



[Table Table](#) Manchester Central, GMEX
Lower Moseley Street, Manchester
Reviewed by [Helen Nugent](#) March 2012

As a rule, I tend to steer clear of anywhere that describes itself as a “pub restaurant”. Experience has taught me that this gastronomic hybrid has a worrying propensity to disappoint and, if truth be told, an unappealing habit of overcooking even the most basic of food.

And so it was with a degree of trepidation that I ventured along to [Table Table at Manchester Central](#). Although the “pub restaurant” is, as the name suggests, central, I had never come across it before. Nor had I ever been tempted to seek it out. Table Table, juxtaposed between the swanky Midland Hotel and the imposing former GMEX centre, had a lot to prove.

Looking back, I don't know quite what I was expecting. A sweaty High Street chain perhaps, complete with decor that tried too hard and the obligatory sticky floor. Or an ill-advised old man's boozer that had valiantly yet unsuccessfully tried to transform itself into a welcoming bistro. But, thank god, Table Table didn't succumb to either of these two nightmares.

Soothing, gentle and inviting turned out to be suitable descriptive words for this pub-cum-restaurant. A mixture of contemporary art, terracotta walls and original brickwork came together to create a city centre venue that didn't irk or irritate. The staff were extremely friendly, attentive and, most pleasing of all, knew the intricacies of the wine list without consulting the latest edition of Decanter magazine.

My companion kicked off the meal with a starter comprising of aromatic duck parcels. This turned out to be a snip at £4.99 after, licking his lips, he pronounced they were "very good, not too filling" and accompanied by a tasty salad – not a given when it comes to a starter (think of all those limp lettuce leaves you've had in a myriad of restaurant starters).

Onto the main. I opted for 21-day-old matured fillet steak. I'm pretty sure I've never had a 21-day-old matured fillet steak before (unless they sell them in Ramsbottom Morrisons and I bought one by mistake) but it was, to put it bluntly, bloody lovely. The chips weren't overdone (another common mistake by so-called gastro pubs) and, after requesting a selection of condiments, I was presented with oodles of ketchup. As a northerner, I was proper happy.

I don't wish to cast aspersions, but I think my companion may have over-reached by ordering the mixed grill. Oh. My. God. As a former vegetarian, I was quietly appalled by the quantity of meat on his plate, not to mention the extremely generous helping of chips. It's possible there was a rogue vegetable on the platter but I couldn't swear to it. "It's a marathon, not a sprint," I told him as he looked, aghast yet content, at the task in front of him. "Might be best to leave the carbohydrate until last", he ruminated.

I'm happy to report that both of us managed to consume all the meat on our plates, even if my dinner partner was embarrassingly lax on the chip front. Every cut was perfectly cooked and appropriately seasoned. And, given what we both put away, fantastically reasonably priced.

And so to dessert. Well, just for me. I think my lunch friend may have needed a gun to his head in order to ingest further. I opted for Eton Mess, a long-time favourite. It passed muster but failed to hit the spot. For such a simple dessert, Eton Mess is surprisingly easy to get wrong. The key is oodles of meringue and the freshest strawberries. Oh well, it was a minor blight on an otherwise delicious meal.

There's an updated review available at [Bishopsgate Table Table](#) .