

New restaurants open in St. John's Wood

Although the St. John's Wood High Street has always offered a range of culinary options, new restaurants have emerged in the past few months that provide vibrant choices. Notes, At Feast and Maido Sushi are three of these new additions.

Review

Rudi Chamria /

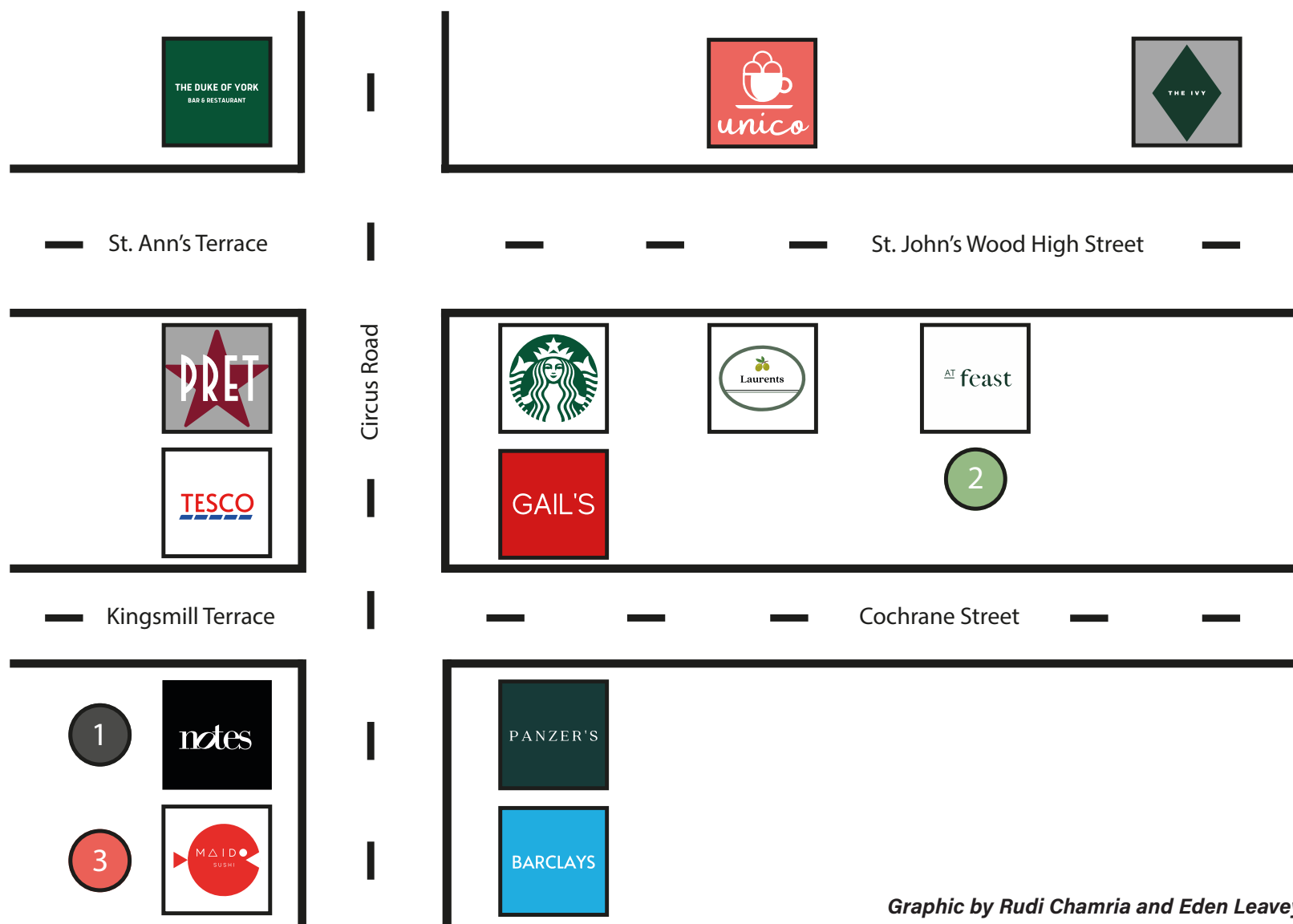
Culture Editor: Online

The St. John's Wood High Street and the surrounding area has always seemed bleak to me, with a few chain restaurants and small businesses that do not tend to survive long.

However, after easing the third national lockdown in the U.K., new restaurants finally popped up and seem as if they are here to stay.

Whether grabbing a cup of coffee before school, scouting a new off-campus lunch table or ordering a takeaway dinner, the options are many.

So, before reverting to the classic Starbucks coffee or Pret a Manger sandwich, I tried three new restaurants the High Street now offers to determine if they are truly worth it.



Graphic by Rudi Chamria and Eden Leavey

#1: Notes

Located opposite to Panzer's Deli, Notes is a delightful option for a simple cup of coffee paired with a nice meal.

Upon entering the restaurant, the ambience is welcoming, with a rustic appearance and plants sitting on shelves, complete with friendly service. There are also a few tables available for outdoor seating, ideal for a sunny day.

The iced vanilla latte and double shot macchiato are both exceptional coffees. Milk alternatives are available for those who would prefer oat, almond or soy milk at an additional charge of £0.30. Many teas, soft drinks and fresh juices are also offered.

Standout items on the menu include the sliced avocado on sourdough with a poached egg, the wild mushrooms and parmesan toast and the pancakes with vanilla ice cream.

The avocado toast was sea-

soned well, comparable with toast served at any upscale restaurant, such as The Ivy. The poached egg that accompanied the toast rendered it a very filling meal.

Moreover, the mushrooms and parmesan served on toast were warm and comforting. Eggs, bacon, avocado or salmon can also be added upon request.

The pancakes paired with vanilla ice cream were my personal favorite, with the clever juxtaposition of the tart berry compote and the sweet ice cream. This plate comes with four medium-sized pancakes and thus can be shared family-style.

Notes also provides a litany of takeaway options, including the majority of their drinks and quick bites from their menu – pastries, cookies and cakes included. The restaurant offers an all-day brunch until 3 p.m. and dinner starting at 5 p.m., perfect for your next meal.

#2: At Feast

Hidden only a few stores past Laurents is At Feast, a family brasserie that prides itself on eco-friendliness by sourcing its food both ethically and organically. It is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Admittedly, what first intrigued me about At Feast was its appealing decor and aesthetic green and beige color scheme.

The restaurant serves coffee, tea, juice and mocktails throughout the day. The Berry Bucha, Cucumber and Mint Cooler and Berry Spritzer were all presented spectacularly, but remained underwhelming considering their high price. The drinks were not mixed well, evident with the lumps of sugar present at the bottom of each glass.

Nonetheless, one can find many international foods, with dishes hailing from all over the

world: vegetable tempura, turmeric hummus as well as American classics.

Quite frankly, I was not a fan of the spaghetti pomodoro. While I understand they used spelt pasta – a healthier alternative – and vegetable tomato sauce in an attempt to increase health appeal, the dish was very poorly seasoned; I barely ate half of the plate. Similarly, the basil, broccoli and roasted hazelnut pesto pasta was uninspiring and bland.

The best item, however, was undoubtedly the vegan aubergine chili. The chili was appetizing and palatable in comparison to the two pastas. The dish was accompanied by rice, chips and salsa.

While staff members were friendly, service was slow and the restaurant was understaffed. At Feast undoubtedly earns stars for its beautiful interior and although the food is mediocre, it may be worth a visit simply to admire its aesthetic.

#3: Maido Sushi

Merely a seven minute walk from school, Maido Sushi is open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily. The plethora of choices the restaurant offers makes it the perfect place for a lunch on the go.

Maido Sushi offers both indoor and outdoor seating as well as click and collect and delivery options.

As a vegetarian, I have an appreciation for Maido's effort to provide vegetarian and vegan-friendly options, given that sushi is predominantly characterized by fish.

Their set menus yield meals with a few different types of sushi, including sashimi, nigiri and maki. The vegetarian set is an all-encompassing meal under £10, containing two pieces of inari, six pieces of cucumber maki roll, six pieces of avocado maki roll, six pieces of bean curd and a cucumber uramaki roll.

In addition to this, non-vegetarian sets include tuna, salmon and prawn.

I enjoyed being able to try multiple items on the menu. Maido Sushi strikes a balance with price and quality; it remains affordable and a better bargain than the cafeteria's exorbitant four-star sushi.

They also offer signature rolls – each elevated and embellished in their flavor profile and presentation – which contain eight pieces of sushi. For those seeking healthy greens, edamame, seaweed salad and other salads may certainly seal the deal.

Eating at Maido is consistently a good experience, with fresh sushi made daily, and high-quality food provided at an accessible price.

Maido Sushi is a superb restaurant with pleasant staff, making it a must-visit next time you feel a sushi craving.