Cordon Bleu students put on a super spread

Ah it's a tough job but someone has to do it - Bridget Galton gets stuck in to some teatime treats

Tickling the taste buds... Clockwise from above, student Tamara Ayoub admires her handiwork; some of the delights on offer; a variety of cakes and pastries on a stand is watched by two of the Le Cordon Bleu students; a view of the restaurant in Marylebone Lane where the tea parties takes place.

THe best value afternoon tea in town has got to be at 108 Marylebone Lane. On select dates, the Superior Patisserie Students at Le Cordon Bleu cookery school in Marylebone show off their newfound skills to the public.

For just £9.95 a head, you sit at tables in this smart modern restaurant, adorned with the crispest, whitest linen, while a parade of exquisitely presented tarts, choux, cakes and pastries are brought on a tray.

When I headed to the debut tea party last month, the only complaint was the physical impossibility of trying more than a few of these delicacies at one sitting.

Once I'd settled down with a pot of Earl Grey, the waiter brought along a basket of scones including apple, raisin and plain.

I tested out the traditional home-made raspberry jam and clotted cream, while my six-year-old wolfed down two plain scones spread with a thick citrusy, home-made lemon curd – all were featherlight and evidently freshly baked, the spreads were excellent.

The students themselves wait on you and are consequently very knowledgeable about the fares on offer.

It's a jolly party atmosphere as trainees take photos of each other's handiwork and proud friends and family gather to admire the impressive expertise of loved ones who can seemingly work wonders with a sculpted chocolate twist.

If a lemon cake with lemon syrup was on the heavy side or a tiny marble cake not quite packing enough vanilla or chocolate flavour, then the iced éclair filled with chocolate crème patissier made up for it.

I particularly liked a teeny crisp pastry filled with chocolate and topped with baked banana. The crème brulee tart on a pastry base with a set fruit compote was also intricate and delicious.

The raspberry and chocolate mousse between layers of chocolate sponge was too rich to finish – the mousse could have been lighter with more evidence of the tangy berry, but there was no denying the depth of dark chocolate flavouring.

Options I, alas, had no room for included a pear mousse with almond sponge, a chocolate macaron with coffee bean brulee, a fresh fruit tart and a coconut meringue with zesty lime mousse.

There may be the odd forgivable flaw, but I guarantee these diploma students will be whipping up teatime treats in London's top hotels before long. Get ahead of the pack by tasting their skilled handiwork for a fraction of the cost of Tea at the Ritz.

The next Le Cordon Bleu Tea Party at 108 Marylebone Lane takes place at 3.30pm on August 25. Further parties will take place in November.