

The Sax, the City and Bellinis galore

It's what your Sunday needs, ladies!

The last time I was in NYC, admittedly over 20 years ago, brunch wasn't something that had hit home shores yet and sadly High Tea was completely out of fashion. We called them the 'wilderness years', no unusual meal times were to be had.

That changed somewhat with the popularity of Sex in the City where four women somehow managed to drag themselves out of bed on a Sunday for the denouement of Saturday nights shenanigans. Didn't we all dream of having those raunchy conversations over scrambled eggs, Imagining which SITC character we most resembled?

When I used to write for a popular tabloid, back in the day, a reader once wrote to me: "Ye think yer Carrie Bradshaw, but yer no." Handwritten too. You'd be lucky if you got an 80 character online insult these days.

But it's my laziness that's the reason I rarely do brunch. Indeed, so impressed was my father that I'd got out of my beloved bed before midday on a Sunday he even offered me a lift up to the Radisson Collection just off the Royal Mile. My dear daddy couldn't quite understand why a 1.00pm meal was called brunch rather than lunch.

"It's a New York thing, dad." I explained.

"So who are you going with?"

"My chum Jing Jing."

"So good they named her twice."

You can see where I get my scintillating wit from...

Jing Jing and I bonded at our children's school after my

daughter gave her son a note asking if he would go out with her. When you need to take dating tips from a six year-old child you realise where you might have been going wrong.

We embrace in the lobby and congratulate one another on our choice of attire. Indeed we have decided to make this an occasion and are in full elegance mode for me and urban chic for Jing Jing. Going out for a glamorous brunch is quite the ego boost and we share a mutual understanding that this is the sort of thing we ought to be doing: cosmopolitan go-getters that we imagine ourselves to be.

Up we go to Cucina where it's immediately obvious Brunch is a lady dominated affair. Don't get me wrong, there are some blokes present, but much in the minority and all with a partner.

Brunch doesn't appear to be a group male hangout. So here's the deal: at the Radisson Collection, on the last Sunday of each month you can have a three course brunch for £35 with unlimited Bloody Marys, Mimosas or Prosecco. How that works with the horrific minimal unit alcohol laws in Scotland is anyone's guess, but it's worth buying into to stick a couple of fingers up at whatever killjoys imposed it.

Anyway we toast ourselves with our first Mimosas of the afternoon, take some selfies and stick them on Instagram. There's something else I remember from 20 years ago. Being able to go out and eat without taking a picture.



The very stylish Radisson Collection

After a relaxing chat in the light, floral but opulent dining room we decide it's time to eat. The first course is a cold

buffet featuring granola with some luxurious accoutrements, an array of fresh juice, charcuterie, smoked fish and various salads, pastries and breads. They also have a whole honeycomb, which is something you don't see every day. I'm delighted to see some plump and super fresh oysters with various dressings. I knocked back a couple with pickled ginger and they are rather splendid.

Onto Bellini number two and it's so relaxing to sit and pick at some tasty treats before the mains. The atmosphere is cheery and bright, in most part to the fantastic music combo of DJ and sax accompaniment [@saxingh](#). It's quite noisy but that's a good thing for me as I tend to talk too loudly after a couple of fizzes.

Hot main courses include roast beef and full English, with various veggie and other options, but we opt for the eggs Florentine and Benedict. My bacon and poached eggs are perfect but I could have done with more of the lovely hollandaise, a sauce that's deliciousness is in direct proportion to what a pain in the backside it is to make.



Cucina

Puddings are another help yourself course and I indulge in a light berry Pavlova and a dainty chocolate cake. By now we're on Bellini goodness knows what and the funky music is so good I could do with a dance.

Instead I head to the ladies to have a chat with some strangers. (Oh no...! Ed.)

They've all had a good time but say their husbands wouldn't like it as they only drink beer. Do 'real men' not drink Bellinis? If they eat quiche then I'd say anything's possible. I'll definitely be heading back here in the summer. The decking outside could well see a bit of a boogie going down.

Although the service is very much do it yourself, this makes for a relaxed afternoon, sashaying up to the buffet or drinks bar. However we enjoy the company of a charming Italian waiter who chats to us in such a teasing and charming way we can't help but find him absolutely adorable.

At 3.00pm we sipped our last and headed out to a clear Edinburgh Sunday afternoon. Off home to parenting, laundry and general adult stuff. But for three hours it was oh, so marvellous, to feel both sophisticated and carefree.

If there's no Sex in the City then Sax in the City will do just fine.

Bottomless Brunch at The Radisson Collection

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Last Sunday of the month