

Sailor V Salcombe

“You can’t buy happiness... you can buy coffee and that’s pretty close.”

This adage greets us at the entrance of a Salcombe cafe where the coffee is very very good. It is the last shop on the left at the top of Fore Street.

Sailor V’s interior is spacious. High ceilings and rock faced walls are fitting in this licensed restaurant. By the counter, a wall is covered with sepia photos and we idly browse while we wait to give our order.

An ornate chandelier graces Sailor V’s cathedral ceiling and contrasts the general maritime tone. The chandelier hangs on anchor chains from open gilt rafters. Old fashioned filament bulbs hang from the rafters too; they’re in lamp shades that have tassels, but no fabric covers. Somehow it looks just as it should, as does the gilt staircase that goes down to the kitchen below. It is in tune with the overall character of this cafe, which backs onto the Ferry Inn. Queen Anne chairs maintain a harmony with the rustic furnishings to create a decor that’s distinctive.

We are here for lunch. It’s after twelve, so we’re too late for breakfast, but if breakfast is what you want, the varied menu has a much favoured scrambled egg and smoked salmon.

My lunch choice is the locally caught crab. It arrives at the table heaped generously on a perfect baked potato and the waitress is justifiably smiling as she sets the plate before me. Green salad and cabbage-slaw complete the meal. Another popular lunch choice is soup that has an excellent homemade quality. From the salad choices, there are various quiches, such as brie and tomato, or asparagus; or you may choose from a variety of hot dogs.

We sit at a high table near the window where the outlook includes the well known Salcombe Harbour seascape. The Ferry Inn is all that interrupts our view with its mossy west-facing tiled roof where, to our surprise, we see grass and flowering weeds that thrive in the gutter and chimney. On the sea’s edge below, is the landing stage with a foot ferry across to East Portlemouth.

Sailor V is especially busy at holiday times when there’s additional call for their ice cream sundaes and smoothies. Between the buzz of half terms and full school holidays, it’s a daytime meeting place where moderately priced meals bring steady business from locals like us.

A display of cakes tempts us to return for tea, or have a coffee stop before they close at 5.

The cafe’s owners, who own both the Winking Prawn on South Sands, and the Island Street Bar & Grill, have been operating this business for two years.

As we prepare to leave, the soup of the day arrives at the neighbouring table. The table has a chunky ramp to raise or lower it to whatever height you want and is just one of several unusual pieces of furniture here!

The soup of the day is hearty minestrone and crusty bread.... mmm!

C’est la Vie at Sailor V

For more information call 01548 843555

Or look up www.cafesailorv.co.uk All the menus and prices can be found here.