

Azzy Asghar asks... So, What's Cooking?



CHAI WU

Fifth Floor - Harrods
T: 020 3819 8888
www.chaiwu.co.uk

Although I am very aware that the world's most famous corner shop is also home to the seminal *Studio Frantzén* - I truly believe that *Chai Wu* has a claim to be potentially the best restaurant at Harrods! High praise indeed I know, but - pardon the pun - the *Proof is in the Pudding*, and also in the *Starters* and especially the *Main Courses*. Combine this with exceptional service and you have the makings of a masterpiece restaurant.

This exquisite fine-dining Chinese restaurant offers creative dishes which are masterfully prepared and served by knowledgeable and attentive staff that seem happy to extol the virtues of each dish and even others you may not have ordered.

Our dim-sum was incredibly succulent and the tempura soft shell crab was crispy yet delicate and bursting with flavour. The Beijing Duck served with fresh pancakes and mantou buns followed by duck fired rice - is, of course, a signature dish and one not to miss!

The marketing team at Harrods should truly spend much more of their time promoting the store as a leading London 'foodie destination' as there are truly numerous fabulous restaurants there - sadly, I only ever think about eating at any of them when I am actually shopping at Harrods - *more fool me!*

IL PAMPERO

The Hari Hotel
T: 020 3189 4850
www.ilpampero.com

Nestled on the corner within the discrete five-star boutique hotel The Hari sits Il Pampero, a modern restaurant which offers authentic Italian cuisine with a touch of pizzazz. Traditional Italian hospitality meets Belgravia sophistication not only in the vibe of the restaurant but also in the cuisine. Classic Italian dishes are elevated with the finest ingredients and served to a discerning clientele that know the difference between a *Zampone* and a *Zamboni*. The restaurant, much like the hotel, is elegantly dressed. Crisp white linen adorn the tables along with sparkling china and glasses and fresh-cut flowers.

The smiling and eager staff are reflective of modern London and represent all corners of Europe. They are both knowledgeable and willing and make the evening more pleasant. Pre-dinner cocktails of Cosmopolitans and Negronis are skilfully prepared and set the stage for the fabulous food to follow.

I have to force myself to stop devouring the warm fresh breads served with olive oil and balsamic. This is more difficult than it sounds as sometimes this simple pairing with a glass of Italian wine is as good as life gets!



I begin with succulent scallops which are lightly seared and bursting with flavour. My pasta dish of linguine with lobster is truly decadent and spoiling but what the hell I deserve it! Opting for Rack of Lamb to finish is the perfect choice. Slightly fatty and full of flavour and served with the world's creamiest mash and crispy fried zucchini fitters.

After actually dining at Il Pampero my initial ideas on the restaurant changed. What I had initially thought of as a 'fancy' Italian restaurant in Belgravia is in fact an Italian restaurant in Belgravia that I quite fancy! *Perfecto!*

MOSIMANN'S DINING CLUB - CELEBRATING 35 YEARS!

11b West Halkin Street, Belgravia, SW1
T: 020 7235 9625 www.mosimann.com

From 4th July until 19th August, *Mosimann's Club* will be opening its doors and welcoming residents of Knightsbridge, Belgravia, and Mayfair to experience the Club's exquisite food and service, a privilege normally reserved only for members. In celebration of their *35th Year Anniversary* this year and in honour of this milestone and to thank the local community for their support, residents and local businesses will be available to reserve a table for lunch or dinner. Helmed by legendary chef *Anton Mosimann* and his two sons *Philipp* and *Mark*, *Mosimann's Club* is one of the most prestigious private dining clubs in the world. Members come from the world over to enjoy its exemplary cuisine, wines and bespoke service, set in the luxurious and intimate atmosphere of a stunningly-converted 19th century church in the heart of Belgravia, with its relaxed Balcony Bar, grand Main Dining Room, and seven exquisite Private Dining Rooms.

In order to make a booking during the dates above, please call or email quoting *Mosimann's 35*. Private dining rooms are also available. Rooms range in size, accommodating from 2 - 50 people.

Mark and Philipp Mosimann: "*We are thrilled to be celebrating 35 years of Mosimann's in Belgravia this year and wanted to showcase our fabulous dining spaces and bar with the residents and business community of Knightsbridge, Belgravia Chelsea and Mayfair, we look forward to welcoming you to our beautiful dining Club.*"



I have literally never seen a review of the restaurant named *Dinner* by *Heston Blumenthal* without the obligatory picture of the iconic 'Meat Fruit'. And, being the conformist that I am, I have elected to toe the line - *et voilà!*

This dish, of course, is not just iconic but is emblematic in one 'fowl' swoop of all that is glorious about the venerated chef who holds three Michelin Stars at *both* his iconic restaurants! The dish not only demonstrates his creativity of thinking outside the 'crate', but is also beautifully prepared and delivers the quintessential Blumenthal signature of surprise and flavour - a trick borrowed from recipes of old apparently.

The 'Meat Fruit' turns out to be the most succulent and creamy chicken liver pate you will ever try - the orange zest adds a citrusy flavour and it is truly sensational.

His mastery extends, of course, to all his dishes. This restaurant is about exploring Britain's culinary heritage where a steak is not just a steak and a piece of fish is not just a piece of fish. Each has a story and is prepared in a way to maximise its natural flavour - perhaps even to enhance it.

Case in point the 'Catsup' - not a tomato in sight. Here they offer a cucumber version originally featured in an 1826 cookbook.



DINNER by Heston Blumenthal

Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park, London
T: 020 7235 2000
www.dinnerbyheston.co.uk

The food history voyage is further evidenced by the three cards the Head Waiter places on your table at the beginning of your culinary journey. The three card choices allow the guest to either be; a) left alone to enjoy their meal, b) the option for the waiter to describe each dish in some detail or c) the waiter to give you the history of the dish, its preparation and more - we opted for a combination of b and c for different courses. It was truly fascinating!

But despite the all the theatrics, at the core of the restaurant - as it should be - is fabulous food, food that you appreciate has a history and is cooked by skilled chefs but still delivers in terms of taste and flavour and exceeds your expectations - and so it does.

In addition to an open-plan kitchen, the elegant dining room showcases a beautiful glass-fronted wine cellar that has a selection any die-hard oenophile would die for.

The service is, as one would expect - exemplary, the setting in a beautiful room at the Mandarin Oriental overlooking Hyde Park - stunning, and the food remains the centrepiece that makes the evening one you will always remember and show-off to - I mean tell - your friends about!