



Interior of Saint-Germain in Happy Valley; saddle of lamb (top right) and coq au vin. Photos: Nora Tam

SAINT-GERMAIN

**1A Wong Nai Chung Road,
Happy Valley
Tel: 2836 6131
Open: Tuesday-Sunday noon-11pm
Cuisine: French**

Price: about HK\$400 without drinks or the service charge.

Ambience: the layout has changed little from its previous incarnation as an English pub, but the interior has been given a quick once-over: mirrors adorn the walls, the floor is a chequered green and white, and there is a glass display case for desserts. Diners will appreciate the comfortable banquette seats and sense of space.

Pros: the kitchen didn't mind serving as

a starter the truffle risotto, offered that evening as a special main course. Management just halved the price. The fairly short menu is approachable and predictable, which works in a restaurant that offers unpretentious, casual dining. English translations are provided for the names of each dish.

Cons: our waitress was unsmiling, but her colleagues made us feel welcome. Temperature-wise, it was almost as chilly inside as out. Although we'd heard much about the apple tart, it was a disappointment: the fruit slices were bland and the pastry was far from crisp.

Recommended: we appreciated the generous shavings of black truffle atop the risotto (HK\$130), which was rich,

smooth and aromatic. The fish soup (HK\$98) was thin but robustly flavoured and came with croutons, and saffron and garlic mayonnaise on the side. The roasted lamb saddle (HK\$238) dressed with jus was accompanied by a vegetable "cake" that was Provencale in its wholesomeness and simplicity. Equally down-to-earth and delicious was the coq au vin (HK\$168), with moist, tender chicken and the usual mix of bacon, mushroom and onion (the potatoes served in a separate bowl). **What else?** On Saturdays and Sundays, brunch dishes such as eggs Benedict, eggs royale or scrambled eggs are available, in addition to regular offerings. *Charmaine Chan*