

Food & Drink

London tried and tasted every week Edited by Guy Dimond



Trout, cask, replica Another Martin Brothers gastropub delivers

Reviews

Cadogan Arms

★★★★★
Martin Brothers' Chelsea gastropub

Tom and Ed Martin, who have already opened a string of acclaimed gastropubs and restaurants across London, have done it again. This is yet another smooth, good-looking, Hugh Grant of a gastropub with great food and a proper beer list. That much we've come to expect. But a good pub on the King's Road? Now that's news.

The Cadogan Arms is a spacious boozier dating from 1869, now rebuilt and beautifully decorated. With its dark wood panelling, antlers on the walls and candelabras on the tables, it's a looker.

Simple dishes done well currently include a fillet of pan-fried trout (pictured), balanced on a firm risotto studded with broad beans and coloured

with garden peas, and the roast vine tomato soup, a bit sweet, but with good intensity of flavour. Some of the desserts read like school favourites, such as the gooseberry and apple crumble, but a shallow dish of crème brûlée would make any French pastry chef proud: a just-set warm custard, delicately flavoured with lavender, with a crisp, wafer-thin sugar lid.

Having eaten in a few Martin Bros places, I'm seeing a pattern. Seamless cooking, great attention to detail, exquisite presentation. And this is a mid-priced gastropub. Which makes me suspicious. Are they using a central kitchen to prep the dishes, in the way that some Gordon Ramsay Holdings gastropubs have done? I'm assured not – it's all made on the premises. Although a gastropub, this is still a

boozier with a bar built for drinking, a few real ales (Fuller's London Pride; Adnams' Broadside or Bitter) and a commendable selection of wines by the

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glass (an Alsatian riesling and a gamay among them). And if bending your elbow with a pint isn't exercise enough, there's a billiards room on the first floor.

The staff are smooth operators, too, gliding around as efficiently as polished billiard balls on baize; our French waitress was as charming as could be. If only all neighbourhood gastropubs were this good.
Guy Dimond
Cadogan Arms, 298 King's Rd, SW3 5UG (7352 6500/www.thecadoganarmschelsea.com). Sloane Square tube or 11, 19, 22, 49, 319 bus. 11am-11pm Mon-Sat; 11am-10.30pm Sun. Meal for two with wine and service: around £70.

The bill

Food	£36
Drinks	£27.70
12.5 per cent service	£7.96
Total	£71.66

Time Out reviews anonymously and pays for meals

La Constancia



River plate Argentinian classics (including chimichurri) by Tower Bridge

★★★★★
New Argentinian nails it

A whiff of charred cowfish is drifting across Tower Bridge – and it's not coming from the slick Gaucho Tower Bridge restaurant.

La Constancia is this year's big local Argentinian steakhouse opening. The venture, under the sure hand of Sebastian Harguindey – formerly a popular waiter in one of the other London parrillas – has taken over a space left by a burned-out pub, in the heart of fast-gentrifying Bermondsey.

Perhaps the steel-and-glass-walled neighbouring apartment blocks inspired La Constancia's interior designers; it looks cool, cold even, and not very cosy from the street. Once inside, though, the dark walls, warm welcome, chilled, tango-inflected soundtrack and that aroma wrap around you quickly. The menu is classic and contains all the usual empanadas, steaks and desserts, though, disappointingly, no sweetbreads.

But what was there was delicious. The morcilla (black pudding) was moist, gristle-free, nutty and sweet, and the chorizo sausage, made to order locally to an Argentinian recipe, may be the best in town: not too spicy, very peppery and succulent inside.

Again, no sign of gristle, which is rarely the case in the home country.

We tried a fair-priced, slender churrasco (sirloin), which cost £12, and a bigger, bloodier rib-eye at £17. The former, cooked perfectly with plenty of juices still dripping off it, was actually tastier. The restaurant also does parrillitas (small table braziers) for the sampling of cuts and extras, but you do run the risk of your steak being overcooked in the time it takes to explore the starters. The sides of chips and salad – which was generous and served in a bowl big enough to give it a proper tossing – were plain and honest.

Two ever-popular River Plate desserts – the 'Don Pedro' of ice cream, whisky and walnuts, and the flan (crème caramel) – were as good as any home-cooked ones we'd had, while the wine list has gone for good value over posing points. Argentinian cuisine is all about simplicity, good produce and careful cooking and Harguindey seems to have nailed it.

Chris Moss
La Constancia, 52 Tanner St, SE1 3PH (7234 0676/www.constancia.co.uk). London Bridge tube/rail or Bermondsey tube. 6-10.30pm Tue-Sun. Meal for two with wine and service: around £90.



JAZZ After Dark

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020 7734 0545
www.jazzafterdark.co.uk

Restaurant at St Paul's

★★★★★
Heavenly food in Wren's landmark



Baroque flourishes at St Paul's

This handsome space in the cathedral crypt has a separate entrance on the north side of the cathedral, together with the shop and the café. The latter two are busy with tourists, but the restaurant so far seems to be more of a hit with locals. And rightly so – it's a light-filled space that gets better the more time you spend there. Beautiful oak tables are set a nice distance apart and laid with antique cutlery, voluptuous water jugs and slate place mats; diners sit on comfortable Wegner wishbone oak chairs with gorgeous white rough linen napkins on their laps. The ground floor has earthenware tiles, the mezzanine herringbone seagrass matting; walls are painted cream and woodwork is picked out in sage green. It's all very sensual and textural – great for a restaurant, but slightly surprising in a place of worship.

Food – by caterer Harbour & Jones, with chef Candice Webber at the helm – follows through on this promise. Organic bread with Jersey butter and juicy green marinated olives served in a little Kilner jar made a good foil for Carter's English sparkling wine with Pimm's. Asparagus and poached Gressingham duck egg was summer on a plate, while the sweetness of treacle-cured salmon was nicely offset by watercress. Next, good though a prettily

pink Trigger Farm Barnsley chop with mint jelly and earthy Jersey Royals was, it couldn't compete with a portobello mushroom Wellington served with spinach – this and the pastry in a pudding of gooseberry cobbler revealed a very deft pair of hands in the kitchen.

The global wine list showcases English winemakers such as Chapel Down, Three Choirs and Carter's, there's beer from St Peter's and the roster of soft drinks includes pressed juices from Chegworth Valley Farm. Staff are still finding their feet, but are eager to please – and pleased we were, especially at these prices. Sarah Guy
The Restaurant at St Paul's, St Paul's Churchyard, EC4M 8AD (7248 2469/www.restaurantatstpauls.co.uk). St Paul's tube. Noon-4.30pm Mon-Sat; noon-3.30pm Sun. Meal for two with wine and service: around £60. Set lunch £16 two courses, £20 three courses.