

BAR + BLOCK

The latest restaurant to open in King's Cross' burgeoning foodie hub is Bar + Block, a beefed-up steakhouse where steaks are hand-cut to order. Sourced from the Pampas in South America, then dry-aged for a minimum of 28 days, Bar+ Block's meat comes from very good stock, and is accompanied by dishes such as chicken wings with raspberry and Tabasco sauce, beef empanadas and fresh flatbreads. Plus, from 12-5pm every weekday, Bar + Block's express menu offers classics such as steak and chips and open club sandwiches, alongside a glass of wine or a beer for under £10. Bargain.

26-30 York Way, N1, barandblock.co.uk



THE NEW BLACK

The New Black, recently opened next to the Walkie Talkie building, takes the concept of artisan coffee to another level. Channelling the intricacies of wine, baristas use technology previously unused in the UK to provide coffee lovers with a premium, business-class experience – and a top quality cup of coffee. Interactive iPads with tastewheels help customers better understand the different flavour profiles of the coffee roasts they've chosen, which come from the world's most renowned roasters. Think hipster coffee in a suit and tie.

10 Philpot Lane, EC3, thenewblack.coffee

THE REVIEW: DARBAAR

SPLENDOUR OF THE SUBCONTINENT

WORDS: DAVID TAYLOR

I'm from the North. Yorkshire, to be precise. Having the UK's curry capital – Bradford – on my doorstep, I feel better placed than most to identify a good ruby when one comes my way. And so I jumped at the chance of reviewing Snowden Street's Darbaar, opened by award-winning Indian chef, Abdul Yaseen.

Previously head chef behind the renowned Cinnamon Club, Westminster,

Mr. Yaseen has moved east for his first solo venture, which is inspired by the banquets of the royal courts of India. Entering, there is certainly a sense of the grandiose, with midnight blue walls, gold chandeliers and ornate mirrors and drapes hanging throughout the expansive interior.

The menu continues in the same vein, a huge range of dishes taking the best of the East and combining culinary highlights of the West. After the traditional starting papadam and chutneys (sweet doesn't begin to cover it), my guest and I were presented with the chef's platter of assorted grills and kebabs, a sizzling plate of seared salmon, grilled chicken, lamb seekh and sumptuous paneer. The salmon was the best of the bunch, the zesty coating cutting through the fish's rich edge. Make sure to try the Amritsari-spiced calamari fritters: good luck stopping at one plate.

Mr Yaseen is well known for, among many dishes, his butter chicken curry, so it would have been remiss not to try it. I wasn't disappointed, and neither

was my guest, who had more than his fair share of the dish. The curry was accompanied by peshwari naan, the sweet coconut suiting the subtle spices. Then again, I'm yet to find any curry that doesn't go with peshwari naan, the miracle bread.

Coincidentally, unexpected flavour combinations are the chef's bread and butter, and our desserts blended Indian and Western cooking: vanilla kulfi with dark chocolate and beautifully scented carrot cake rounding off a delicate and thoughtful menu. Make use of Darbaar's comprehensive wine list. We chose a Malbec, which paired particularly well with the playful fragrances of the grill dishes.

When a restaurant describes itself as influenced by royal banquets, expectations are high enough to cause altitude sickness. Darbaar exceeded expectations – these are Indian dishes fit for a king.

1 Snowden Street, EC2, darbaarrestaurants.com

