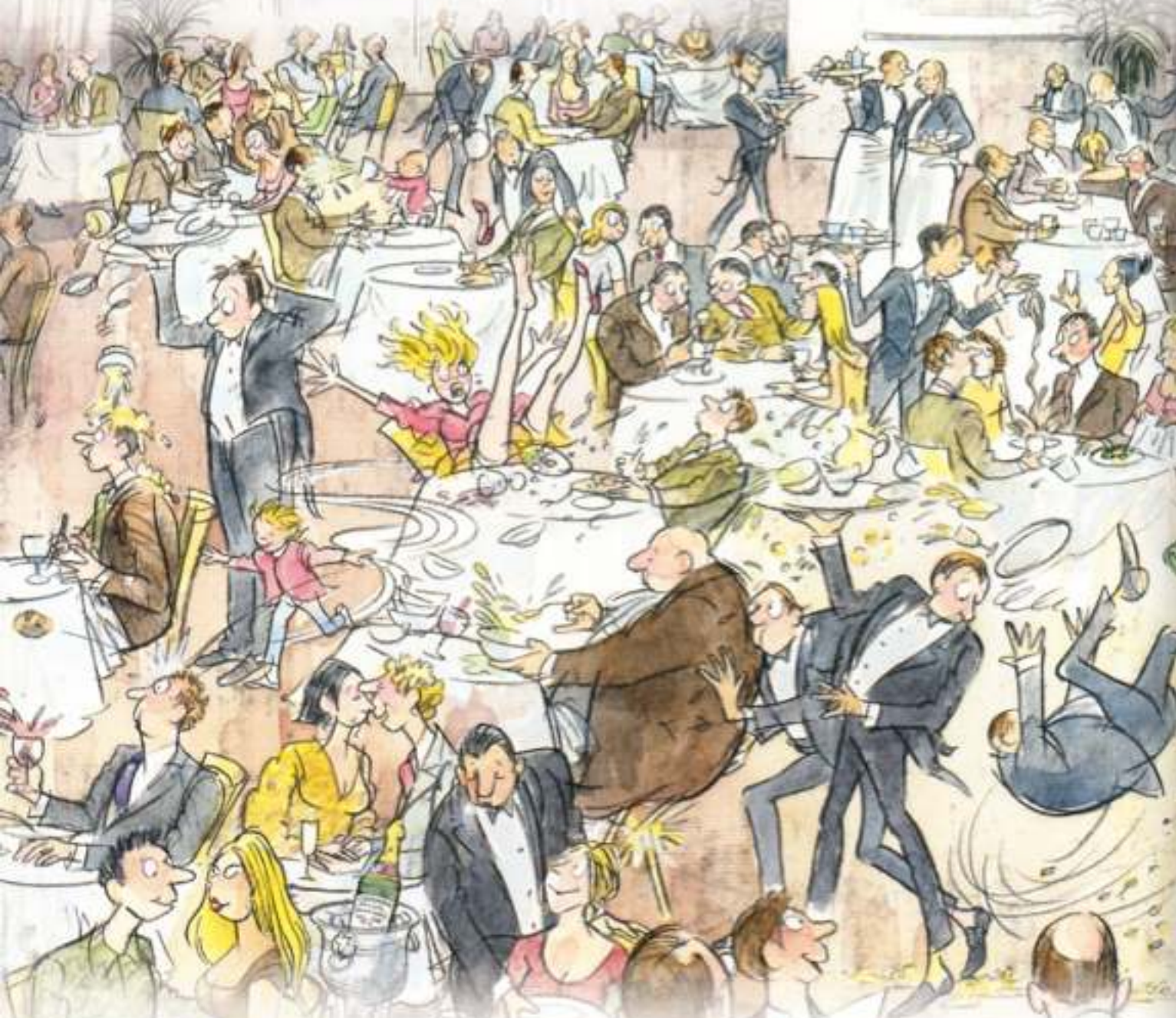


TATLER

RESTAURANT GUIDE 2013



taste
OF LONDON
2013-2014
BRITISH AIRWAYS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

CHAMPAGNE
Laurent-Perrier
MAISON FONDÉE
1812

LUDO'S

The Coopers Inn, Station Road, Newcastle Emlyn, Carmarthenshire SA38 9BX (no website; 01239 710588)

Frogs' legs in deepest, Welshest Wales? Surely not. Newcastle Emlyn is not the most obvious location for an ambitious young French chef to set up shop. But Ludo Dieumegard is winning over sceptical locals softly-softly, smuggling a deep-fried snail in alongside the wild-garlic soup. There's lots of slow cooking and the sticky toffee pudding, with salty Halen Môn sauce, makes our all-time STP top 10. **☆☆**

MINT AND MUSTARD

134 Whitchurch Road, Cardiff CF14 3LZ (mintandmustard.com; 02920 620333)

At Mint and Mustard, the jewel in Whitchurch Road's rather scruffy crown, murals of extravagantly mustachioed Bollywood actors gaze moodily down on the packed, good-time crowd. We can't overstate how superb this food is: Bombay chaat like little crispy space hoppers; fig and fresh coriander naan, hot from the tandoor. It's a blast, it's a buzz, it's knock-your-block-off brilliant. **☆☆**

THE FAT DUCK

High Street, Bray, Berkshire SL6 2AQ (thefatduck.co.uk; 01628 580333)

Many first-time visitors to the Duck are struck by how low-key it is, but when you're this big you hardly have to shout about it. It's not just Heston Blumenthal's culinary inventiveness – snail porridge, the thermodynamics – that is so winning, it's the whole package. An elderly relative or a callow schoolboy would be equally captivated by the magic. Snagging a table is still tough, though. **☆☆☆☆**

THE SIR CHARLES NAPIER

Sprigg's Alley, Chinnor, Oxfordshire OX39 4BX (sircharlesnapiers.co.uk; 01494 483011)

This place has been around for yonks (as have some of the clientele) but owner Julie Griffiths and chef Chris Godfrey won their first Michelin star in 2011. Lunch could be double-baked smoked haddock and cheddar soufflé or braised ox cheek, with salted caramel and honeycomb nibbles to follow. All delicious. **☆☆**

THE DINING ROOM AT WHATLEY MANOR

Easton Grey, Malmesbury, Wiltshire SN16 0RB (whatleymanor.com; 01666 822888)

A country house of Cotswold stone, with formal gardens and grassland leading to the river. In the two-Michelin-star Dining Room, Martin Burge's cooking gets more exciting by the minute, with dishes such as pig's cheek in Thai spices and venison with bitter chocolate.

Sunday jazz suppers are in the less formal Le Mazot restaurant. **☆☆☆☆/☆☆**



THE ELEPHANT

3-4 Beacon Terrace, Torquay, Devon TQ1 2BH (elephantrestaurant.co.uk; 01803 200044)

You might already know chef patron Simon Hulstone from BBC One's *Saturday Kitchen*. His pretty townhouse restaurant, on a hilly terrace above the harbour, is split into ground-floor brasserie and first-floor posh option the Room (open only in spring/summer). We especially love the former, where moules marinieres followed by tagliatelle with crab make a fine lunch. **☆☆/☆☆☆☆**

HUMPHRY'S

Stoke Park, Park Road, Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire SL2 4PG (stokepark.com; 01753 717172)

Stoke Park, 40 minutes from Hyde Park Corner on a good day, is an architectural sock-in-the-eye, an 18th- (and part-14th) century pile with attitude. Humphry's restaurant – with its glorious floor-to-ceiling windows and great vases of lilies and orchids – must be seen to be believed, but the biggest surprise is the food. A classic tournedos of beef and a cannon of lamb were two of the best dishes we've eaten in the past 12 months. **☆☆☆☆**

THE OLDE BELL



THE OLDE BELL

Hurley, Berkshire SL6 5LX (theoldebells.co.uk; 01628 825881)

Olde indeed – some parts of the Bell date from the 12th century – but the rooms and restaurant have recently been renovated by designer Ilse Crawford, so it's smart and well tended, Berkshire-style. Sunday lunch is a non-stop show – busy-busy, everyone hale and hearty and good-looking children all over the place. The lovely garden provides nearly half of all the fruit, herbs and vegetables and in summer there's an outdoor barbecue. **☆☆☆☆**

THE DINING ROOM

Pavilion Buildings, Rock Road, Rock, Cornwall PL27 6JS (thediningroomrock.co.uk; 01208 862622)

With the old guard somewhat standing still, new blood is taking the Cornish helm. The Dining Room, so unassuming from the outside, surpasses every expectation. The head chef is a master at balancing lip-smacking creativity with classic combinations. Mackerel tartare and Tamar Valley venison are particularly good choices and the local Camel Valley wine is so good you want to retire early and move to the area. **☆☆**

