

## **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 night out in town. A difficult task in this great city full of wonderful restaurants.

Anyway here it is. The restaurants have been set out in alphabetical order and split between the more expensive and the less expensive although I accept many are for special occasions. **Bold** type means it's one of my top 10 and **P**, means reasonable parking after 6.30pm.

There are some recent 2016 changes e.g. Club Gascon (I have not been there for ever), Langan's Brasserie (tired), The Ivy (pretentious), Petrus (expensive and pretentious), Enoteca Turi (moved from Putney) Shanghai Blues (my favourite restaurant in Holborn has closed sadly) are out. So is Zucca though still a good Italian I just don't really travel to Bermondsey anymore and a few other departures but let's focus on the/my newcomers. Assaggi is hardly a new comer but has reopened which is great news and I have added Clos Maggiore and Koffmans (French to the fore) are in along with three locals for me. The excellent Italian L'Amorosa, Saigon Saigon, Vietnamese of course and the amazing Hedone which is just food heaven.

I could not ignore Rules (no pun intended) anymore, so many visitors love it. Cicchetti has come in because its location and consistency is so good for that pre theatre Italian. Marianne near Notting Hill is in as is nearby Ledbury. I act for D& D restaurants my favourites I have added 3 of those (I have limited myself to 3 for this list so as to not appear too biased and to keep to 50 in total, but see the first entry under Angler for more detail). I have gone for Angler, Launceston Place and the Orrery- tough to choose).

All very subjective of course so, as they say, don't blame the juggler if you disagree with any recommendations.

### **££**

- 1 **Angler 3 South Place, EC2. tel 32151260. My favourite restaurant in the City (though see also Le Café Du Marche ) . Michelin star , 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, Sartoria in Saville Row, Bluebird in Fulham, the German Gymnasium at Kings Cross and Pont De La Tour by Tower Bridge. 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. P**
- 3 **Le Caprice – Arlington House, Arlington Street, SW1, tel 7629 2239. You really need to book well ahead. A lot of famous people seem to go to this restaurant just behind the Ritz Hotel but it is still relaxed and very good for pre and post theatre meals. The cooking is excellent and consistent with an eclectic menu based upon brasserie type food. The standards are very high**

including service and the same meals are served at the bar as in the main restaurant. I would normally choose the bar (which is much easier to book) if there are only 2 of you. For a price there is a NCP car park by the restaurant for pre "single yellow line" parking. Open for Saturday and Sunday brunch.

- 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 elegant after all these years. P
- 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.
- 6 **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. P.
- 7 **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. P
- 8 **Hedone**– 301- 303 Chiswick High Rd W6 tel 87470377 this superb reopened small restaurant is at the cutting edge of fine cuisine and worth a trip for a wonderful experience at a price. Must book, must allow some hours, must relax into it but it is no surprise this was recently voted by the Times in the top 20 restaurants in the UK. Better than Story in my view, top rated though this similar (think Fat Duck and the French Laundry) restaurant near Tower Bridge. Plus, it is local for me. P
- 9 **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.
- 10 **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. P.
- 11 **Koffmans**. At the Berkeley Hotel SW1 Tel 71078844. Pierre Koffman is famous for cause. Well worth a visit but be ready for old fashioned French. Atmosphere apart it is fantastic and next door to Marcus Wareing (was Petrus then when Gordon Ramsey took the Petrus name after their fall out and opened in Kinnerton Street it became Marcus Wareing or MW I think now just Marcus). Mind you I am not a 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.

- 12 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 Michelin star restaurant or to **Kensington Place** nearby its company sister. P
- 13 The Ledbury – 127 Ledbury Road W11, tel 7792 9090. A great restaurant in fun Notting Hill, just heavenly food. 5 stars with most critics but had to get into. P
- 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. P
- 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. P
- 16 The Ritz – 150 Piccadilly, W1 tel 7493 8181. Hard to miss out on the list because it's always so smart (jackets required) and a real occasion in one of the finest dining rooms in Europe.
- 17 Riva – 169 Church Road, Barnes SW13, tel 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. P
- 18 River Café – Thames Wharf, Rainville Road, W6 tel 73864200. Expensive but beautifully cooked Italian food with the best ingredients and a particular favourite for lunch on a sunny day. A late tale 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 the main maître di is excellent. P
- 19 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's not as spacious, it's rather bright, but excellent. The grill is fantastic. 3 other London locations too.
- 20 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.
- 21 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.
- 22 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.
- 23 The Square – 6 Bruton Street, W1 (off Bond Street), tel 7495 7100, fax 7495 7150. Expensive, elegant – fabulous food. Wonderful truffled mashed potato, as long as someone else is paying. Modern and confident. A few too many “suits”?
- 24 Sushi Samba - Heron Tower 110 Bishopsgate EC2. Tel 36407330. Had to include this restaurant because a) it is an amazing view including the lift up to it b) it is in the same footprint as my old office (knocked down but I worked there for 5 years, next to Liverpool St station really) c) I know the owners

and d) it is an incredible experience. They own the Duck and Waffle pub above it too, great breakfasts. A must see for visitors but book ahead.

- 25 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).
- 26 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.
- 27 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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- 28 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. Upper tables preferred. Closed Mondays.
- 29 Bocca di Lupo – 12 Archer Street, tel 7734 2223. Italian tapas near Piccadilly Circus, Excellent
- 30 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. P
- 31 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.
- 32 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. P
- 33 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.
- 34 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. P

- 35 Franco Manca – 144 Chiswick High Road, W6 tel 8747 4822. Fantastic pizza and near me so a good spot to check out.
- 36 Gaucho – Towpath, Richmond, tel 8948 4030. Obviously this chain is all over London but this is my favourite Argentine steak house. Even though it's expensive and the service is often shocking it's always buzzy and it's along a wonderful stretch of river and so I'll always consider it for a good steak and a bottle of Malbec when I'm in or near the Richmond area. The one at the O2 is also good.
- 37 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. P
- 38 Golden Hind – 73 Marylebone Lane, W1 tel 7486 3644. My favourite fish and chip restaurant and BYO as well so that's always good. Often a stop before getting the train from Marylebone up to Wembley or on the way back! Geales - 2 Farmer Street, W8 tel 77277528 is another favourite fish and chip place and in Notting Hill but just edged out by Golden Hind . P
- 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. P.
- 41 Potli- 319 King St W6 tel 87414328. 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. P
- 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. P
- 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 San Remo – 195 Castlenau, SW13 tel: 8741 5909. One of our favourite local Italian restaurants with an excellent selection and for me a short walk over Hammersmith Bridge. 25 years old in 2016. Happy Birthday Joseph. Great for lunch.
- 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. P
- 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. P

- 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. **P**