

Created by: Debra C. Argen

The Saddle Room

The Saddle Room at [The Shelbourne Hotel](#) in **Dublin, Ireland** features cuisine by Executive Head Chef John Mooney with a Steak and Seafood theme in an attractive setting.

The Shelbourne Hotel reopened in March 2007 after an extensive 2-year renovation, which included the addition of The Saddle Room restaurant where Edward F. Nesta and I had dinner at during our stay at the hotel in September 2007.



The restaurant features an Oyster Bar, the inspiration of Executive Head Chef John Mooney, and an open kitchen, which guests pass by on their way to the dining room tempting their senses as the chefs prepare the nightly fare.

On the way to the main dining room, we passed intimate copper padded booths that featured privacy curtains, and in the main room, which is divided into sections, and there is wallpaper with a brown leaf design on a cream background, tobacco leather chairs with hob nail design, oak walls, fairy light ring chandeliers, brown floor to ceiling fabric graces the wide windows overlooking Dublin, and a fireplace at the end of the room was a delightful architectural surprise that was discovered during the renovation. The tables are draped with white linens, white napkins, and accessorized with orange and yellow glass globe bowls with tea lights.



In a celebratory mood, our waiter, Tomasz, began our evening with flutes of Moët & Chandon Champagne to accompany our Amuse Bouche of Asparagus and Pistachio Soup.



For his first course, Edward selected the Pan Seared Foie Gras, Caramelized with Drunken Cherries and Toasted Almonds, which arrived with a ring of sauce and delectable cherries.

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I had the Crab Cakes, Roasted Pepper, Basil and Lemon Mustard Aioli presented as two very tasty crab cakes accompanied with mixed greens on a rectangular art glass plate decorated with 9 basil and lemon mustard aioli "buttons."



The Chef sent us a second "greeting" in the form of Halibut on a bed of heirloom tomatoes with tomato jus and herb oil, which was nicely presented with a rich broth.



Chef John Mooney uses local and organic steak and seafood in the restaurant, and since Wicklow is famous for its lamb, Edward selected the Roast Rack of Wicklow Lamb, Potato Gratin and a Mustard Crust. This course was beautifully presented with crisscross rack of lamb, and accompanied by a small cast iron pan of perfectly golden potato gratin, mixed greens and a grilled tomato, and another cast iron pan filled with mixed vegetables.



As my last course of the evening, I selected the "Gin & Tonic" Grilled Salmon, Caramelized Cauliflower, Lime Emulsion and Coarse Herbs and Potato Gratin, which was salmon on a bed of caramelized cauliflower, topped with rocket, and with sauce lines decorating the plate. As for the "Gin & Tonic" in the title, the name was a play on words, and referred to the juniper berries and lime in the recipe, and not actually gin or tonic, which was a small disappointment, but I quickly recovered as the salmon was excellent.

Although The Saddle Room features a tempting Oyster Bar menu where guests can experience different parts of Ireland through the oysters, and includes Clare Atlantic Oysters, Carlingford Oysters, Galway Oysters, and French Claire Oysters, we decided to wait until our next visit to Dublin to sample them, leaving us with another reason to return to the restaurant.

Read other articles on **The Shelbourne** in the **Hotels and Resorts** and in the **Chefs' Recipes** section where Executive Head Chef John Mooney shares a delectable three-course menu.

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