



£3.25
No.2111

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Food & Drink



14 **New entry**
Viajante
Everything about Nuno Mendes's restaurant is hip – the name ('traveller' in Portuguese), the location (in 'up-and-coming' Bethnal Green), the Nordic-meets-Itale Modern decor. But pretentious it isn't, even when you're presented with an amuse-bouche titled 'Thai Explosion II' and the chefs plate up using tweezers. There's a sense of fun here, in part due to Mendes's infectious enthusiasm (he often serves some of the dishes to diners himself), and the food is genuinely creative and accomplished. It's quite unlike anything else in this city. Prices are, of course, among the highest in east London – pay £100 or so per head for dinner (yes, really).
When to go When you want your tastebuds to do the travelling.
What to have No choices here, just pick a number – three, six, nine or 12 courses?
Town Hall Hotel & Apartments, Patriot Square, E2 9NF (7871 0461/www.viajante.co.uk).
Bethnal Green tube/rail.

13

New entry

Les Deux Salons
The team behind Arbutus (see No. 32) and Wild Honey have gone full circle from creating cutting-edge Modern French food to recreating classic French brasserie fare. This belle époque setting is perfectly recreated, from the polished brass to the

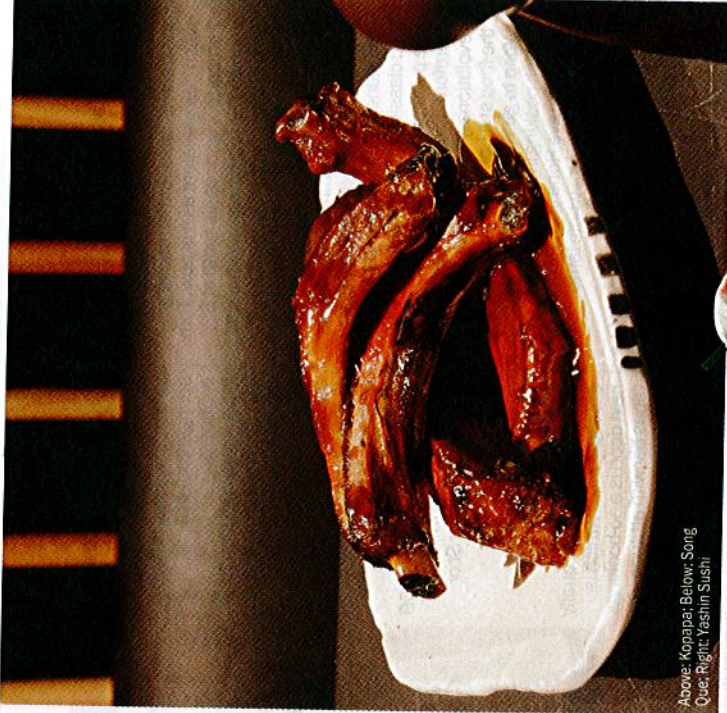


clenched-buttock service. The cooking's classic and reminds you why the French have their reputation as culinary masters. Simple dishes such as steak bavette are perfectly cooked, and desserts, such as the rum baba, are a delight.
When to go 'Pre-theatre', ie between 5 and 6.30pm, when in the West End.
What to have The pre-theatre prix fixe, £15.50 for three courses.
42-44 William IV St, WC2N 4DD (7420 2050/www.lesdeuxsalons.co.uk).
Charing Cross tube/rail.

12

New entry

Hix
Given Mark Hix's kitchen pedigree and status among the fashionable, it was clear his Soho bar and restaurant would be a huge hit when it opened in late 2009. For those of us not on the A-list, Hix is just as welcome and sums up what Soho dining should be all about. It's permanently buzzing, the design's cutting edge and the clubby bar downstairs is exceptional and merits a visit on its own. Mark Hix's hand is clear in the boisterously British menu, which pairs prime ingredients with confidence.
A special-occasion place (although maybe a bit loud for a first date).
When to go For an uproarious and memorable Soho meal with pals.
What to have The roast chicken with garlic sauce to share is hard to beat.
66-70 Brewer St, W1F 9UP (7292 3518/www.hixsoho.co.uk). Piccadilly Circus tube.



Above: Kopapa; Below: Song
Queue: Right: Yashim Sushi

11

New entry

Zucca
Years on, food bores will probably be waxing lyrical about how this modest Bermondsey restaurant started a movement for clean, simple modern Italian food at bargain prices – River Café lite, if you like. It's not beyond the bounds of possibility, after all. Zucca is a brilliant newcomer, its food refreshingly simple yet good, the prices decent and the restaurant design neat and unfussy. It's a return to letting ingredients speak for themselves, in a time where complex food seemed to be becoming the norm.
When to go Date night. After all, great Italian food and wine, chilled-out service and wallet-friendly prices – that's amore!
What to have Everyone will tell you to have the eponymous zucca (pumpkin) fritters, but we have eyes only for the juicy, rosy, grilled veal chop.
184 Bermondsey St, SE1 3TQ (7378 6809/www.zuccalondon.com).
London Bridge tube/rail or Bermondsey tube.



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New entry

Dishoom
This modern homage to the old 'Irani cafés' of Bombay was pretty good when it opened, and has got better as the kitchen has fine-tuned the dishes. It's a no-booking, fast-turnover place with low prices, so don't expect to dawdle – but do come here for small dishes such as the pau bhaji, the Bombay street snack that combines a toasted Portuguese-style bread roll (pão) with a filling of spiced vegetable stew (bhaji). The biryanis, not a high point when Dishoom opened, have been hugely improved and are as good as Mumbai versions.
When to go When you need a feed near Leicester Square.
What to have Pau bhaji, keema pau, chicken berry biryani.
12 Upper St Martin's Lane, WC2H 9EF (7420 9320/www.dishoom.com).
Covent Garden tube.

8

New entry

Bistrot Bruno Loubet
Chef Bruno Loubet has a short menu of Modern European dishes that reads like a dream. Beetroot ravioli, fried breadcrumbs and sage with rocket salad could be followed by a course of braised beef with mango and herb salad. This Clerkenwell restaurant initially seems to lack the 'wow' factor, but once you've tried the dishes, you'll understand why we rate it as one of the capital's most enjoyable meals out.

10

New entry

Kopapa
The team behind Providores and Tapa Room (see No. 34) have just opened this upscale café/wine bar/bistro with shared tables at Seven Dials in Covent Garden. What makes Kopapa stand out are its extraordinary dishes – you'll not find this sort of thing in Chelmsford. For example,inari pockets – Japanese fried tofu envelopes – are filled with a spicy, clove-flavoured dahi, then deep-fried in tempura batter and served with deep-fried plantain. Blimey!
When to go When your palate's jaded by every other cuisine.
What to have Order a few dishes to share, because they tend to be small, and the menu's worth exploring.
32-34 Monmouth St, WC2H 9HA (7240 6076/www.kopapa.co.uk).
Leicester Square tube.

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