

EAT & DRINK

News and reviews from London's bar and restaurant scene

compiled by **JENNY STALLARD**



All white: The cod fishcake with poached egg has sauce good enough to bathe in

ROMA

TOWER HILL

★★★★☆

THE concept here of Ancient Roman cuisine leads my boyfriend to wonder whether there will be dormice on the menu or even a vomitorium. The answer to both is no, but the stairway of this City venue is covered in period pictures plus a couple of Caesar-type busts to stress the theme. Thankfully however, there's a change of decor in the dining room, with mustard-yellow velvet booths, marble tables and atmospheric lighting. It feels a little disjointed but

the cocktails soon distract me with names such as Carpe Noctem [Seize The Night] and the delicious Vesuvius [£9.50] – a negroni infused with apple-wood smoke. Some dishes are described with quotes from Apicius, a 5th-century Roman recipe book, and use traditional ingredients – oxtail and lovage – and methods such as baking in hay, which cooks meat slower. My boyfriend starts with a simple poached-egg-topped cod fishcake [£8.50] swimming on a sauce so buttery, lemony and tarragon-y, I want to bathe in it. My hay-smoked mackerel fillet [£8] is less successful, tasting too fishy, with a

somewhat flabby texture, although prettily presented. But the mains are good: hay-baked lamb rump [£26] is perfectly pink and tasty, while the honey and mustard pork 'stincotto' [£25] is a tasty hunk of pig falling off the shank bone. The sides [£4] are fine – borlotti beans with ham and tomato needed a longer simmer, while I don't really taste the samphire advertised with the gnocchi. But the staff are friendly and knowledgeable and the vast wine list has many reasonably priced bottles. Carpe diem and give it a go. **LAURA MILLAR**
roma.london



DIARY DATE

INDIAN chain Dishoom is marking the festival of Holi, in which people get covered in coloured powder, with two parties in Bethnal Green on March 12. Adult tickets from £26. dishoom.com/holi

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TASTING NOTES

NOTED Covent Garden seafood joint J Sheekey is launching a new Sunday Feasting Menu. A choice of four set menus start at £58.50 and include a seasonal Bellini. Highlights include chargrilled squid and avocado, and salt-baked sea bass with braised fennel hearts. j-sheekey.co.uk/

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