

Stef Bottinelli

Eating Out: Vegan Christmas Dinner at Eastway Brasserie at Andaz London



I remember when Andaz London opened in London, or rather, the Great Eastern Hotel, as it was called then, around 15 years ago. There was no cooler place to hang out whether it was at the hotel bar or at one of the regular weekend parties. Those days may have gone, but Andaz has kept its coolness, elegance and reputation, thanks to its gorgeous decor, topnotch service and its restaurants and bars (six, no less).

This year the hotel has gone for a *Green Christmas* festive theme: from decorations made with loo rolls (trust me, they are lovely) to the addition of a vegan Christmas menu at their hip Eastway Brasserie and Rake's Bar and Cafe'.

If you are reading *Ethica Magazine* for the first time, you might not know how much I love Christmas. I love it so much, it's almost an obsessive, deranged love. If Christmas were a person, I'd probably be in jail. So it didn't take much convincing to hop on a bus to Liverpool Street on a freezing London night to try the Eastway Brasserie's festive feast.

Eastway Brasserie is cool and cosmopolitan, yet warm and inviting with its low lights and wooden floors. It's spacious yet manages to feel intimate - not an easy thing to pull off.

The vegan menu offers a starter of roasted butternut squash soup with crispy sprouts, croutons, finished off with a drizzle of truffle oil. The main is a cauliflower steak served with maple carrots, parsnips, sprouts and cranberry sauce, whilst dessert is coconut and juniper infused pineapple served with stracciatella coconut and dark chocolate ice-cream. Of course all three had to be tried.

The soup was simply delicious: full of flavour yet delicate, and the crispy sprouts were not only cooked to perfection, but kept their crunchiness in the hot soup. This dish was tasty and hearty, whilst being light and exceedingly healthy. My dining companion, who generally loathes truffle oil, scoffed the lot, and said it was his favourite dish out of the three.



The cauliflower steak also hit the spot. Cauliflower steaks can be tricky to cook to perfection. If they are too thin they'll fall apart, too thick and they'll be hard in the middle. This was cooked beautifully and the vegetables were caramelised to perfection. My only quibble would be about the cranberry sauce - but I must stress that this purely due to my personal taste. Not that it wasn't delicious, with its sweetness balanced by a lots of zing, but as the root vegetables were already quite sweet as they were cooked in maple syrup, I would have preferred their sweetness to be offset by a slightly more savoury condiment, such as a vegan cheesy bread sauce. Anyway, as I said, that's very much my personal taste, and I ate everything on the plate, so the cranberry sauce was definitely not a dealbreaker.



I never order pudding in a restaurant and I'm not a huge fan of pineapple, but my god, *this* pudding totally changed my mind. The pineapple, infused in coconut and juniper, wasn't presented in chunks, but rather as a carpaccio fashioned in a rosette. It had none of the usual acidity of the pineapple - the infusion balanced its sweetness and tanginess perfectly and the creamy stracciatella coconut and dark chocolate ice-cream was well matched: tropical yet delicate and very light.



All was washed down with a lovely bottle of crispy and lively Verdicchio, which I must say went really well with the whole menu and the delicious homemade seeded bread we were brought on arrival.

At £35 a head (without wine) in London's financial district I'd say this is a bargain and worth every penny.

The service was excellent too: welcoming, attentive and friendly but not intrusive and I really loved all those upcycled decorations - from the aforementioned garlands to the reindeer made of used cork. I would happily return to Eastway Brasserie and I suggest you stop looking for a restaurant for your vegan Christmas dinner: if you are in London, this is the one.

Where: [Eastway Brasserie](#), Andaz London

Address: 40 Liverpool Street EC2M 7QN, London

Price per head: £35 for three courses without wine

Bookings: +44 207 618 7400 or email londondining@andaz.com

Dining Out...



Eating Out: Vegan Christmas Dinner at Eastway Brasserie at Andaz London



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Vegan Champagne and Sparkling Wine Tasting and Food Pairing at Champagne Route



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