

# What a Find!

by Zoe Williams

Tucked away behind the market square in the centre of Burnley is a real treasure. 'The Red Lantern' is a recently opened Chinese Restaurant that has replaced 'The Regent'. The interior is a fusion of traditional China with modern-day England and bestows a measure of Eastern promise that is not lost throughout this dining experience.

Raymond Chan and his wife Carole proved to be the perfect hosts for our evening probably down to their vast years of experience of running restaurants in Manchester's China Town. The Chan dynasty is well known in Manchester with Raymond's family running the popular Charlie Chan's restaurant in the early 1970's, a well known haunt for the rich and famous at the time. In fact, the Chan family is still prominent in the city with Raymond being the chairman of Manchester's Chinatown Business Association and his daughter Selina being the owner of the well known karaoke/nightclub "Charlies".

The extensive menu offered all of the well-known Chinese dishes, plus a range of new and unique options that we hadn't seen before, perfect for the more "adventurous" diner. Set menus were available and there were also separate Thai and Vegetarian menus. Absolutely everyone was catered for

and I was amazed to see that there was even a section for low-calorie dishes, which included Steamed tiger prawns with garlic sauce.... Very tempting!

In the end I opted for Coconut Sliced Chicken Soup, from the Thai menu, to start. This broth was warming, flavoursome and authentic (including chunks of lemon grass and lime leaves). My dining companion had the old favourite of Chicken and Sweetcorn soup and reported this to be just as good.

Half a crispy duck followed and we had offers to replenish the pancakes, salad and hoi sin sauce which we accepted. This was probably a mistake as we were then starting to get full (we would have had enough with a quarter for the three of us). Raymond came to the rescue and offered to cancel one of the dishes if we wanted to as they are all cooked fresh. It was a hard decision which one to let go but we settled to keep the Singapore Vermicelli and Hong Kong Style King Prawns. Both were beautifully presented and absolutely delicious. The generous portion sizes meant that we didn't manage to finish either but these were delivered back to our table in take away boxes for a tasty lunch the day after.

Oh! I can't believe I nearly forgot about



Zoe pictured here with owners Raymond and Carole

the fish! In between the soup and duck courses we took up Raymond's recommendation of a new dish to try, a dish that I would certainly recommend. It arrived and looked like a portion of barbecue spare ribs, red and coated in a sweet marinade. It tasted similar to spare ribs too, except more tender and without the fat or bones (which sometimes puts me off ribs). Raymond told us that this dish was made from a fish that is similar to whiting, so extremely healthy too. It is currently on the menu as "Red Lantern Smoked Fish".

The total food bill, for the three of us came to £45, which I thought was extremely reasonable for food and service of such outstanding quality and especially if you consider that we had more than enough to feed four.

The only possible negative is the location, as it is very easy to miss, especially with the minimalistic exterior but perhaps that could be a positive in the sense that it is a little-known, hidden gem?



## Special Christmas Menus

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**The Red Lantern**  
**Chinese Restaurant**

