

TATLER®

RESTAURANT GUIDE 2018





RADICI

30 ALMEIDA STREET, N1 1AD (RADICI.UK; 020 7354 4777)

There's not one single thing on the menu at Radici we don't want to eat, which might say more about our greed and gluttony if the man at the helm did not just happen to be Francesco Mazzei, of L'Anima in the City fame. After bringing his talents to Sartoria to coincide with that restaurant's relaunch, he has now turned his attention to Radici (formerly Almeida), where everything he touches turns to sunny, southern Italian gold. Mazzei is king of fregola, king of 'nduja. **£££**

MARGOT

45 GREAT QUEEN STREET, WC2B 5AA (MARGOTRESTAURANT.COM; 020 3409 4777)

The ground floor of Nicolas Jaouën and Paulo de Tarso's (formerly of Bar Boulud) cultivated Covent Garden Italian sports a small bar and open kitchen, luxurious blue-leather chairs and fauteuils, and bevelled art nouveau mirrors. It feels like a supper club. Home-baked grissini and oven-fresh sourdough are so good you could fill up on them, but pace yourself. Tagliatelle with hare ragù, roast saddle of venison with savoy cabbage and pumpkin sauce and ossobuco with a rich, saffrony risotto are among the many standouts. And Margot's wine list has been compiled with an eye to both quality and variety, with some terrific finds, like the Disznókó 2015, a beautifully made Tokay, among the super-Tuscans. **££££**



NOVIKOV ITALIAN

50A BERKELEY STREET, W1J 8HA (NOVIKOVRESTAURANT.CO.UK; 020 7399 4330)

With its airy, contemporary setting, wonderful display of fresh produce (mind your back, San Remo market!) and sense of abundance, in many ways this Mayfair Merc resembles those early Conran restaurants that instantly transported you to Provence or the Med. And it would be a picky customer indeed who couldn't find lots to enjoy on Arkady Novikov's long menu, peppered with (mostly northern) Italian classics. Novikov is family-friendly too. **££££**

LOCANDA LOCATELLI

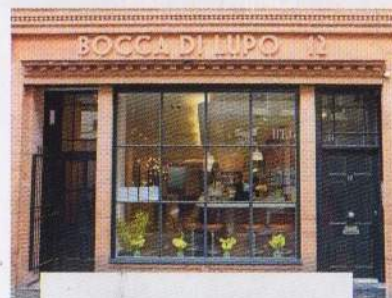
8 SEYMOUR STREET, W1H 7JZ (LOCANDALOCATELLI.COM; 020 7935 9088)

Giorgio and Plaxy Locatelli's celeb-strewn restaurant is still the gold standard. David Collins' original decoration from 2002, recently refreshed, never dates and the cooking, which sweeps across northern Italy, is rich and indulgent. Expect fabulous milk, butter, cream and dairy dishes, homemade pasta and risotto, a winning way with offal and wonderful veal and lamb. Locatelli also gives the lie to the long-held belief that Michelin and great Italian cooking don't go hand in hand – the restaurant has held its star for 14 years. **£££££**

CAFE MURANO

33 ST JAMES'S STREET, SW1A 1HD (CAFEMURANO.CO.UK; 020 3371 5559)

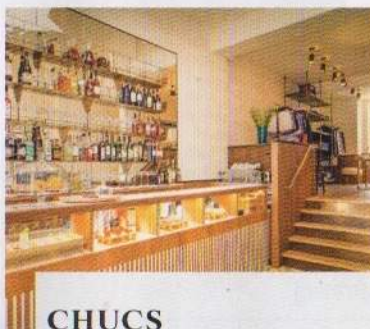
Angela Hartnett's popular Café Murano is not, strictly speaking, a café, but it's Italian to the core, serving homemade pastas, many with bold sauces, and a short list of delicious, straightforward fish, fowl and poultry mains. If the narrow banquette seating facing the long bar feels a bit cosy, opt for a slightly roomier table at the rear. No matter where you sit, the atmosphere is infectious and minor comfort issues are quickly forgotten. A sister restaurant on Tavistock Street in Covent Garden is handy pre-Opera House if you're sufficiently well organised, or post-performance if the show obliges with an early enough curtain-down. **£££**



BOCCA DI LUPO

12 ARCHER STREET, W1D 7BB (BOCCADILUPO.COM; 020 7734 2223)

Next year marks the 10th anniversary of Jacob Kenedy and Victor Hugo's Soho osteria, which is distinguished by the fact these guys really 'get' Italian. The food is not generic but regional – ditto the all-Italian wine list – and the variety of dishes, always changing, is therefore virtually endless. Don't decide what you want to eat so much as where you want to go. The Alps? Piedmont? Sun-kissed Liguria? Sardinia? All of Italy awaits, whether you want to pop in for a few small plates or a feast. **£££**



CHUCS

30B DOVER STREET, W1S 4NB (CHUCS.COM; 020 3763 2013)

Chucs, with just 16 seats, a teeny panelled bar and Amalfi Coast photos on the walls, transports you back to the Italian seaside of the Sixties. And the food hits the spot – carpaccio, Sicilian red prawns and bigoli cacio e pepe – served traditionally, with a jug of hot water, in case the sauce dries out. 'The chef is from Rome,' says manager Lucio, 'so he has to do it right.' **£££**