

Eating out



Bill Knott, our new restaurant reviewer, is a celebrated chef and food writer. A self-taught cook, he learned to peel his first courgette at the age of seven, and after taking a degree in linguistics set up his own catering company in London. In the 1980s he cooked for pop stars such as Kate Bush, Peter Gabriel and The Pogues before being appointed chef at the Green Street Club in Mayfair. This year he was short-listed for a Glenfiddich award, for his work in the specialist magazine *Eat Soup*, and he frequently appears on television and radio. His reviews will appear in Weekend fortnightly.



THE SUGAR CLUB

Picture: HERBIE KNOTT

Join the club: Best ingredients, but how many staff does it take to write a menu?

Modern British

Less of the 'Leon Lomo'

The menu at The Sugar Club is baffling, writes **Bill Knott**, but the food is excellent

ONE of the most pleasing aspects of London's restaurant revolution has been the refusal of the city's chefs to be intimidated by the strictures of classical French cooking. Whereas Parisian restaurants have been strangled by their own chauvinism, the British have happily embraced cuisines from all over the world, and the result is a restaurant culture which makes up in breadth what it sometimes lacks in depth. The Michelin guide may not recognise it, but London now boasts hundreds of national and regional cuisines, with enough restaurants to keep the adventurous diner happy for years.

One by-product of this explosion is the death of menus written solely in French, which seems, thankfully, to have gone the same way as the menu without prices *pour madame*. The London's restaurants have grown up and so have their menus. Most are even written in English.

The menu might be intimidating, but the restaurant is not. Eyebrows were raised when New Zealand chef Peter Gordon set up shop on All Saints Road, a street which has seen its fair share of aggro over the years. In truth, the running battles between police and gangs of drug dealers ended in the Eighties and the street, while not exactly Belgravia, is pretty harmless.

The restaurant is light, airy and minimally decorated, with a non-smoking section downstairs and a small garden for summer lunches.

Launch is a bit of a bargain: the restaurant is rarely full, not exactly being at the hub of expense-account territory, and the set menu is £12.50 for two courses. Given that starters on the à la carte menu are six or seven quid, with main courses about £14,

it is excellent value. So, having waded through the global Larousse of a menu, it was time for lunch.

My friend does not often get taken out, so she went for the no-expense-spared Champagne and turbot.

the earthy, sweet-sour beetroot acting as a glorious foil to some fresh almonds. Wine was a properly apricot-scented Viognier, from a short but sensible list that verges on the pricey.

A generous tranche of butter-fresh turbot was, even for such a noble, fragrant and full-flavoured fish, rather overwhelmed by a red pepper 'dressing' and roast sweet potato. The oyster moustrooms were as grey, cultivated and redundant as an ex-Cabinet minister.

Spiced neck of lamb, from the set menu, was, by contrast, perfectly balanced: delicately and aromatically spiced, it must have been marinated for a day or two to soak up both the spice and a sweet coconut flavour. The jus was excellent; Gordon clearly runs a kitchen of sub-

Bill's bill

Sugar Club	06/05/97
1 Bottle Water	2.80
2 Glasses Benedict	6.50
1 Salad	6.00
1 Turbot	17.00
1 Set - 3 course	15.50
2 Double Espresso	2.20
1 Drink	4.80
1 Bos Amarragac	6.95
Balance £94.25	

● The Sugar Club, 33a All Saints Road, London W11 1HE (0111 221 3844), is open for lunch (12.30pm-3pm) and dinner (6.30pm-11pm).

Sugar Club Telegraph Bill Knott



Clipped By:
ianlharris
Sun, Apr 16, 2023