



IT'S BOBBY

Jake Cooper, who turned 21-years-old last month, celebrated with a birthday party at Claudia Cooper and Dominic Bowser's gym, Sound Mind and Body, Front Street, Benton, Newcastle. Mother, Claudia, who is excellent at organising parties, did a wonderful job. Her partner, Dominic, who is one of the best personal trainers in the North

East, was a great host, too. With around 175 guests, the bar was flowing with just about everything, from beers and cocktails to shots. They also served sausage and mash (with delicious onion gravy), cupcakes and, of course, birthday cake. The brilliant DJ Jo Manji (David Jones) provided the music. The best part was that Jake invited his mates to bring sleeping bags so that they could sleep on the gym floor. Claudia served up bacon butties in the morning, I'm sure! There were also heartwarming speeches from Dominic, Jake's brothers, Michael and Myles, and his Auntie Catherine, who sent her message all the way from Edinburgh via video. Jake, I've watched you and your brothers grow up into strapping young men and I was so proud to be a part of your night.



David King invited me to join him and his wife, Julie, to have lunch at his venue, City Tavern, on Northumberland Road, Newcastle. David took over the premises in January 2014 and has spent a fortune on the refurbishment. It looks amazing: two bars on two floors, including a sheltered terrace and loads of seating for customers to eat and drink. The first floor also features a great open kitchen, allowing diners to observe the preparation of their food. With delicious food at reasonable prices and a 3am closing license at weekends, it's definitely worth a visit and should attract all kinds of people.

Executive chef, Mark Docherty, is so devoted to what he does, that David has let him design his own menu.

I decided on the goats cheese roulade, served with fresh figs and mixed leaf. David, meanwhile, opted for the sesame steak salad with Asian pears, sliced radish and 'sesame snow'. Julie decided on the grilled mackerel with compressed, gin-infused cucumber and apple gel. I also sampled the aromatic spiced belly pork (my favourite), which was served with an Asian salad, dressed with sweet chilli, pork crackling and more sesame snow. To finish off, we sampled three mini desserts from the specials menu: strawberry tart, flourless chocolate torte and cheesecake. Everything was freshly prepared and all I can say, Mark Docherty, you are one very talented man. Well done, guys!

My friend, Natasha Withers, invited me to the opening of Tiger Hornsby, on the Quayside, which is owned by Rachael Frame, and her silent partner, Steve. The bar is amazing and I really believe that, along with House of Tides, Popolo and Chase, which will reopen as a new venue later this year, it will bring the crowds back to that part of Newcastle.

Until next month, guys! Bobby. bobbym30@talktalk.net