



THE PEARSON ROOM

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Strolling into the Pearson Room on the second floor of a glass-fronted building on Canada Square, we were greeted by a lively crowd of drinkers who filled up the vast New York loft-style bar space. An eclectic selection of music – everything from the Jackson Five to Edwyn Collins – permeated the room. We were led to a smaller dining space at the back, sectioned off by a free-standing bookshelf, where the music was less obtrusive. The look of the place combined industrial with contemporary casual – all filament lightbulbs, distressed mirrors, wood flooring and practical seating. As daylight shrank and the restaurant lights were dimmed, the vista through the floor-to-ceiling windows became awe-inspiring as imposing skyscrapers beamed right at you.

Service was relaxed – just as it should be – and the new menu from recently appointed head chef Tim Tolley featured steak, veggie options, sandwiches, seafood and salads. But for me the American-inspired dishes, a nod to Tolley's upbringing in the US state of Virginia, were the ones to try.

We relished the opportunity to sample the seafood chowder starter; an amalgam of textures, this spicy, hearty, chunky soup was dense with potatoes, tomatoes and all the



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salty flavours of the sea – clams, mussels and pollock – rounded off with a smattering of bacon. The dish was accompanied by a wafer-thin poppy-seeded crispbread.

My main course of brick baby chicken with Napa slaw was another hit – the green coleslaw, swathed in a tangy sweet honey mustard dressing, offset the savoury meatiness of the crispy-skinned spatchcock well. But the triumph of the evening was my friend's colourful plate of shrimp and grits. I devoured the crunchy crustaceans and the cheesy, creamy yellow spiced-up cornmeal that lay settled in a pool of beefy broth.

The New York cheesecake dessert was a delectable vanilla affair sitting on top of a moist biscuity base. It came with a flourish of blueberry compote, tart enough to cut right through the richness.

The restaurant's extensive wine list was no less impressive than its food – it offers European and New World options and a decent selection by the glass.

COST

Around £90; wine ranges from £22 to £200 per bottle

GOOD FOR...

Tasty US-style cooking and a stunning view

WHAT TO EAT...

We wished we'd tried the grilled hangar steak with kimchi fried rice

WHAT TO KNOW...

Take the lift to the left of Waitrose to the second floor – you'll find the entrance opposite Reebok.

RESIDENT RATING

★★★★★

16-19 Canada Square E14 5ER; 020 7970 0920; thepearsonroom.co.uk