

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.

Some sad recent departures in these covid times such as Le Caprice and The Ledbury (both exceptional over the years) 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 5 in each in bold to highlight my personal favourites) I do accept many are for special occasions.

All very subjective of course so, as they say, don't blame the juggler if you disagree with any recommendations. But hope you **do** enjoy some of these experiences.

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- 1 Angler 3 South Place, EC2. tel 32151260. My favourite restaurant in the City .Great views, private tables, wonderful service, 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.
- 2 **Assaggi – 39 Chepstow Place, W2, tel 7792 5501. 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 now also a restaurant. Menu in Italian! Specials always good. Great for lunch and easier to get in then. Their one table for 6 very sought after. I tend to book for the next time when I am there, which works well.**
- 3 Cinnamon Club – Old Westminster Library, Great Smith Street, tel 7222 2555. 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.
- 4 Clarke's – 124 Kensington Church Street, tel 7221 9225. Great cooking from Sally Clarke, no longer a fixed no choice menu but sophisticated and fresh food. Try and book upstairs. Great for weekend brunch. Still very elegant after all these years.
- 5 **Clos Maggiore - 33 King Street, WC2 tel 7379 9696. Covent Garden, 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.**

- 6 **Core** – 92 Kensington Park Road, London W11 2PN tel 0208 937 5086. Claire Smyth opened 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.
- 7 **E & O** – 14 Blenheim Crescent, W11, tel 7229 5454. 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.
- 8 **The Five Fields** - 8-9 Blacklands Terrace SW3 tel Head Chef is Marguertie Keogh , just excellent, and a new comer with a great value lunch and tasting menu for the big occasions. Maybe the best food in Chelsea and that is high praise.
- 9 **Le Gavroche** – 43 Upper Brook Street, W1 tel 7408 0881. 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** – 8 Hanway Place, W1, tel: 7927 7000. Very near to Tottenham Court Road tube though tucked away location. Very atmospheric with a great lounge/bar area. Innovative, oriental food. Good dim sum. Restaurant design the best-selling point though. Also has a sister at 8 Hanway Place W1.
- 11 **Kitchen** - 11-13 Abingdon Rd. 79370120. Phil Howard and quite magical food just off High Street Ken.
- 12 **Koffmans**. At the Berkeley Hotel SW1 Tel 71078844. Pierre Koffman is famous for good reason. Well worth a visit but be ready for old fashioned French. Atmosphere apart it is fantastic and its next door to Marcus Wareing (was Petrus and became Marcus Wareing when Gordon Ramsey took the Petrus name after their fall out and opened in Kinnerton Street and is now simply called Marcus). Mind you I am not a huge fan of either the Petrus restaurant or Marcus despite their talents. Too many bad and expensive experiences mine and others. Anyway, a tick for Koffmans and gets on this list as has the edge on similar old fashioned but excellent French food at **Otto's** WC1 but only just.
- 13 **Launceston Place** – 1a Launceston PI W8 tel 79376912. 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.
- 14 **Marianne** 104 Chepstow rd. W2 tel 36757750. 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 **Orrery** – 55 Marylebone High St. tel 76168000. 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.
- 16 **Riva** – 169 Church Road, Barnes SW13, tel and fax 8748 0434. 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.

- 17 **River Café** – Thames Wharf, Rainville Road, W6 tel 73864200. Beautifully cooked Italian food with the best ingredients and a particular favourite for lunch on a sunny day. A late table for dinner 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 !
- 18 **Roka** – 37 Charlotte Street, W1, tel 7580 6464. 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. 3 other London locations too.
- 19 **Rules**- 35 Maiden Lane WC2 Tel 788365314. Yes, it is for tourists but how they love it and with 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.
- 20 **Scott's** – 20 Mount Street, W1 tel 7495 7309. 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.
- 21 **J Sheekys** - 28-32 St Martin's Court, tel 0240 2565. Simply the best fish restaurant in town and oh so handy for the theatre. Open early and late.
- 22 **The Square** – 6 Bruton Street, W1 (off Bond Street), tel 7495 7100, fax 7495 7150. Expensive, elegant – fabulous food. Wonderful truffled mashed potato, if someone else is paying. Modern and confident. A few too many “suits”?
- 23 **The Wolseley**, 160 Piccadilly, W1, tel 7499 6996. 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, W1, tel 7494 8888. 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, tel 7584 1010. 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. P

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- 26 **About Thyme** – 82 Wilton Road, London SW1, tel 0207 821 7504. 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 85630300. Up market 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, tel 7734 2223. Italian tapas near Piccadilly Circus, Excellent.
- 29 **Chez Bruce – 2 Bellevue Road, Wandsworth Common, SW17 7EG, tel 8672 0114, fax 8767 6648. 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. Fun family Italian close to Russell Square tube station and the good traditional Italian food is good value.
- 31 Cibo – 3 Russell Gardens, W14, tel 7371 6271. 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 W1 Tel 74949435. 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, tel 8994 8089. This is very local to us. 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, W6 tel 8747 4822. 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 Geales - 2 Farmer Street, W8 tel 77277528. My favourite Notting Hill fish and chips.
- 36 The Glasshouse – 14 Station Parade, Kew, Surrey TW9 tel 8940 6777, fax 8940 3833. 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.
- 37 Golden Hind – 73 Marylebone Lane, W1 tel 7486 3644. 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!
- 38 **Il Portico – Kensington High Street, W8, tel 7602 6262. 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, single yellow lines..**

- 39 **Indian Zing** – 236 King Street, W6 tel: 8748 5959. 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.
- 40 Osteria Basilico – 29 Kensington Park Road, W11, tel 7727 9957. Great for children. Simple Italian cooking but you have to book. Don't expect to be treated like royalty but good fun upstairs fewer but nicer tables. .
- 41 Potli- 319 King St W6 tel 87414328. Almost up there with Indian Zing as one of the finest Indian restaurants in London and also local to me, fantastic. Innovative.
- 42 The Royal China Club – 40-42 Baker Street, tel 7486 3898. It's very convenient and easy to book (although 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.
- 43 Saigon Saigon 313 King St W6 tel 87486887. My only Vietnamese on the list because it is excellent and local to me and I love it.
- 44 Sagar – 157 King St, Hammersmith, W6 tel 87418563. Vegetarian Indian, vegan friendly cheap, excellent, good service. Not for a first date but delicious. P
- 45 Sukho Fine Thai Cuisine - 855 Fulham Rd SW6 tel 73717600 .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 tel 8748 0002. 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 tel 8747 1836. 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, tel 8742 2121. 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 tel 7287 6622. 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 tel 7795 6533. Quite a history. Moved from Chelsea a few years ago and now opposite Kensington Gardens. Went to being called One Kensington and non-Indian back to great and creative Indian cooking again. Part of the Tamarind Collection.
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