

SARTORIA

20 Savile Row W1S 3PR ☎ 020 7534 7000

Price £57 Wine £18 Champagne £39.50 Private Room 20,20

Mon-Sat 12N-3pm (Sat -5pm) 5.30-11pm



Sartoria suits its pinstriped Savile Row setting to a T. The name translates as 'tailor', & the place itself (part of D&D London) aims to conjure up some of the clean-lined, monochrome elegance of classic restaurants in Milan or New York. The kitchen cooks with the seasons, opening with, say, pecorino-crusted baked mackerel or beef carpaccio with artichokes & Castelmagno cheese. Pasta might include lobster spaghetti or autumn-hued cavatappi with partridge & chestnuts, while mains press the protein button for braised Black Face lamb shank with shaved black truffles or old-style veal milanese. High prices have raised a few eyebrows, & one reader recommends you bring your own wine & pay the corkage ('it will be far better value', he advises). Mind you, there's plenty of fascinating stuff on the 200-bin regional Italian list. 'Perfect for business & pleasure', noted one satisfied customer.

THEO RANDALL AT THE INTERCONTINENTAL

InterContinental London Hotel, 1 Hamilton Place W1J 7QY

☎ 020 7318 8747

Price £66 Wine £20 Champagne £55 Private Room 32

Mon-Fri 12N-3pm Mon-Sat 5.45-11.15pm



Winning the 'Best Italian' gong at last year's London Restaurant Awards has worked wonders for chef Theo Randall: his formerly quiet gaff has been re-energised. The terrifically assured cooking certainly merits a wider audience than the guests of the Interconti. Randall's five-star budget allows him to source peerless ingredients, & he lets them shine in dishes of beguiling simplicity: Scottish scallops with chilli, parsley & braised Swiss chard, & a Mirabelle plum & almond tart have both impressed. Pasta is a strength (tagliolini with brown shrimps, artichokes, parsley, chilli & butter sings with sweetness), while Randall's signature dish – succulent char-grilled veal chops paired with whatever's in season – remains one of London's must-try dishes. Big names from Italy lead the wine list, with classic support from the rest of the world & a decent selection of half-bottles. The dining room is smart & glossy (if slightly hotel-ish), while staff are cheerful & efficient.

www.squaremeal.co.uk
VIA CONDOTTI

23 Conduit Street W1S 2XS ☎ 020 7493 7050

Price £42 Wine £18 Champagne £5 Private Room 20,35

Mon-Sat 12N-3pm 5.45-10.30pm



Bond Street ladies applaud this welcome alternative to the male-orientated high-octane Italian restaurants that dominate the area. It's a place that shows its feminine side, with colourful flowers & pastel shades creating a light, airy & elegant feel (head for the spacious upstairs room if the ground floor is packed). Excellent home-made breads & olive oil set the ball rolling, before simply wrought dishes including Culatello ham with rocket & pecorino cheese, Sardinian gnocchi with fresh tomatoes, & char-grilled chicken breast with roasted potatoes & spinach. There's a very useful selection of classic Italian wines by the glass, & an equally traditional dessert menu – try a selection of sorbets or pannacotta to round it off. Readers rate the set-lunch menu (2/3 courses £14.95/18.90), while spot-on service from friendly staff is the icing on the cake.

INTERNATIONAL**COOKBOOK CAFE**

1 Hamilton Place W1J 7QY ☎ 020 7318 8563

Price £52 Wine £16 Champagne £44

Mon-Sun 6.30-10.30am 12N-3pm 6-10.30pm

To sprawl in the country-kitchen atmosphere of the Cookbook Café – surrounded by wooden tables loaded with mezze-style cold food & the eponymous recipe books – is a decidedly relaxed way to spend your time, even if this is part of a posh hotel. Customers are encouraged to chat to & share recipes with the chefs, & the menu often reflects what has been set down in print. Classics such as Caesar salad, club sandwiches & vegetable curry could be bolstered by, say, Middle Eastern-style grills involving poussin, sea bass & king prawns. Desserts might feature a luscious Austrian chocolate cake or citrus pannacotta with lime & ginger jelly. At weekends, a DJ spins chill-out tunes, while the fixed-price brunch sees unlimited Champagne flowing. Friendly staff & a kid's corner for painting & making a mess add further appeal.

DOVER STREET RESTAURANT & JAZZ BAR

8-10 Dover Street W1S 4LQ ☎ 020 7629 9813

Price £44 Wine £16.50 Champagne £39 Private Room 25,25,50

Mon-Fri 12N-3pm Mon-Sat 5.30pm-3am (Fri-Sat 7pm-)



For nigh on 30 years, this Mayfair institution has been pulling in the crowds with its winning combination of live basement jazz, drinks, dinner

& dancing. While it's undeniably fun – there's a particularly raucous atmosphere at weekends as party groups hit the town – it's fair to say standards aren't particularly high. Inexperienced staff roam around listlessly, the simple decor has its shortcomings (although these probably matter less at 3am), & readers agree that the food doesn't quite live up to expectations. Dishes such as seared scallops with a light Champagne sauce, fillet steak Rossini with foie gras & Périgueux sauce, & king prawns with pilaf rice & lobster sauce all sound good, but don't quite deliver on the plate. Still, the venue 'comes alive' in the small hours when tables are cleared for dancing, & regular queues testify to the bar's enduring popularity.

THE PIGALLE CLUB

215 Piccadilly W1J 9HN ☎ 0800 988 5470

Price £66 Wine £16 Champagne £45

Mon-Sat 7pm-4am



Descend from Piccadilly Circus & go back in time to the glory days of the supper club – complete with live music & dancing – brought to you by festival impresario Vince Power. Staff kitted out in 1940s gear lead you through winding passageways decorated with dark green & gilt wallpaper, until you arrive at the underground theatre. After a cocktail in the bar, take your seats for the evening's entertainment: past acts have included everyone from Shirley Bassey to Duffy. Solid sustenance comes in the form of a short, dependable menu of Euro-inspired food that might include a salad of bresaola & watercress, fettuccine with ceps & truffle butter, & apple tarte tatin. Dinner is included in the ticket price (£40/50 depending on whether you sit in the mezzanine or by the stage), but you might run up a hefty bar bill by the time the DJs & dancing start.

ROCKET

4-5 Lancashire Court W1Y 9AD ☎ 020 7629 2889

Price £39 Wine £14 Champagne £37.50 Private Room 10,25

Mon-Sat 12N-3pm 6-11pm



Walking past, you'd be forgiven for not realising that above Rocket's throbbing ground-floor cocktail bar is a very large, high-ceilinged dining room with a bar & wood-fired pizza oven. The regularly changing menu offers an impressive choice: classy pizzas topped with anything from Gorgonzola & rocket or pancetta & goats' cheese, to smoked chicken & caramelised baby onions, are reliably backed up by some excellent salads – rare beef, Saint Agur cheese & pear, or crispy squid with mango. Readers have noted inconsistent service, but applaud the value for money at this popular, relaxed venue.