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North Star Delicatessen is a microcosm of everything Chorlton. It's organic, foodie, yummy-mummy heaven. It fully conforms to the over-used clichés applied to the suburb and often used as terms of derision. But since relocating to the café wasteland of Prestwich, I miss having a deli that sells posh sarnies and lattes within stumbling distance of home.

We finish off with cakes, and these are where North Star really shows its strength. I have a chocolate orange and cheesecake brownie (£2.85) which sounds like they made a list of everything good in the world and mixed it all together in one bowl.

At North Star, they've got a fine selection of fancy sandwiches on their new summer menu, but it's the salads and tartlets displayed in the counter cabinet that tempt us on our midweek, lunchtime visit. There's a table by the window that's not boxed in by three-wheeler buggies so we grab it after selecting drinks from the shelves in the delicatessen.

Established in 2003, North Star has proved to be a constant in this somewhat shaky part of Chorlton where many a bar and café has shone bright only to burn out a few seasons later. It taps into the foodie market well with a light, stylish deli stocked with fresh cheeses and meats and culinary treats such as organic cider, organic chocolate, and artisan biscuits. In an admirable attempt to cover the basics they also do organic eggs and organic milk, but it's never going to be the type of place where you'd do

your weekly shop: the wines are all over £8.95 for a start.

We ignore the alcohol (you can order wine and beer to have with your food) in favour of some odd-looking soft drinks; a murky bottle of mango tea (£1.35), and an alarmingly orange concoction called La Mortuacienne Mandarine (£1.25). It's mandarine-ade which actually tastes and smells like mandarins, despite being the colour of Irn Bru on steroids.

Food-wise, I go for mackerel tortilla (£6.95) because the tartlets I'd had my eye on have all been snaffled by other customers. I don't look forward to it, imagining a strong-flavoured fish like mackerel might be too much for lunch. But it turns out to be far from overpowering: a thin layer of mackerel balanced out by new potatoes, garden peas, and a delicate covering of cheese. Very restrained and very good. The lentil side is the colour of mud but has a zesty, lively taste thanks to the red onion, tomato and big chunks of feta.

My friend has a more conventional salad: goats cheese and roast Mediterranean vegetables (£6.95) with pine nuts, balsamic dressing, and gooey-looking warm bread on the side. She orders it because she's trying to be healthy, then later says she likes it because it's really big. A reluctant dieter if ever I saw one.

Abandoning the health kick completely, we finish off with cakes, and these are where North Star really shows its strength. I have a chocolate orange and cheesecake brownie

(£2.85) which sounds like they made a list of everything good in the world and mixed it all together in one bowl.

'Blimey. It's amazing, isn't it?' says my green-eyed friend.

Dense, moist and almost caving in under its own deliciousness, it might make it worthwhile moving back to Chorlton. The rhubarb and yoghurt cake (£2.85) doesn't have such a mouth-watering name but is just as successful with real pieces of rhubarb and a light texture.

Alongside the coffees (£1.55), which North Star blends on site, these dishes are a lovely way to finish Wednesday lunchtime, and shows why this establishment is as popular as ever.

The food is imaginative, even adventurous at times, but it works. Surely the city could sustain another place like this – with a name like North Star, you'd think they might consider opening up a sister operation north of the city centre. In Prestwich. Just for me.

Rating: 15/20
Breakdown: 8/10 food
4/5 service 3/5 ambience
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