batter for that extra crunch; and the real highlight for us, two perfectly cooked scallops presented in their own shells and swimming in a subtle combination of garlic, onion, chilli and its own natural sweet juices — it was heavenly.

To follow, we were brought a serving of chicken with lemon grass and basil that was packed with flavour and a dish of fresh sea bass in a light sweet chilli sauce that fell apart in delicious chunks. This was accompanied by a bowl of Chinese vegetables and a basket of rice with prawns, lobster and Chinese mushrooms steamed in lotus leaves that fragrantly infused the dish.

We washed the food down with a crisp Pignot Grigio.

To end with, we were presented with a moreish offering of sweet red beans lightly panfried and served with fresh cut strawberries and two scoops of vanilla ice cream — the perfect finish.

The generous spacing between tables guarantees no unwelcome ear-wiggling from your neighbours and the restaurant easily caters for anything from two to parties of 80. So if you are looking for a venue to celebrate in style or an intimate setting to spoil yourself for the evening, Yi Ban has all its bases covered. **AE**

**Yi Ban Chinese restaurant is located at 98 Field End Road, Eastcote, Middlesex HA5 1RL. Call 020 8868 8028 or visit [www.yiban.co.uk](http://www.yiban.co.uk)**

