

Mirage is a good bet to tickle your taste buds

Restaurant Review Mirage Fusion

Aside from the odd late-night kebab, I don't tend to mix food and gambling.

My experiences of casino cuisine haven't always been the best, either, with a trip to Las Vegas a few years ago consisting mainly of oversized buffets that really didn't bring out the best in me.

But luckily your options in Birmingham aren't limited to those 'all you can eat' foodfests.

Five Ways island isn't exactly the Vegas strip, but Broadway Plaza's casino boasts its own restaurant, Mirage Fusion. And very nice it was, too.

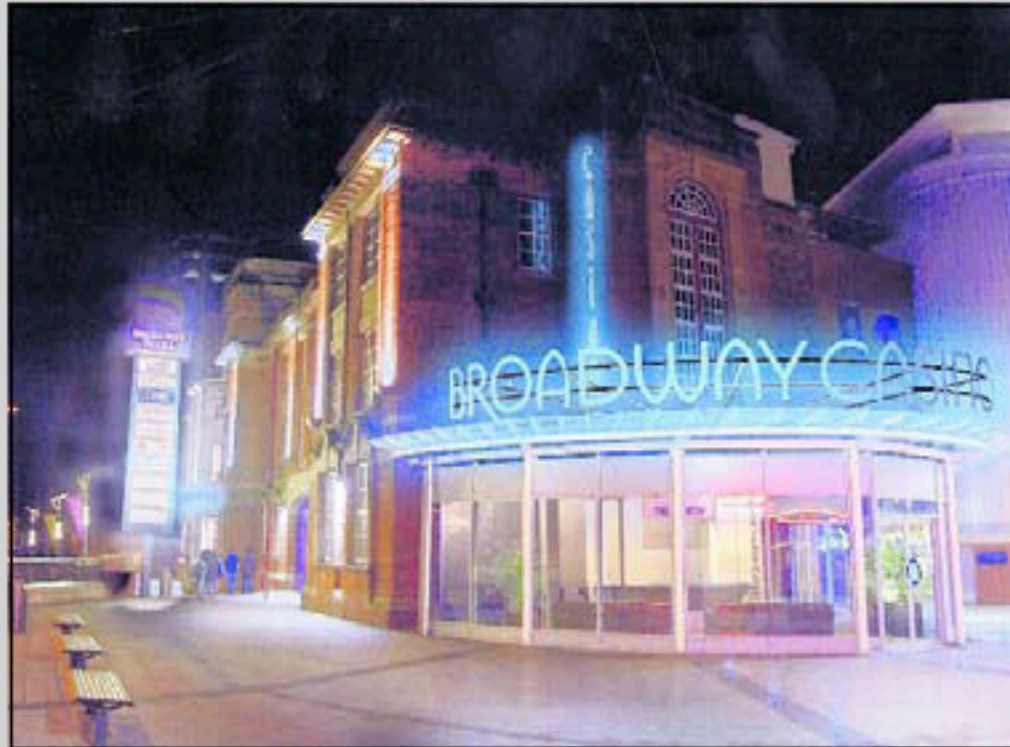
As the name suggests, it specialises in Asian fusion cuisine, although, a little confusingly, it retains a few old favourites from its previous life as an Italian restaurant.

For starters, my mate had the Hanoi chicken soup that, despite its name, had slices of pork thrown into the mix as well. He wasn't complaining, though. A big bowl of the more-ish and spicy broth came loaded with veg and noodles.

I went for the Vietnamese spring rolls. Stuffed with king prawns and rice, they reminded me of dumplings but were flavoured with coriander, nuts and veg, and were a fresh and cool way to start the meal.

We also had soft shell crab, and that was a real highlight. It was deep fried in salt and chilli, and there was plenty of white meat to pick at and legs to crunch on.

Helpfully, all the starters came



with side dishes of chilli dip, so you could choose how hot or otherwise to make your dish.

For my main, I thought I'd try one of the Italian dishes that stuck out on the menu, although it too had a touch of 'fusion' cuisine about it.

Seafood in penne pasta sounds Italian enough, but the creamy and beautifully-flavoured saffron sauce made it almost taste like a curry dish.

My friend thoroughly enjoyed his belly of pork.

He said it was cooked to perfection and very tender.

It came on a plummy sweet and sour sauce, and was accompanied by a side dish of egg-fried rice that would have been comfortably big enough for two to share.

The bill was reasonable when the extra starter and a beer or two were factored in.

The only real downside of the

meal was an ugly dessert menu that didn't make any of the options – tiramisu, cheesecake, ice cream, etc – look at all appealing. Not that either of us were still particular hungry, though.

You're always due a little disappointment in a casino, though – usually to your bank balance – and it didn't spoil our enjoyment of the meal.

The casino was just starting to liven up as we left the restaurant at around 10pm, so Mirage Fusion might be a buzzy place to enjoy a late supper – whether or not you are at the casino to win or lose (probably lose) a few quid.

Richard Jackson

A meal for two, with drinks, cost £56. Mirage Fusion, Broadway Plaza Casino, Ladywood Middleway, Birmingham. Tel: 0121 456 5557. www.broadwaycasino.co.uk