

ABSOLUTELY

JUNE 2013
£3.95

Wimbledon

SOUL FOOD
LEVI ROOTS TALKS
REGGAE, RASTAS AND
BEING A ROLE MODEL

CLAUDE BOSI'S
PUB LIFE

CAKE BOY
ERIC LANLARD'S
LATEST BOOK

**SOME
LIKE IT
HOT**

LOCAL CULINARY
DELIGHTS

STYLISH. INTELLIGENT. ELEGANT. ABSOLUTELY

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

ABSOLUTELY ROUNDS UP THE BEST NEW RESTAURANT OPENINGS IN SOUTHWEST LONDON

RIVER QUARTER KITCHEN

Battersea

BY ALICE MILNER

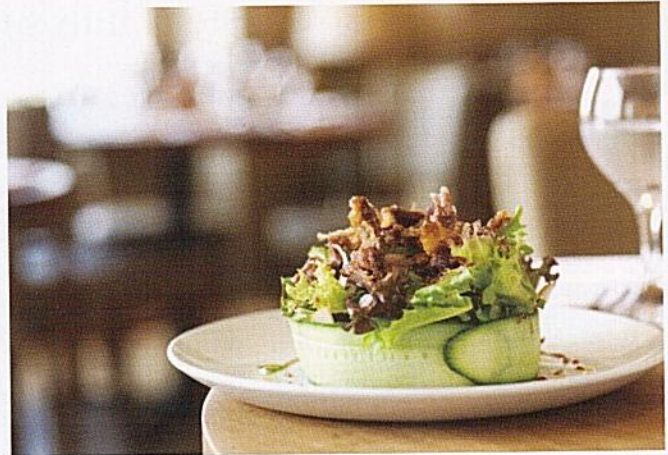
After years of searching, I think I've finally found London's best cheeseburger. Many burgers claim to be 'gourmet' but their gristle and foamy buns rarely wow me. Then I tasted River Quarter Kitchen's homemade BBQ burger – freshly sizzled and elegantly served on rectangular china at Battersea's River Quarter Kitchen.

Just off the York Road, it's worth the hunt to find this hidden gem of a restaurant tucked inside Molasses House right on the river's edge. This really is riverside dining at its best. Sparklingly clean

glasses and white napkins dot the fresh, muted mushroom interiors, while music gently hums in the background. The owners Valeria and Doron Zilkha have created a chic yet relaxed atmosphere so little ones are welcome too. This is all complemented by the Italian charm of Restaurant Manager Gregorio who greets his guests with a smile.

We kicked off with crispy calamari which was tender as can be. Then I tucked into my burger as my eyes feasted on the sunny riverside views. Full of character, it arrived handsomely dressed in a bouncy bun (fresh out the oven), with cheese oozing round every edge of plump beef. It was also infused with the chef's secret ingredient, which gave an unexpected herby twist to a familiar dish.

My companion was feeling super virtuous, so opted for an elegant salmon, honey and whole grain mustard dish



presented on a luminous green bed of pak choi – rather like a Monet painting on a plate. This was rounded off with a chocolate fondant that melted in front of our eyes like a chocolate volcano.

But there's no need to restrict visits just to lunchtime. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are skilfully prepared from scratch by chefs in their open kitchen. Much like its sister cafés across the river (Chelsea Quarter Café & Heal's Café) the River

Quarter Kitchen displays its glistening pastries like jewels. No hint of pretentiousness, just good authentic food that's reasonably priced. It's lucky I don't live in one of the riverside apartments otherwise there's a danger I'd be in there from am to pm.

RIVER QUARTER KITCHEN

Molasses House, Plantation Wharf, SW11, 020 7978 5055; riverquarterkitchen.com

HOT PINK GRILL

Wimbledon

BY GEORGIE LANE-GODFREY

Is it just me, or does it sometimes feel like there's a new burger joint popping up every five minutes in the capital? The latest contender for the crown is Wimbledon's Hot Pink Grill, a new venture from the creators of DukeBox in Chelsea and The Black Dog in Vauxhall.

When I visit, HPG has been open for a grand total of two whole days yet there's already plenty of people in there trialling its grilled offerings. The concept is simple enough – just 12 items on offer. 'Choose a main, add a side & pick your sauce' instructs the menu, helping you to navigate the 72 possible combinations.

Now, grills tend to shoulder a couple of stigmas. Firstly, that they are unhealthy, serving greasy burgers dripping in fat. Secondly, that they are no-go areas for veggies. Not HPG, a self-proclaimed 'healthy' grill with vegetarian options galore: Falafel burgers, veggie sausages and halloumi stackers are on offer to keep them happy.

