

Tim Russell's 50 recommended London restaurants

I have had the opportunity of writing a few restaurant reviews over the years and I am often asked for recommendations in London especially from friends outside town. Anyway, with a natural bias to West London where I live, I thought it might be fun to put a list of my 50 favourite London restaurants onto my website in case it assists you in choosing a lunch or night out in town. 25 more ££ and 25 mainly less £ although London restaurants , naturally , all tend to be expensive .

Some sad recent departures in these covid times such as The Square and Le Caprice (exceptional over the years and fond memories) but in the difficult world of today London is now one of the world's top cities to dine out in. Some wonderful experiences and a fun, if difficult task, to name a top 50 but here it is.

The restaurants have been set out in alphabetical order and split between the more expensive and the less expensive 25 in each and some in each in bold to highlight my personal favourites) I do accept many are for special occasions.

I have provided a telephone number as well as a website and (B) after the website address means you can book online. All very subjective of course so, as they say, don't blame the juggler if you disagree with any recommendations. But I hope you do enjoy some of these experiences.

More ££

1. **45 Jermyn Street** – SW1Y 6DN, **Tel:** 0207 205 4545. **W:** <https://45jermynst.com/> (B)

Sneakily at the head of my alphabetical list and with an easy-to-guess address almost within Fortnum & Mason. Buzzy, upmarket, breakfast onward, elegant dining room. small menu, and as a destination a great choice for the more formal occasion in an easy-to-get-to location near Piccadilly Circus.

2. **Angler** – 3 South Place, EC2. **Tel:** 0207 3215 1260. **W:** <https://www.anglerrestaurant.com/> (B)

My favourite restaurant in the City of London. Great views, private tables, wonderful service, an excellent set lunch and one of my 3 D&D picks. Edges out the wonderful Coq d' Argent near Bank. Another from the D&D stable (they bought the Conran group of restaurants and others in their full of variety chain include Kensington Place in W8, 100 Wardour St in Soho, Quaglino's off Piccadilly, Launceston Place in Kensington, Skylon by the National Theatre south of the river, Satoria in Saville Row, Bluebird in Fulham, the German Gymnasium at Kings Cross, Orrery in Marylebone, Aster in Victoria and Pont De La Tour plus Chop House

by Tower Bridge. So, they have London covered as well as some cities outside the capital. Check out their website for more.

3. **Assaggi** – 39 Chepstow Place, W2 4TS, **Tel:** 0207 792 5501. **W:** <https://assaggi.co.uk/restaurant/>

A difficult (traditional and recently reopened) Italian restaurant to get into in London because it doesn't seat many people. It is very informal, but the service is excellent and very friendly, and the food is mouth-watering excellent (from my favourite Pecorino starter to the sea bass) in this Notting Hill Italian above what was a pub and is now also a restaurant. Menu no longer just in Italian! Specials always good. Great for lunch and easier to get in then. I tend to book for the next time when I am there, which works well.

4. **Cinnamon Club** – Old Westminster Library, Great Smith Street, **Tel:** 0207 222 2555. **W:** <https://cinnamonclub.com/> **(B)**

An interesting location, high prices for Indian food but fun and full of MP's as it's right by Westminster. But if its fabulous Indian food you are after go to Indian Zing or Zaika if in or near West London and Tamarind Kitchen or Tamarind of Mayfair if in Central London.

5. **Clarke's** – 124 Kensington Church Street, W8 4BH, **Tel:** 0207 221 9225. **W:** <https://www.sallyclarke.com/restaurant/> **(B)**

Great cooking from Sally Clarke, no longer a fixed, no choice menu but sophisticated and fresh food. Try to book upstairs. Great for a weekend brunch. Still very elegant after all these years.

6. **Clos Maggiore** – 33 King Street, Covent Garden, WC2E 8JD, **Tel:** 0207 379 9696. **W:** <https://www.closmaggiore.com/> **(B)**

Romantic, great food and service and a massive wine list. What more do you need to say? Other than almost impossible to book other than a 10.30 pm table beloved by all Americans, I am sure. Not.

7. **Core** – 92 Kensington Park Road, London W11 2PN, **Tel:** 0208 937 5086. **W:** <https://www.corebyclaresmyth.com/> **(B)**

Claire Smyth opened this in the summer of 2017 on what was the site of the Notting Hill Brasserie and before that Leiths. Quite a stark room (also with a chef's table outside the kitchen) and very much her own menu but quite superb. One of the best tasting menus I have ever enjoyed (with a wine pairing if you want) and well worth the expense. The crispy smoked duck wing (with burnt orange and spices) as an amuse bouche through to lamb braised carrot (yes, really) is stunning and I was completely sold on her version of cherry Bakewell and would thoroughly recommend a visit for any foodie.

8. **E & O** – 14 Blenheim Crescent, W11 INN, **Tel:** 0207 229 5454. **W:** <https://www.eandolondon.com/> **(B)**

Good service, unusual food, and real buzz. Another hit for Notting Hill. I always really enjoy a meal there and the critics rave as well.

9. **Le Gavroche** – 43 Upper Brook Street, W1K 7QR, **Tel:** 0207 408 0881. **W:** <https://www.le-gavroche.co.uk/> (B)

Michael Roux, extremely good food and service on a recent visit but obviously expensive. A London basement version of the Waterside Inn. Very French but much improved from a few years ago and a natural choice if you want to eat centrally and someone else is paying! The tables for two mean you are quite close to your dining partner and tables for four are better. Jackets preferred, set lunch a good deal.

10. **Hakkasan** – 17 Bruton St, London W1J 6QB, **Tel:** 0207 927 7000. **W:** <https://hakkasan.com/mayfair/> (B)

Very near to Tottenham Court Road tube though a tucked away location. Atmospheric with a great lounge/bar area. Innovative, oriental food. Good dim sum. Restaurant design the best-selling point though. Also has a sister restaurant at 8 Hanway Place W1T 1HD

11. **Kitchen** – 11-13 Abingdon Rd. **Tel:** 0207 937 0120. **W:** <https://www.kitchenw8.com/> (B)

Phil Howard and quite magical food just off High Street Kensington.

12. **Launceston Place** – 1a Launceston Pl W8 5RL. **Tel** 0207 937 6912. <https://www.launcestonplace-restaurant.co.uk/> (B)

Intimate and excellent and away from the hustle and bustle, well worth a trip to this D&D restaurant or to Kensington Place nearby its company sister.

13. **The Ledbury** – 127 Ledbury Rd. W11 2AQ. **Tel:** 0207 792 9090. <https://www.theledbury.com/> (B)

Closed in June 2020 but reopened as a tasting menu only and in 2022 added chef Brett Graham. Brilliance and a must go, must book delight.

14. **Marianne** – 104 Chepstow Rd. W2 5QS. **Tel:** 020 3675 7750. <http://ww12.mariannerestaurant.com/> (B)

I am not a fan of Bayswater as a venue but am happy to go to this delightful restaurant and anyway it is Notting Hill really. Though so hard to get in as it is small but intimate. Superb cooking.

15. **MARU** – 8 Shepherd Market, Mayfair, W1J 7QH. **Tel:** 020 3637 7677. **W:** <http://MARULondon.com/> (B)

Innovative and just superb Japanese cuisine, with only 20 covers but 20 courses (!) or so, at a long table with exceptional service and a tasting menu to live long in the memory. Tucked away beside a pub in the alleyway running from Shepherd's Market to Curzon St; book well ahead. Antonio Palmarini the Head Sommelier / Manager is a delight.

16. **Orrery** – 55 Marylebone High St. W1U 5RB. Tel: 0207 616 8000. W: <https://www.orrery-restaurant.co.uk/> (B)

Delightful cooking and one of my favourite D&D restaurants above the Terence Conran shop in Marylebone. Lovely area to wander round and walkable to the West End too, even though out of the way. Unusual and perfect setting.

17. **Riva** – 169 Church Road, Barnes SW13 9HR, Tel: 0208 748 0434. W: <https://www.riva.restaurant/>

Another excellent Italian with a real emphasis on the cooking and obviously very local. Dull interior but food makes up for it. Excellent fish, and pasta and truffles are the best around mid to late October.

18. **River Café** – Thames Wharf, Rainville Road, W6 9HA, Tel: 0207 386 4200. W: <https://www.rivercafe.co.uk/> (B)

Beautifully cooked Italian food with the best ingredients and a particular favourite for lunch on a sunny day. A late table for dinner is to be avoided. Only 2 tables for 6 which always get booked up. Sunday lunch always a buzz. Amazing desserts. Gets its critics but packed every night. Charles and Bassam the Maitre Ds spot on as are all the staff. Top notch service right from the private car parking to getting the significant bill!

19. **Roka** – 37 Charlotte Street, W1T 1RR, Tel: 0207 580 6464. W: <https://www.rokarestaurant.com/restaurant/roka-charlotte-street/> (B)

Near the Charlotte Hotel and obviously quite central. Very like Zuma and obviously based upon this, but although the food is as good if not better and the service is excellent, the atmosphere isn't quite as good. It is not as spacious, it's rather bright, but excellent. The grill is fantastic. Three other London locations too.

20. **Rules** – 35 Maiden Lane WC2E 7LB, Tel: 0207 88365314. W: <https://rules.co.uk/> (B)

Yes, it is for tourists but how they love it and with good cause. Covent Garden, old fashioned, historic even. A lot of wonderful meat dishes; always the first port of call for some of our American friends.

21. **Scott's** – 20 Mount Street, W1K 2HE, Tel: 0207 495 7309. W: <https://scotts-restaurant.com/> (B)

Also, Richard Caring who owns le Caprice, The Ivy, J Sheekey, Daphne's the list goes on and on and he used to own Wentworth Golf Club too. It is just such a wonderful restaurant. I am usually tempted by the king of fishes, turbot, and you get wonderful service and great food and a feel-good lunch or dinner, albeit at a price.

22. **J Sheekey** – 28-32 St Martin's Court, Tel: 0207 240 2565. W: <https://j-sheekey.co.uk/> (B)

Simply the best fish restaurant in town and oh so handy for the theatre. Open early and late.

23. **The Wolseley** – 160 Piccadilly, W1J 9EB, **Tel:** 0207 499 6996. **W:** <https://www.thewolseley.com/> (B)

Can it really be as long ago as 2004 this busy restaurant was opened by Corbin & King, the men originally behind Le Caprice and the Ivy? By Green Park tube and the Ritz. Needs to be booked but excellent food and worth a visit. Open all day including breakfast (my favourite).

24. **Yuatcha** – Broadwick House, 15-17 Broadwick Street, W1F 0D, **Tel:** 0207 494 8888. **W:** <https://yuatcha.com/soho/> (B)

Dim sum specialities at Hakkasan like Soho restaurant. Good for a group visit. Great cooking. Funky design. Book for downstairs as there is less of a spotlight though I still prefer Zuma to all the other Japanese restaurants.

25. **Zuma** – 5 Raphael Street, SW7 1DL, **Tel:** 0207 584 1010. **W:** <https://zumarestaurant.com/locations/london/> (B)

Like Nobu in Park Lane but much better. Not just Japanese food but a wide variety and a nice bar area. Opposite Harrods although quite hard to find. Always fun for lunch or dinner. Very friendly and good for people watching. Buzzy people watching place. Go early for a “cannot book” place for two at the bar and enjoy watching the busy professional chefs.

Less £

26. **About Thyme** – 82 Wilton Road, London SW1V 1DL, **Tel:** 0207 821 7504. **W:** <http://www.aboutthyme.co.uk/> (B)

Excellent food and wine, nice atmosphere and excellent service according to one of my work colleagues and well worth a visit to this modern European restaurant in Pimlico.

27. **L'Amorosa** – 278 King Street, W6 9NH, **Tel:** 0208 563 0300. **W:** <https://www.lamorosa.co.uk/>

Upmarket but casual and inexpensive Italian, a welcome 2015 edition to my local favourites. Excellent short but clever menu mainly pasta dishes. Upper level tables preferred.

28. **Bocca di Lupo** – 12 Archer Street, W1D 7BB, **Tel:** 0207 734 2223. **W:** <http://boccadilupo.com/> (B)

Italian tapas near Piccadilly Circus, Excellent.

29. **Chez Bruce** – 2 Bellevue Road, Wandsworth Common, SW17 7EG, **Tel:** 8672 0114, **W:** <https://www.chezbruce.co.uk/> (B)

An extremely popular local restaurant, two minutes' walk from Wandsworth Common and a few minutes from Balham. Easy going atmosphere and how could a restaurant with excellent beef with béarnaise sauce and hot chocolate pudding go wrong? Consistently excellent.

30. **Ciao Bella** – 86-90 Lambs Conduit Street, WC1N 3LZ, Tel: 0871 075 3984. W: <https://ciaobellarestaurant.co.uk/>
Fun family Italian close to Russell Square tube station and the good traditional Italian food is good value.
31. **Cibo** – 3 Russell Gardens, W14 8EZ, Tel: 7371 6271. W: <http://www.ciborestaurant.net/> (B)
Innovative and excellent Italian cooking just by Olympia, off Holland Park Road. Amazing internal decorations, massive and colourful dinner plates, homemade pasta, good fish, and wonderful Italian wines. A favourite but sometimes lacking in atmosphere early/mid week. Good for lunch and summer evenings (ask for the table near the entrance). Service can be mixed but I still love it and great memories R us.
32. **Cicchetti** – 215 Piccadilly W1J 9HL, Tel: 0207 494 9435. W: <https://sancarlo.co.uk/restaurants/cicchetti-london-piccadilly/> (B)
Ok, I like Italian food and ok this is not the very best in town. But it is good, and the location is just fantastic right by Piccadilly Circus tube and walkable from Green Park. I find I go there quite a lot and am happy to recommend it. It's the best location and service of this chain.
33. **Fat Boys** – (BYO!) 10a Edensor Road, W4 2RG, Tel: 0208 994 8089. W: <http://www.fatboysthai.co.uk/> (Bookable on Facebook)
This is very local to me. Near the Riverside Sports Centre and is a very informal Thai restaurant and is open on Sunday evening when we usually visit. Good food. You can sit outside on a sunny evening and good for parking.
34. **Franco Manca** – 144 Chiswick High Road, W4 1PU, Tel: 0208 747 4822. W: <https://www.francomanca.co.uk/restaurants/chiswick/>
Fantastic pizza and near me so a good spot to check out. Part of a chain of course but not a bad thing when the blueprint is good and it is.
35. **The Glasshouse** – 14 Station Parade, Kew, Surrey TW9 3PZ, Tel: 0208 940 6777. W: <https://www.glasshouserestaurant.co.uk/> (B)
Owned by same people who run The Square, Chez Bruce and now La Trompette. Prices still very good and the cooking and service is excellent. It is situated right next door to Kew station and parking is easy (once you find it, the street is a dead end). Very popular.
36. **Golden Hind** – 73 Marylebone Lane, W1U 1PN, Tel: 0207 486 3644. W: <https://www.goldenhindrestaurant.com/> (B)
My favourite fish and chip restaurant (edging out **Lisson Grove**) though sadly no longer BYO. Often a stop before getting the train from Marylebone up to Wembley or on the way back!
37. **Il Portico** – Kensington High Street, W8, Tel: 0207 602 6262. W: <https://www.famigliaportico.co.uk/> (B)

This is one of my very favourite restaurants. It is not for special occasions but very friendly and family owned/oriented. (James) They tend to book in people they know, as it gets very crowded. It is in Kensington (near the former Kensington Odeon cinema) and serves excellent Italian homemade pasta and fresh Dover Sole. Reliable. Parking a few hundred yards west of the restaurant is ok, with single yellow lines.

38. **Indian Zing** – 236 King Street, W6 ORF, Tel: 0208 748 5959. W: <https://www.indian-zing.co.uk/> (B)

Excellent service and one of the (if not the) best Indian restaurants in London and it's a few hundred yards walk away which helps. Very special.

39. **Osteria Basilico** – 29 Kensington Park Road, W11 2EU, Tel: 0207 727 9957. W: <https://www.osteriabilico.co.uk/> (B)

Great for children. Simple Italian cooking but you must book. Don't expect to be treated like royalty but good fun upstairs with fewer but nicer tables.

40. **Potli** – 319 King St, W6 9NH, Tel: 0208 741 4328. W: <https://potli.co.uk/> (B)

Almost up there with Indian Zing as one of the finest Indian restaurants in London and also local to me. Fantastic. Innovative.

41. **The Royal China Club** – 40-42 Baker Street, W1U 7AJ, Tel: 0207 486 3898. W: <https://www.royalchinagroup.co.uk/> (B)

It's very convenient and easy to book (one should) and a reliable place to go for a decent Chinese meal if you are not keen on picking one in Chinatown or want to go on a Sunday.

42. **Saigon Saigon** – 313 King St, W6 9NH, Tel: 0208 748 6887. W: <https://www.saigon-saigon.co.uk/> (B)

My only Vietnamese on the list because it is excellent and local to me, and I love it.

43. **Sam's Riverside** – 1 Crisp Walk, W6 9DN, Tel: 0208 237 1020. W: <https://samsriverside.co.uk/> (B)

Opened in 2019 so a difficult covid-affected start but a real success. Next to the new Riverside Studios, always busy and a fun riverside location and strong menu. Quite eclectic European menu and a fun bar.

44. **Sagar** – 157 King St, Hammersmith, W6 9JT, Tel: 0208 741 8563. W: <https://www.sagarrestaurant.co.uk/hammersmith> (B)

Vegetarian Indian, vegan friendly, cheap, excellent, good service. Not for a first date but delicious.

45. **Sukho Fine Thai Cuisine** – 855 Fulham Rd, SW6 5HJ, Tel: 0207 371 7600 W: <https://sukhogroups.com/Sukho> (B)

I do love Thai food and this is the best in West London maybe all of London so check out this charming (non-socially distanced) restaurant.

46. **Tosa** – 332 King Street, W6 ORR, **Tel** 0208 748 0002. **W:**
<https://www.tosa.uk/>

A really good Japanese cafe with unlimited green tea, a wonderful chicken yakitori, very near me and cheap as chips, but not as unhealthy. Discount for cash.

47. **La Trompette** – 5-7 Devonshire Road, Chiswick, W4 2EU, **Tel:** 0208 747
1836. **W:** <https://www.latrompette.co.uk/> (**B**)

On the old site of La Dordogne, which was a wonderful French restaurant, but you'd never know it had been there, the change is so complete. Wonderful value for such fine cooking. Be ready for 3 courses. It really is a West End restaurant with Chiswick prices.

48. **Le Vacherin** – 76 South Parade, North Chiswick, W4 5LF, **Tel:** 0208 742
2121. **W:** <https://www.levacherin.com/> (**B**)

On the site of Riso RIP, how along was that now? Anyway, very French and traditional. Enjoyable and good value if not as excellent as in the early days. Baked Vacherin to die for.

49. **Yoshino** – 3 Piccadilly Place, W1 0DB, **Tel:** 0207 287 6622. **W:**
<https://www.yoshino.net/> (**B**)

A small Japanese cafe near Piccadilly and excellent sushi as well as (in the less expensive section) good value.

50. **Zaika** – 1 Kensington High Street, W8 5NP, **Tel:** 0207 795 6533. **W:**
<https://zaikaofkensington.com/> (**B**)

Quite a history. Moved from Chelsea a few years ago and is now opposite Kensington Gardens. Went to being called One Kensington and non-Indian food back to great and creative Indian cooking again. Part of the Tamarind Collection.