

Juliet's food diary

Bar and restaurant openings are generally fun affairs, although sipping fizz, air kissing and negotiating canapés can be a multitask too far.

I was rather delighted when attending the reopening of The Scottish Café that guests were seated at tables with Contini Prosecco and delectable treats served to us in a calm and relaxed atmosphere.



Delicate though the morsels were, I felt rather stuffed at the end of it but couldn't leave a grain of my Peterhead Smoked Salmon Kedgeree and wolfed down a sticky toffee macaron for good measure. I've no doubt the revamped Scottish Café will be a resounding success. Owners Victor and Carina are celebrating the centenary of the Contini family in Scotland and here's to another 100!

Congratulations to Stuart Ralston and Krystal Goff at Aizle

for being placed fifth on the Trip Advisor Travellers Choice awards for the best fine dining restaurant in the UK. Located on St Leonards Street, Aizle was the first restaurant in Edinburgh to offer a surprise tasting menu, perfect for taking out annoying people who can make their minds up. From sourdough to hand churned butter, everything is made in house here and they even grow some herbs and vegetables 'out the back'. It's great to see such dedication from another husband and wife team pay off.

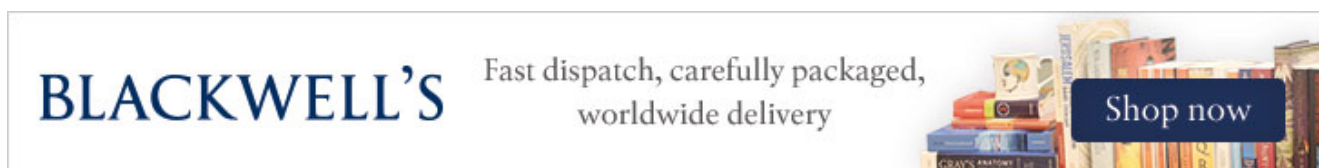


How can you feel like you've been in a children's play park for an hour? Be in a children's play park for five minutes.

The opening of [The Vanilla Pod](#) on Leith Links gave me hope for the chilly autumnal trips to the slide and swings. Quickly famed for its great coffee and home made soups it seemed to be the perfect addition for weary parents. But sadly The Vanilla Pod was closed down after one complaint from the public which I gather stated 'the generator would scare dogs' and 'the seating outside the van would attract paedophiles.' Goodness me.

Now a charming business has been lost to the park, a place for dog walkers to socialise, families to eat and even a location for entirely innocent lonely people to enjoy a cup of tea, cheered by the fun of the play park nearby. When you consider the utter bastardisation that the council welcome for the city's centre green spaces over the festive period, it seems insane that a small food and coffee van that offers a welcome public service is put out of business. I hope the council deign to temporarily refrain from getting their knickers in a twist over the commercialisation of the city and get round to doing the right thing for businesses prepared to open all year round.

Legendary artist and all round eccentric Salvador Dali originally wanted to become a chef, and even published a cookbook, *Les Diners de Gala*, in 1973. With only 400 copies printed publisher Taschen is reissuing the book. With 136 recipes, including a section on aphrodisiacs, the book is packed with surreal illustrations and dishes including Veal Cutlets Stuffed with Snails and Frog Pasties. Not the kind of thing you might pick up from Greggs. However to genuinely entertain like Dali and his wife Gala you'll also need a few wild animals as extra guests for the dining room.

A promotional banner for Blackwell's. On the left, the word "BLACKWELL'S" is written in a large, blue, serif font. To its right, the text "Fast dispatch, carefully packaged, worldwide delivery" is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. On the far right, there is a stack of colorful books. A dark blue rectangular button with the white text "Shop now" is overlaid on the books.

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