

THE WEEK

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THE BEST OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN MEDIA

LEISURE Food & Drink

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What the experts recommend

Brasserie Joël

Park Plaza Westminster Bridge, London SE1 (020-7620 7272)

Situated on a roundabout south of Westminster Bridge is a “hulking carbuncstrosity” called the Westminster Bridge Park Plaza, says Giles Coren in *The Times*, and deep within it is Brasserie Joël, a “doomily red-lit space, cordoned off with badly fitting false walls”. It’s a truly awful space – which is a great shame, because Chef Joël Antunes’s menu reads like a dream of the “best old-school provincial French brasserie standards”. Artichoke soup – “earthy and aromatic” – comes with foie gras kromesky (little liver dumplings). Milk-fed lamb, slow-cooked in the wood oven with garlic, thyme, chickpeas and tomatoes, fills the “antiseptic space with the roasty odours of early Mediterranean summer”. There is also an “unbelievable” gnocchi soufflé. Even so, the restaurant is surely doomed to close within the year. “Go once, with a lot of people, make your own atmosphere and eat everything on the menu.”

Around £45 a head without service

The Old Brewery

Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich, London SE10 (020-3327 1280)

In the 19th century, there was nothing Londoners liked better in the summer than a whitebait dinner and a glass of Hospital Porter down at Greenwich, says Tracey



The Old Brewery: “a distinctively beery bias”

MacLeod in *The Independent*. In its new restaurant, local brewer Meantime is reviving that tradition. The dramatic restaurant space (inside the old brewery of the Royal Naval College) has soaring ceilings, vast industrial lamps throwing pools of light and a “wave” of beer bottles suspended overhead. During the day, staff cater for visitors to the neighbouring *Discover Greenwich* exhibition: at night they dim the lights, get out white tablecloths and serve a modern British menu “with a distinctively beery bias”. Whitebait were “pretty damned fresh”, while oysters came on ice with a “jug of stout to pour over them”. Mains were

decent (cod and tomatoes and braised mutton) but not as spectacular as the setting. Puddings – “refreshing” rhubarb and white beer cheesecake, and lemon posset with lavender shortbread – were “notably good”. For the full experience, arrive by the Thames Clipper (30 minutes from the London Eye). *Around £45 a head for dinner without service.*

Dishoom

12 Upper St Martin’s Lane, London WC2 (020-7420 9320)

Dishoom (the sound effect of a blow or gunshot in old Bollywood films) is described as a Bombay Café, says Fay Maschler in the *London Evening Standard*. It’s designed to pay homage to the hundreds of cafés opened by Persian immigrants to the city now known as Mumbai in the late 19th and early 20th century – so inside it’s all ceiling fans, marble-topped tables and bentwood chairs. The result isn’t entirely authentic (it’s too “spick and span and loud”), but the food has “freshness and immediacy”. Standout dishes include a tomato *shorba*, soup “soured with tamarind and spiced with cumin”, the Ruby Murray of the day (lamb in yoghurt) and a “slow-cooked, sonorous” house black dhal. Early birds should come here for a breakfast of sausage naan roll with chilli jam. It’s “a champion way” to start the day. *Dinner with drinks and service around £30 a head.*