

FOOD • JANUARY 2018

COVENT GARDEN'S HOTTEST RESTAURANTS



With a New Year on the horizon, it's time to uncover the slickest dining experiences for 2018. That's why this month, *The Club's* editorial team headed to Covent Garden, now one of London's foodie hotspots, in search of the restaurants that'll make your year

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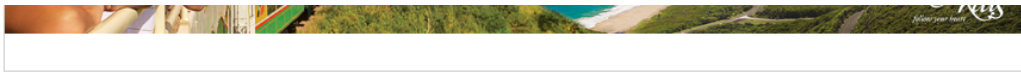
1 Frenchie

Who: Matt Richardson, *The Club* picture editor

Where: WC2E 8QH

Frenchie's first overseas outpost burst onto London's dining scene in January 2016. Having gained a following for its inimitable bacon scones and clotted cream combo, Marchand's classic French cooking, updated with a splash of British flair, is well worth a visit. Though rich, the lamb with butternut squash, harissa and smoked yogurt was sublime, while the Cornish cod with Jerusalem artichoke was equally delectable. For the sweet tooth, the meringue drizzled in chocolate sauce with brittle malt is not to be missed.





2 Frog by Adam Handling

Who: Hannah Ralph, *The Club* content editor

Where: WC2E 7HG

A sleek standout in an otherwise unremarkable side street, the [Frog by Adam Handling](#) sets quite the sophisticated scene. Inside, the clink of air-light wine glasses and the ethereal glow of a bustling open kitchen set the tone for Handling's masterful tasting menu. Showstoppers include an Iberian pork so soft you'd think it was melting, thickly whipped chicken butter on crusty sourdough, plus the restaurant's famed cheese and (generously) truffled donuts. Opt for the expertly crafted cocktail pairings, where beetroot, charred sage and cardamom spiced yellow pepper let you know this is no ordinary happy hour.



3 Henrietta at the Henrietta Hotel

Who: Barbara De Beukelaer, *The Club* production manager

Where: WC2E 8QH

Launched in May within the boutique Henrietta Hotel, Michelin-star chef Ollie Dabbous'

Henrietta is understatedly elegant, featuring a blend of French and British décor to match the origin of its cuisine, alongside a dazzling glass ceiling. We were welcomed with a gin-based cocktail and a lengthy selection of wines to choose from, followed by a tantalising starter of barbecued Jerusalem artichokes garnished with hazelnuts and truffle. The Latteria dumplings, served with garlic buttermilk, chanterelles and chestnuts were plump and flavourful, while the Dame Blanche, an exquisitely executed French classic with crumbly brownie, Chantilly cream and lashings of chocolate sauce, was dreamy.



4 Eneko at One Aldwych

Who: Marisa Cannon, *The Club* content editor

Where: WC2B 4BZ

Following the success of his three Michelin-starred Azurmendi in Bilbao, Basque chef Eneko Atxa opened his first London restaurant in August 2016. Housed within the five-star One Aldwych hotel, the Eneko at One Aldwych design marries charming bucolic accents with industrial decor, featuring an elegant copper staircase, smooth chestnut tables and bell pepper red leather booths. The Memories of the Bay of Biscay was a spectacle, a starter dish of grilled scallops and daikon, served smoking on a bed of dry ice, while the *txipirones en su tinta* – stuffed squid marinated in a viscous, black ink sauce – burst with flavour. Make sure to finish with the peanut sponge cake, topped with decadent dark chocolate ice cream.





5 Sibarita

Who: Ross Clarke, *The Club* content editor

Where: WC2E 7NA

This cosy [Sibarita](#) on Maiden Lane is the second of three Central London tapas eateries from acclaimed chef Victor Garvey – his latest, [Rambla](#), which opened in October has been lauded by critics. Sibarita, is social eating at its best, with both well-priced plates to share, and a truly amiable atmosphere reminiscent of a genuine *tasca* you'd idle into on an alleyway in [Spain](#). The menu is small, but each dish packs a punch, from unctuous *Torta del Casar* fondue, and melt-in-the-mouth lamb cutlets, to zingy *ensalada Malagueña* with its pineapple, fennel and sherry. The stars of this show however, are the *croquetas*, heavenly parcels of creamy spinach and béchamel coated in crispy breadcrumbs. My advice? Order two lots, and a hearty glass of Rioja while you salivate over the menu.



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