
Bath Ups Its Foodie Game With The Arrival Of These Culinary Giants

RESTAURANTS & FOOD

By Emily Gray | 4th January 2019

In recent years, the South West of England has gained attention because of its so called ‘comedy’ accents epitomised by Kerry Mucklowe, Vicky Pollard and Hot Fuzz. Of course, those of us who live here know that there is so much more to us than being gurt lush. So does Discover England who has just launched The Great West Way, a new 500 mile network of road, rail, river, canal and paths joining London to Bristol which encourages visitors to get off the beaten track and to explore just how much there is to offer outside of the capital. No doubt, one of the most popular destinations will be the World Heritage Site of Bath, made famous by its Georgian architecture, Roman-era baths and now, the home to two culinary giants: [Pierre Koffmann](#) and [Marco Pierre White](#).



The two chefs, who hold six Michelin stars between them, have recently opened their first restaurant, which marries the French and British cuisine they are both known for. [Koffmann & Mr White's](#) opened at the tail end of this summer at the Abbey Hotel Bath, marking not only the first step in a revival of the hotel which has just been bought by KE Hotels but also gives Bath another restaurant to rival it's foodie neighbour, Bristol.





Naturally then, the next time we visited Bath we dropped in for lunch. For those who visited when the restaurant was Rupert Taylor's Allium Brasserie you'll be pleased to know that the boudoir pink and chi-chi draped curtains have been replaced by muted bottled greens, dark polished wood flooring, banquettes and soft orb lighting. The walls are adorned with an eclectic mix of pictures and portraits and come the evenings, candles sit on the tables. It's got an understated elegance to it with a French brasserie feel.

On the menu you'll find humble, comforting dishes which have been given the Koffmann and Mr White touch, such as Mr. Lamb's shepherd's pie, smoked sardines on toast and a sherry trifle for pudding. We started with warm sourdough from Richard Bertinet, (a Breton baker who now resides in Bath, you'll find his cafe, kitchen and bakery all in the city) before following up with our starters. Rilletes of duck which came under a thick, hard layer of fat (we didn't dare try this not wanting to miss Christmas due to clogged arteries) with green pickles and toasted sourdough. Our other starter of eggs Maxim mushroom duxelle brought together boiled eggs with golden yolks, earthy mushrooms with a rich, creamy hollandaise sauce.



and peppery sauce. For those looking for something a little lighter I recommend The Connaught's coq and shrimp curry with sweet fresh mango, fiery ginger and buttered rice. We finished with one of my favourite puddings, Pain perdu (lost bread), not dissimilar to bread and butter pudding, it was served with toasted almonds and whilst the bread was warm the custard was cold. Whether it was intentionally cold or not, it's not exactly going to warm your cockles on a bleak December day. We rounded off by sharing the Alex James cheese board which featured an excellent blue cheese.

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tangy bordering on steely, sparkling wine.



The only thing now is to get more people through the doors, I noticed that the reservation list looked longer for the evening service but for the majority of our lunch we were the only people in the restaurant. Hopefully once the hotel itself has had a much needed update it'll encourage visitors and locals to venture further from Milsom Street (where you'll find The Ivy Bath Brasserie) as Koffmann + Mr White's is well worth it.

Koffmann & Mr White's can be found at The Abbey Hotel, North Parade, Bath, Somerset, BA1 1LF

www.mpwrestaurants.co.uk

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Zela: The Celebrity Owned Restaurant On Our A-List

RESTAURANTS & FOOD

By Lottie Hulme | 2nd January 2019

Off the back of Usain Bolt-ing to open up a restaurant, David Beckham and Guy Ritchie buying a pub and Idris Elba squashing 007 rumours by instead opening a bar, it's safe to say it has been quite the celebs-turn-hospitality led few months. So, why not throw Enrique Iglesias, Cristiano Ronaldo and Rafael Nadal into the mix, eh?! Yes, we scoffed at the random prospect but the news is true. The threesome, whose looks don't stray far from triplet-dom, have financially backed Zela, a restaurant residing in the ground floor of the ME hotel in Aldwych, London. It's a destination which, I'm sure, people are going to flock to for more than just the food... Ronaldo only had to pop up an Insta of him and his girl at the venue and, the staff informed us, fans flocked to the location and nearly broke the phonelines (this is what happens when three hotties join forces!) So what did I think?

First Impression: Dazzling is the word I'd use. I think if I were to design a restaurant I'd make it look like this. It's glitzy and has a sophisticated feel to it with dim lighting and an interior palette of golds and greens but it's also relaxed, with smart offset by outdoors-in style foliage and wicker chairs that juxtapose plush midnight blue sofas. The space is large and features a bar laden with spirits, just what we like to see!

On The Menu: The gastronomic director is Michelin-recognised chef Ricardo Sanz – however our odds were on someone like Taylor Swift or Del Boy after this influx of celeb owned bars/pubs/restos/anything simply hospitality related! The menu is best for sharing, with a large focus on sushi and sub-headings inclusive of nigiri and uramaki, sashimi usuzukuri and mains. It's eclectic, with raw dishes including tatakis, tartares, sashimi, sushi and tiraditos, fresh fish and seafood, and classic dishes like pork gyoza. I'd say it's a complex menu for your everyday diner. I certainly wasn't without questions! So it's best to ask one of the informed staff members. The menu represents the sort of fresh and healthy diet the three stars at the helm of the venue like to eat everyday. We felt like we were reaping the same benefits, but then I ruined it by drinking way more than my cocktail quota!



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What We Ate: Zela prides itself on being the home of the MEPPON cuisine, which is a fusion of Mediterranean products and traditional Japanese cuisine techniques; it's really one of a kind in this aspect. We sampled a variety of dishes, but three caught my attention. The salmon "Hawaiian" poke with mango and avocado is a real palette cleanser, combining complimentary flavours. It's fresh and can easily be shared between two as a starter. Next, the quail egg with white truffle is a simple must-have, it's more of a mouthful as opposed to a dish but what a mighty fine mouthful it is. And finally, the 48-hour Wagyu Teriyaki (we had the sirloin cut). It simply falls off when you push your chopstick through it and tastes delicious; the sauce is a little on the rich side but works well combined with the potato. For dessert we enjoyed a mochi in green tea, chocolate and strawberry flavours. If you don't have too much of a sweet tooth this is for you, as it oozes pure simplicity and tastes so refreshing. And if you do have a sweet tooth well, you're going to love it anyway!

Tip: Get some chopstick training in before you visit Zela, that's all you've got to work with!



What We Drank: Cocktails galore. I feel like you can't go to Zela without holding a cocktail at some point and posing with it. My recommendation? The Hattorei. It features gin, grapefruit, sugar and earl grey foam! Grab a bottle of Spanish white wine as well.

Go With: A date; it has that vibe.

Where: Me London Hotel, 336-337 Strand, WC2R 1HA, www.zelalondon.com

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