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EL TORO

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Javier Bardem

Story by Jonathan Heaf Photographed by Nico Bustos

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45 Jermyn St



Deep space: The interior of 45 Jermyn St, as designed by Martin Brudnizki

BEST

For design enthusiasts, the words art deco are hallowed scripture. Too often is the aesthetic associated purely with the grandiose ostentation of the roaring Twenties and not the measured, expertly balanced approach to design that has elevated its reputation ceaselessly through the decades. At the recently reopened 45 Jermyn St, the attention to the latter makes for an effortlessly urbane approach to the former.

"They managed the rarest of feats, they don't have a bad table," says our judge Matt Hobbs. Precision and balance characterise every detail of Martin Brudnizki's design, from the vermilion and sage colour palette to the at once jovial and sophisticated use of space. The result is an earnest, authentic and endlessly elegant celebration of a golden age. 45 Jermyn Street, St James's, London SW1. 020 7205 4545. 45jermynst.com

Runners-up: Blixen, German Gymnasium

Also nominated: Bronte; Pharmacy 2

INTERIOR



FOOD & DRINK AWARDS

Distinguishing features (from top): Rosewood London's Mirror Room; the grand marble staircase; bronze entrance gallery; Holborn dining room; marquis house suite



BEST HOTEL

Rosewood London

The towering grandeur of 252 High Holborn began its life as the home of the Pearl Assurance Company in 1914. Today, the Grade II-listed Edwardian building is better known as a pearl in the capital's luxury diadem. In the four years since its reopening under the Rosewood name, the hotel has flourished into what judge Dylan Jones describes as "an oasis of calm and excellence in the heart of the city", redefining contemporary opulence.

Inside the Belle Epoque edifice glistens the redesigned interior courtesy of Tony Chi, whose respectful refurbishment takes the spirit of turn-of-the-century gentlemanly sophistication and embellishes it with a modernist exactitude. With The Mirror Room, Holborn Dining Room and Scarfe's Bar (with interiors designed by Martin Brudnizki, who also takes the Best Interior gong this year for 45 Jermyn St) also garnering praise for their culinary offerings and endlessly alluring ambience, it appears Rosewood may well have gifted us with a new classic.

252 High Holborn, London WC1. 020 7781 8888. rosewoodhotels.com

Runner-up: Gidleigh Park

Also nominated: The London Edition; No 131; Chewton Glen



Swede spot: Aquavit's interior, designed by Martin Brudzinski; (below) matjes herring

THE RESTAURANT

Aquavit, London



LONG before Scandi-style wellbeing was a thing, and René Redzepi had redefined and globalised its culinary fare, there was Aquavit: a fine-dining room in midtown Manhattan that took Nordic cuisine seriously and, under the auspices of Marcus Samuelsson, elevated the likes of Arctic char and *matjes* herring to multi-starred status. In 2010, Samuelsson left to develop his concept for Afro-Scandi soul food at Harlem's Red Fooster. Still, Aquavit prevailed, with fellow Swede Emma Bengtsson earning it two Michelin stars and restoring its hallowed three-star status in the *New York Times*.

But for its launch into the UK, another approach was needed – one that answers the capital's siren call for all-day dining with culinary flair. Accordingly, Aquavit's new home in the fast-developing foodie quarter St James's Market is light, airy, immaculately designed (by another Swede, Martin Brudzinski) and inclusive in a way its Manhattan parent could never be. Or as the founder and CEO of London's operation, Philip Hamilton, puts it, "It's fine dining, but it's a brasserie. I want people to come here two or three times a week. We are accessible, with the accent on food excellence."

The trade-off: dishes have been simplified to make for a quicker dispatch across the pass. But otherwise first impressions should be the same: not so much classical as much-loved dishes from the region that gave us *hygge*, given the care and attention you'd expect.

It's a project that sits well with Bengtsson's approach. "I'm very true to the flavours and quality of ingredients, and how things are



Up Nord: Turbot, horseradish and brown butter at Aquavit

produced," she says. "But I trust the people I work with. In my mind, a kitchen is much stronger with people who have lots of ideas. It's a team effort, and creating this menu with Henrik [Ritzen] was an amazing experience."

Belying his absurdly youthful looks, the 41-year-old Ritzen has spent the last 20 years cooking in the capital, starting at the Blueprint Café, before moving on to Le Petite Maison and Dover Street's The Arts Club. At the same time, he's seen his native Swedish cuisine grow in scope and stature.

"It's tricky," he says of adapting the menu. "It's a big restaurant so we had to do something we felt really confident doing. We didn't want to be too Nordic, but we didn't want to be too rounded at the edges either. We want food people recognise and come back for. So we serve blood pudding, liver pâté – which we associate with childhood in Sweden – and veal in dill and, of course, meatballs."

And would Aquavit London's all-day dining iteration ever work in its home city? Bengtsson thinks so. "The markets are very different, but we're entering a new era. If we took what we have in London and placed it in New York, it would work amazingly well, I'm sure." **BP**



● St James's Market, 1 Carlton Street, London SW1. 0207 024 9848. aquavitrestaurants.com

Where GQ has been eating this month... Spago, Beverly Hills

BACK in the day, whenever you read anything about the vagaries of Hollywood nightlife, or heard a juicy, but usually unprintable, story involving the sexual pursuits of the likes of Jack Nicholson, Spago always seemed to be mentioned at some point. Not only did everyone who was anyone appear to eat there, but they also seemed to always be behaving incredibly badly. As an advertisement for a restaurant, this vague sense of loucheness was catnip. "Who cares if it's true?" we cried. "We want to go there!"

Wolfgang Puck's formidable Californian cuisine eatery opened on the Sunset Strip in West Hollywood in 1982 and became famous almost immediately, though it moved to Canon Drive in Beverly Hills two decades ago. In 2013, it was even named the most iconic restaurant in LA – yet it still reinvents itself each season. Not only does it now have two Michelin stars, which has made it easier for Puck to franchise the brand, but it is still a foolproof way of successfully achieving "Saturday night". No one was ever disappointed when they decided to go to Spago and they probably never will be. **DJ**

Standout dish

Bincho grilled Korean marinated salmon, with vegetable *namul* and seaweed.

● 176 North Canon Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, USA. 001 310 385 0880. wolfgangpuck.com. For more information, visit lovebeverlyhills.com

