

Juliet's August Food Diary

Having once owned and cooked in one myself you'd think I'd know how to behave in restaurants.

Arriving at The Ivy for their new fandangled Butterfly Afternoon Tea with my chum, Jing Jing, it might have occurred to me in advance that she's lactose intolerant. To be fair to myself I'd completely forgotten, possibly because every restaurant seems to cater for veganism and every other millennial food intolerance, whether diners need a refined menu or not.

I'm happy to report that The Ivy do not do a vegan, dairy free afternoon tea as standard: go Ivy!

Yet the staff here are indeed the best in the business and went out of their way to give my chum a great three tiered selection of loveliness. My dairy-do tea was delightful, especially the scones which were almost as good as my dear old grans.

But Ivy, may we please have raspberry jam rather than strawberry compote? We're in Scotland, after all. The Ivy on St Andrew Square is a glam experience and I love the maximalist decor. In honour of their butterfly theme they even have a large butterfly you can stand in the middle of to create an Instagram worthy pic.

The original Ivy was a restaurant where the famous went to be discreet and the new where we take selfies. Is that progress? However the service is of the top tier here and if the brand can hold onto such a standard that's something to be proud of.



Mark Greenaway has gone to pastures new at the Waldorf Astoria : The Caledonian

To the Waldorf and Mark Greenaway's latest restaurant, 'Grazing'. A table of four, we decided to order one of each of the sharing plates. I've noticed that chefs have a wheeze to make their life easier by presenting the dishes 'as they are ready', but here Mark goes old school, bless him, and gets they whole lot out at once. The beef tartare was the biggest hit for me, there was something about the texture. There's no denying that Greenaway is a brilliant chef although he has had a reputation for mucking about with perfection: deconstructed lemon meringue pie, for example. The only food I'd like to see off this menu is the duck fat butter. Imagine taking possibly the best tasting food known to humanity and adding duck fat to it? It's like giving a 20 year old Brigitte Bardot botox. When the food is great and the menu clever you need to know when to stop.





On the subject of getting the balance right, I'm quite a fan of the Nauticus on Leith's Duke Street, an old boozier turned cocktail bar but still with a pub feel. Okay, some of the bar staff would appear to have waxed moustaches but they've kept the hipster element in check. My perfect Manhattan was indeed so.

"I hope you're going on somewhere because your a bit over dressed for us." said no Glaswegian Maitre 'D ever. Yet this was my welcome into one of the smarter Edinburgh restaurants. He wasn't joking either. Edinburgh residents have never been known for their glamour but I've recently noticed a celebration of scruffiness. Wearing shorts to a restaurant is never acceptable, even on holiday.

I long for a restaurant where gentlemen are denied entry without a tie and the sight of utility bra straps a thing of the past.



Graze on