

News Digest

Ramsay heads to Battersea, chefs climb for charity, and Maschler quits the LRF

Collins leaves iconic legacy

David Collins, the designer behind some of central London's most iconic and striking bars and restaurants, has died. Collins was responsible for the look and feel of bars at The Berkeley, The Connaught and Claridge's as well as the dining room of The Wolseley, which was a remodelled 1920s car showroom. His expertise and skill in balancing elegance and opulence with modernity and comfort also saw him leave his mark on restaurants as diverse as J Sheekey and Café Rouge.



The Wolseley: design work by David Collins

Ramsay's love of London

Gordon Ramsay's interest in London shows no sign of abating, with the chef-restaurateur having taken on the former Bennett's Brasserie and Oyster Bar site in south-west London's Battersea Square. The restaurant, to be called London House, is held on a Mitchells & Butlers lease. Next month Ramsay opens Union Street Café, the long-awaited restaurant that has backing from David Beckham. Located on the ground floor of Harling House on the corner of Union Street and Great Suffolk Street, in Southwark, south-east London, it will focus on Mediterranean-style food.



Hitting the heights for charity

A team of chefs and front-of-house staff led by Ashley Palmer-Watts will attempt to scale the heights of Mount Kilimanjaro later this month to raise funds for Farm Africa. Chefs Paul Foster, from Tuddenham Mill in Newmarket, Suffolk, and John Freeman from Restaurant Sat Bains in Nottingham, along with Paulo de Tarso, senior maître d' at Bar Boulud in London's Knightsbridge, are joining the Dinner by Heston Blumenthal chef to climb Africa's highest peak. They hope to raise £50,000 for the charity, which helps African farmers create market links. To support them text CHEF13 followed by the £(amount) to 70070. Follow them on Twitter via #Chefkili and at www.bighospitality.co.uk.

Garrett leaves Galvin

Galvin at Windows head chef André Garrett will leave the Michelin-starred Mayfair restaurant next month after seven years. He will be replaced by sous chef Joo Won, who has worked for the Galvin brothers for more than eight years. Garrett has plans to open his first solo restaurant, although further details are yet to be revealed.



Ho profile: Bobby Chinn

Maschler loses appetite for LRF

Fay Maschler has resigned from the London Restaurant Festival (LRF) to launch a rival event called London Eats Out. Scheduled to launch in February or March next year, "when restaurant trade slows and needs encouragement", says Maschler, *London Evening Standard* restaurant critic and co-founder of the LRF, London Eats Out will address the problem of recruiting and retaining staff. Restaurateurs, chefs, critics and bloggers are being invited to get involved in the new event.

Chinn bonus for Soho

Bobby Chinn, the popular TV chef who runs two restaurants in Vietnam, is launching his first UK venture in September. The House of Ho will be on Old Compton Street, in London's Soho, and serve a Vietnamese menu that mixes traditional cuisine with dishes influenced by Chinn's travels. The New Zealand-born chef, described by Anthony Bourdain as "a true man of mystery", was educated in England before living in the US. He moved to Vietnam in 1996.

The Lowdown

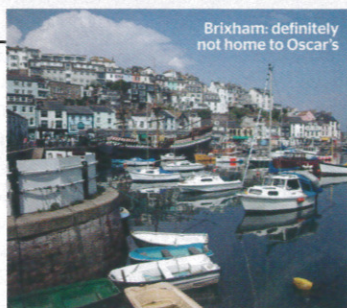
OSCAR'S RESTAURANT

Sounds like a nice place?

It's very nice. In fact, the restaurant in Brixham, Devon, recently became one of TripAdvisor's most highly ranked for the region.

Hardly a reason to single it out though

True. It's here by virtue of the fact that it doesn't actually exist.



Brixham: definitely not home to Oscar's

Don't go all Kierkegaard on me...

It has nothing to do with the infinite qualitative distinction (thanks Wikipedia), you'll be pleased to hear. Rather, it's a fictional restaurant created to see if TripAdvisor can detect fraudulent reviews.

And can it?

Not all the time, as this shows. But

with so many reviews being posted it's proving an increasingly tricky task these days.

So where should I go to find out if a restaurant's any good or not?

You could just go and eat at one and find out for yourself.

Now there's a thought

I know. Novel.