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Winter 2026

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Newsy Nibbles

A selection of what is happening in the food & drink landscape –
find full stories and reviews at bite-magazine.com



Christmas, sorted: Edinburgh's **Wedgwood the Restaurant** has unveiled its 2026 festive boxes, bringing a restaurant-quality Christmas feast to dining tables across Scotland. Designed by chef Paul Wedgwood, the six-course menu is built with hosts in mind, featuring pre-plated starters and simple finishing steps that minimise kitchen time and maximise time with others. Highlights include smoked Shetland salmon, roe deer pastrami, a choice of turkey, mallard or ham hock with all the trimmings, and festive desserts including Christmas pudding with XO rum sauce. Priced at £180 for two (with boxes for one, three and larger groups available), the packages include nationwide delivery, optional wine pairings and vegetarian alternatives. Edinburgh deliveries on Christmas Eve even come courtesy of Paul and the team themselves.



Macau Kitchen, one of Edinburgh's most beloved restaurants, has added another accolade to its growing list of honours, recently winning a Good Food Award. The homespun restaurant, led by chef-patron Kei de Freitas and partner Hoeyyn, has built a loyal following for its modern interpretation of Macanese cuisine. Drawing on Macau's unique culinary heritage, the menu blends Portuguese, Chinese and wider Asian influences to create dishes that are both deeply rooted in tradition and distinctly contemporary. The latest recognition joins an impressive collection of achievements, including AA Rosettes and Asian Chef of the Year at The Asian Curry Awards. These honours reflect Macau Kitchen's success in bringing one of the world's lesser-known cuisines into the spotlight and cementing its place as one of Scotland's most exciting dining destinations.



Behind Bars is a book written by Anna Boda, better known to many in Edinburgh as Anna Laggerqvist Christopherson, one half of The Boda Bar Group which included Boda Bar, Sofi's, Akva, Hemma and Victoria - the latter of which Anna still owns on Leith Walk. The book tells the story of how Anna left Sweden to come to Scotland and discusses what it really takes to build a life and a business in a new country. At the time of going to press, we haven't yet had time to read it but look out for our review on the Bite website.

Vietnamese restaurant **Pho & Roll** (also in Stockbridge) has transformed its successful Edinburgh Festival pop-up into a permanent fixture. Following a refurbishment of the Jeffrey Street premises this November, the venue has reopened as a two-floor dining destination. Founded by Bau Pham, the family-run business has built a loyal following thanks to its overnight-simmered phở, fresh ingredients and authentic Vietnamese cooking, with brother Thinh Pham taking the reins at this branch. *15-19 Jeffrey St, Edinburgh EH1 1DR - 0131 285 8418*





Award-winning Argyll restaurant **Inver** was put up for sale after almost 12 years, although chef-owner Pam Brunton stressed the business remained successful and well supported. Set on the shores of Loch Fyne, Inver has built a national reputation for its innovative, ingredient-led cooking, earning Scotland's first Michelin Green Star and recently securing four AA Rosettes. Brunton said the decision to sell was driven by personal and family considerations rather than financial pressures. She also hinted at future projects, including a second book, following the success of her acclaimed debut *Between Two Waters*.

Loch Leven's Larder is bringing a taste of the Alps to Scotland this winter with a fully immersive, six-week Alpine Village experience. Until Christmas Eve, the popular destination farm shop, deli, and café has transformed into a festive mountain-inspired world. Visitors can enjoy Swiss and Scottish sharing platters, traditional fondue, an Alpine Bar, Silent Discos, and a lively German Beer Festival. A major highlight is the installation of an inflatable curling rink in the Larder grounds, giving guests a chance to try the classic Scottish winter sport. Business owners Rob and Emma Niven championed the rink, pulling inspiration from their own passion for curling. *Activity tickets and lodge reservations are available on the Loch Leven's Larder website.*





There was a double celebration in Leith after **Fingal** was crowned both Europe's Leading Boutique Hotel and Scotland's Leading Boutique Hotel at the World Travel Awards 2026 this autumn. Since opening in 2019, the luxury floating hotel has become one of Scotland's most distinctive places to stay.



La Querencia opened a second restaurant in Dalry Road, bringing the spirit of Argentina, its food and culture to Haymarket as well as to Leith Walk, home of their first restaurant. *Read Anne Pia's review on pages 14 & 15.*



Pies, pints and duelling pianos arrived on George Street with the opening of **The Lyon Public House** in October. The all-day venue blends gastropub dining with live entertainment, an in-house bakery and 18 draught beers, anchored by Hammer Hall's duelling pianos and long beer-hall tables. Fresh pies are baked daily and served from a late-night window until 3am, while reclaimed antiques, tapestries and custom-built bars nod to the building's auction-room heritage at 51a George Street.



Independent Edinburgh drinks retailer **Great Grog** is inviting beer lovers to kick off the festive season with its annual Christmas Beer Tasting on Thursday 10 December. The event will be hosted by Fraser and Joe in the company's Pleasance tasting room. While the final line-up is being confirmed, attendees can expect festive favourites, high-strength Christmas brews and a few surprises, with organisers promising beers from respected names such as Pohjala, Sierra Nevada and Delirium. Tickets are priced at £15, with guests also encouraged to bring an appetite for mince pies and seasonal cheer.



A campaign **More by the Shore** designed to boost footfall in Leith and Newhaven following disruption caused by the Princes Street fire earlier this year will run until the end of February. It is funded through the Scottish Government recovery package and delivered by Forever Edinburgh and includes promotional events, special offers and a voucher scheme for participating businesses including The Scotch Malt Whisky Society, Leith Makers, Fingal and Victoria Bar. Some 40,000 vouchers will be made available through a partnership with Itison, while a programme of festive and winter events aims to encourage residents and visitors back to the area.

One of Scotland's most celebrated chefs has revealed his next move. After closing the doors of Michelin-starred Loch Bay on Skye at the end of October, **Michael Smith** will join Perle Hotels as Culinary Director and Brand Ambassador, working across the group's portfolio in Skye, Oban and Glencoe. The newly created role will also see Smith help shape the food and drink offering at Perle Hotels' highly anticipated Edinburgh project, 1620, a new townhouse hotel on Castle Street due to open in 2027. The move marks a fresh chapter for the chef after nearly 40 years in hospitality, bringing the experience that earned Michelin stars at both Loch Bay and The Three Chimneys to one of Scotland's fastest-growing independent hotel groups.





Seaweed is emerging as one of the food industry's most talked-about sustainable ingredients, and a Scottish brand is helping drive the movement. Highland-based **SHORE** has surpassed £1 million in retail sales while turning hand-harvested seaweed into a range of award-winning snacks now stocked by major supermarkets across Scotland. With demand growing for sustainable gifts and stocking fillers, SHORE's Seaweed Chips are a festive alternative to conventional snacks, offering consumers a nibble with a lighter impact on the planet. *Try the legendary Peking Duck flavour!*

Edinburgh favourite **Ricks** reopened its doors on Frederick Street on 31 October, marking the return of one of the capital's best-known hospitality destinations. Formerly operating as Rabble, the venue has reclaimed its original name, bringing together a restaurant, bar and ten-bedroom boutique hotel. Originally launched in 2000, Ricks earned international acclaim and became one of Edinburgh's most distinctive independent venues. Its refurbishment celebrates the spirit that made it a local institution, with a menu from Group Executive Chef Ross Giamblanco showcasing seasonal British produce sourced from suppliers including John Gilmour Butchers, Cumbrae Oysters and Tarbert crab.





Milnes Bar underwent a glow-up prior to reopening in November. Once a popular haunt for poets and arts students in the 20th century, the bar has a new look inside and out to welcome locals and tourists wanting to soak up its traditional Scottish feel. The famed 'Lonely Poet's Chair' has pride of place in the bar whilst much has been made of the antique features of the Kremlin room, so named for its political debates that once took place there. New signage, lighting, and outdoor furniture have boosted the pub's kerb appeal, while the inside has new and refreshed flooring, booth seating and furnishings, lighting, décor and curated artwork. The toilets have also been refurbished.

Edinburgh cook, stylist and author **Jess Elliott** has announced she will leave her Sciennes Road studio in January after eight years in the space. Elliott says she has decided against renewing the lease, with plans for a new Edinburgh base to be revealed in 2027. Before then, visitors can enjoy a final season of events, shopping days and festive celebrations at the much-loved studio including the release of her new book *Biscuits*.



Review: The Wee Kitchen

Travel the world in your own kitchen

One of my favourite things to do is take a cooking class, especially when I travel. It's a wonderful way to engage with the local community, learn about different cuisines, and interact with complete strangers – something we don't really do anymore, which is a shame, because the people I meet at The Wee Kitchen Cookery School, from Ailsa McGuiness who set up the business, to the incredibly diverse mix of people figuring out how to peel ginger properly, are such a nice bunch and I'm grateful to have the opportunity to share a hard-earned meal with them.

A windy and stormy day in Edinburgh doesn't deter us from what promises to be a fun afternoon. When we arrive, Ailsa greets us with big smiles and immediately helps us feel at home. Then we set out to create some delicious Vietnamese street food. The classes are inspired by Ailsa's travels so you can choose from a range of global cuisines.

I love to cook and I'd say I'm pretty good at it – but I value tips from professionals and learn about the ingredients we're using throughout the session. For example, when making the caramelized sauce, don't stir while it is cooking just trust your ear and when you can no longer 'hear' the sauce boiling, it's time to take it off and swirl.



Ailsa McGuinness

Ailsa's class is the definition of engaging. Not only are we surrounded by delicious smells, but she breaks each step of the recipes down, buzzing around us while imparting wisdom.

Halfway through the class, my friend Vic and I are ravenous, so it's time to tuck into the first course we've made: Summer Rolls. Painstakingly wrapped with love, care and perhaps a little bit of drool, I quite literally inhale mine before we're whisked straight back to preparing our main course.

The pork meatballs sizzle and my stomach growls as the sweet scent of caramelised sauce wafts up to my nose. That first bite of Bun Cha ten minutes later? I'm not lying when I tell you my mouth is watering as I write this. No matter that it's 9 am, I want caramelised pork meatballs on a noodle salad stat.

Lucky for us, Ailsa sends us away with the recipes from the day. Some students have leftovers, but I devour every single bit of my meal on site!

Ailsa's classes are friendly, entertaining, educational and gift vouchers are available too. (Bronwyn Eley)

The Wee Kitchen Cookery School — Cyrenians Flavour & Haver Cookery School, 66-68 Jane St, Edinburgh EH6 5HG Tel: 07377 592291 Class times vary

Review: Nick's

Scottish heart at Port of Menteith

Set beside the quiet Lake of Menteith, Nick Nairn's restaurant blends generous, confident cooking with genuine warmth — a reminder of why he remains one of Scotland's defining chefs. And a warning — this article contains cliches as Nick's is one restaurant where they, for once, are apt.

First of all, this restaurant is a classic "hidden gem". Port of Menteith is a small, quiet village set on the edge of the Lake of Menteith, known as Scotland's only true lake. It's a soft, low-lying landscape of water, woodland and farmland, with Inchmahome Priory sitting on an island just offshore. You find 'Nick's' down a track off a winding country road, a bucolic, charming setting comprising a garden, polytunnel, cook school and Julia Nairn's beautifully curated lifestyle shop. We visit for lunch on a misty day, when the lake is busy with anglers who appear in dark relief against the gray water.



Julia & Nick Nairn

The restaurant has a cosy, bistro feel: sage-green walls, a textile feature wall panel depicting pheasants, and burnt caramel-coloured leather chairs; all is simpatico with the setting.

A glass of 'Nick's favourite fizz', Nyetimber, complements my Seafood Cocktail, which arrives in a generous portion. It's a meal in itself. King prawns mingle with smaller ones in a Marie Rose sauce, alongside chunks of home-cured smoked salmon, slices of avocado, the odd cherry tomato and a shred of mangetout. The latter is unexpected, but it adds an extra dimension. It's genuinely "mouth-watering".

Across the table, Mr Bite notes that his bottle of Bitter and Twisted also complements his starter of Curried Sweetcorn and Scallop Chowder perfectly. There are layers of flavour packed in: spice, salty bacon pieces, fish stock, crispy spring onions. It feels as if 'Chef' has taken two classic starter dishes and asked, "How do I make the very best versions?" Mr B says it's not just the best chowder he has ever tasted but the best soup, and he eats it with gusto.

For my main course I choose the Homemade Flatbread with Smoked Chicken Shawarma, Muhammara Sauce, Walnut Dukkah and Feta. It is presented as an Arabic-style pizza with heat, spice, nuts and cheese. A moreish dish full of surprise, and halfway through I'm asking for a doggy bag because the portion is again so generous. Mr Bite chooses the Panko-Breaded Haddock with house tartare, crisp pommes frites and a garden salad. The fish is beautifully flaky and full of flavour, and it's telling that for once he eats up his greens!

I've been looking forward to pudding, and I choose Tarta de Santiago, a favourite since walking the Camino back in the day. It is perfectly executed and lifted by bright orange gel and zest. Lovely, but overshadowed by Mr Bite's showstopping Choux Bun, a huge wodge of pistachio ice cream sandwiched inside perfect pastry, all sitting in a pool of chocolate sauce. I have to eat half of this as well.

On the way out, I pause at the wall of photos: Nick with Tony Singh, Rick Stein, Michael Smith, the late Andrew Fairlie, James Martin, Pierre Koffmann and many more. It's a visual timeline of his career from the beginning.

Nick Nairn opened Braeval in 1986 and earned a Michelin star at 32 in 1991. And when Mr Bite and I visited earlier this year, Nick and Julia were preparing for a 40th-anniversary dinner with chefs Neil Forbes, Martin Wishart, Stephen Terry and Jeremy Wares, all of whom credit Braeval with shaping their careers and modern Scottish cooking. Braeval was all about Scottish produce with European influence; it was pioneering.

Through television, restaurants, authoring many cookbooks, the cook school, and even the bumps along the way, the most devastating being the major blaze at Nick's on Henderson Street in Bridge of Allan in August 2021, Nick Nairn has prevailed. He has earned one of the most prominent places in Scotland's culinary history and in our hearts and most recently, the restaurant has been included in the Good Food Guide's 100 Best Local Restaurants 2026.

Mr Bite and I leave Nick's at Port of Menteith feeling warm, glowing and feeling privileged to have experienced such hospitality.

At Nick's, the clichés ring true: hidden gem, mouth-watering food and must visit — and that's no exaggeration. (Sharon Wilson)

***Nick's at Port of Menteith** —*
Stirling FK8 3JZ T: 01877 389900
Opening hours
Wed 5-10pm (April – November only)
Thurs to Sat 12-10pm, Sun 12-6pm



Dining Room at Nick's



Artisonal Pizza



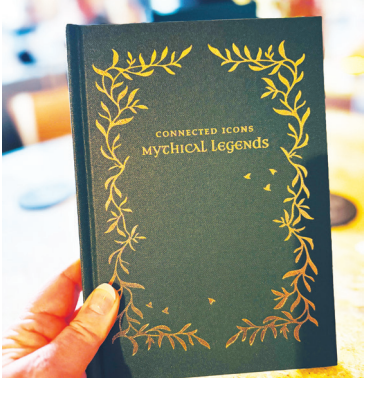
Choux Bun

Review: Bar Prince

Where Folklore Meets Mixology at The Balmoral

Building on the success of last year's *Connected Icons*, Bar Prince at The Balmoral unveils its latest immersive cocktail concept, *Mythical Legends*, a menu inspired by Scotland's rich folklore and legendary creatures.

Since ancient times, folktales have passed down lessons, preserved the stories of lands and civilisations, and entertained generations. We grow up on tales of giants, dragons, powerful witches, princesses and kings, and they never quite leave us, inviting us to keep dreaming of worlds filled with magic. Some people still hesitate to swim in Loch Ness, "just in case", while others know to beware the shape-shifting spirits said to lurk in Scotland's rivers. And, if you didn't know, a dragon supposedly sleeps beneath Arthur's Seat, so tread softly on your next walk. Stories like these help shape a nation's identity and fire its imagination.



Handstitched and Illustrated Menu

Overseen by Head Bartender Mattia Rovaris, *Mythical Legends* continues the storytelling ethos established by *Connected Icons*. Guests are encouraged to uncover the tale behind every drink, creating a journey through Scotland's mythical past, one cocktail at a time.

Mrs Bite and I visit on a bustling Saturday afternoon and immerse ourselves in a world of magic and mixology.

On arrival, we are handed the menu: a green book adorned with golden detailing, resembling a treasured fairytale volume. As we browse, each story unfolds alongside a list of ingredients that, like a potion, brings spirit to a glass.

For our first round, we choose The Dragon's Tale, inspired by the legend of Arthur's Seat, and The Lost Princess, which references the creation myth of Islay; both are gin-based cocktails. The former combines dragon fruit and a Campari foam and is reminiscent of an Americano cocktail, while the latter blends nori, rosemary and lemon cordial to evoke the minerality and freshness of the sea.

To accompany our drinks, we order a selection of bar snacks. Delicate lobster rolls deliver sweet shellfish flavours with a subtle fennel-like finish, while prawn toast topped with crisp shards of prawn skin provide a more indulgent contrast.

Our second round brings The Shape-Shifter, inspired by Scotland's legendary kelpies, and Messy-Nessy. The former is a bright, citrus-led blend of tequila, mezcal and Campari, while the latter combines Japanese whisky with pine needle cordial, capturing the freshness of an early morning mist drifting across the Great Glen.

As Mattia Rovaris explains:

"Building on the success of Connected Icons, *Mythical Legends* gave our team the opportunity to tell a new chapter of Scotland's story through the lens of folklore. Each cocktail has been created by a different member of the bar team, making the menu a true collective of ideas, creativity and personal interpretation. Paired with bespoke illustrations and scent, we've created an experience that invites guests to discover something new with every serve."

This is a five-star mixology experience, elevated by impeccable service, consistently excellent cocktails, an elegant setting and a remarkable level of creativity. (Eleonora Vanello)

Mythical Legends at Bar Prince — The Balmoral, 1 Princes Street, Edinburgh EH2 2EQ. T: 0131 556 2414 barprince@roccofortehotels.com Bar Prince is open daily from 12pm-midnight.



Exquisite Lobster Rolls



Shapeshifter



Dragonstail

Review: La Querencia

brings the spirit of Argentina to Haymarket

Enter La Querencia, Edinburgh's new Argentinian restaurant in the hip Haymarket area of the city and you are immediately wrapped in the warm aromas and sounds of maybe a downtown Buenos Aires restaurant or a popular food stop in Patagonia's Bariloche… vibrant, rustic, informal… a place to relax in and kick back awhile. To savour the basic good things of life. This new arrival, sister restaurant to owner Ariadne and family's charming Leith eatery of some repute, is Argentina at its most beguiling... all bustle, spin and clatter. All heart.

Dalry Road becomes a place very far from here and you find yourself seated at a wooden barra in a small corner of elegant Recoleta with a glass of the finest Malbec, maybe, just around the corner from the mighty mausoleums of the city of the dead, and the resting place of Eva Perón; drinking a mate, maybe, in the bohemian streets of San Telmo…a middle-aged couple dancing very close; a hot hot tango, and the fiercely rhythmic strains of a bandoneón or Argentinian concertina in the background.



Argentina, land of wild, unrelenting landscapes, pampas, free-ranging cattle, rough-shod gauchos on horseback; the land of the asado, and ranches— a land where you can pick up a few empanadas, or a picada (a platter of charcuterie Italian-style) and a good beer for a song, is not for the faint-hearted. Nor is La Querencia. Chunky, plump and juicy beef prime cuts, Argentine Black Angus ribeye, tenderloin, sirloin, and a majestic, sizzling parrillada… a major work of carefully fired earthy artistry… take centre stage here. But while Argentinian meat is the menu's backbone and centrepiece… non-meat-eaters are equally honoured by an interesting, varied array of starters, small plates and mains, infused with the flavours, flair and culinary legacy laid down by mainly Southern Italians and historic migration.

Amidst the joy and glamour of tango, the live rhythms of Piazzolla, people jostling to take photos, we eventually get round to the menus. A platter of Empanadas is a very promising start. We quickly demolish all three: a caprese (fat with sweet tomatoes, mozzarella and feta); a humita, creamy and smooth, sweetcorn spiced with cinnamon and fragrant with fresh basil; and the reigning queen of the empanada world, a classic tucumana which oozes soft minced meat in a rich earthy gravy. How light, slight and flaky the pastry is— its role to balance, contain and complement. My only regret is that we do not order a platter of five.

Nothing evokes Hispanic tradition more than a blood sausage and so we ordered a Morcilla from the list of small dishes, the picoteo selection; and though the Gambas al Ajillo, the Croquetas and the crusty Provolone are strong contenders, tradition wins out and the morcilla, lighter and less demanding than any Stornoway variation, is indeed crumbly and gentle; paired with an Aubergine Steak topped with mozzarella, gloriously sizzling and hearty, both work well together.

I am usually unfussed by a dessert; however, my friend has a sweet tooth and I am no match for her, aided by restaurant patron Ariadne, so I order a Flan. Freshly made that day, it is the lightest, most exquisite Crème Caramel I have eaten in a while. “Do not miss out on anything to do with dulce de leche”—customer comments advise and so we also order a Crêpe… sweet and light. We have no room even for coffee, but the smooth Mendoza Malbec which accompanies my food is memorable; as is the fiery spirit which arrives without my asking and I do not complain. (Anne Pia)

La Querencia Haymarket—
90 Dalry Road, EH11 2AX - 07777671102
Open Mon-Fri 5-10pm, Sat 11am-10pm,
Sun 12-9pm. Lunch Wed-Fri 12-2:30pm
Instagram: @laquerenciauk



Empanada Platters



Parrillada



Tango on elect nights



Great food, great wine and warm Argentine hospitality.

Review: Contini

La Signora of George Street

Sometimes you forget what's on your doorstep.

With much recent attention focused on the east end of Princes Street, Edinburgh's West End can feel as though it has lost a little energy. Yet a series of new openings, including Ottolenghi and The Lyon Public House, could breathe fresh life into the area. Standing proudly among the new kids is Contini, La Signora of George Street. Housed in a former banking hall, it remains one of Edinburgh's most striking dining rooms, with soaring columns, ornate detailing and a romantic Italian aesthetic.

A friend and I are reminded of its charms while stopping for Aperitivo, that most tempting of foodie rituals, ahead of Ottolenghi's opening. The building looks as magnificent as ever and the drinks are faultless, from a perfectly balanced Negroni to an excellent Apricot Margarita.

As it happens, Contini was on the verge of launching their new autumn menu, making a return visit feel apt.



La Signora

What strikes Mr Bite and me when we return for dinner is the restaurant's unwavering commitment to sourcing both Scottish and Italian ingredients and its dedication to seasonality. Trends come and go, but Contini remains steadfast in its belief that great food is rooted in exceptional produce.

I am also delighted that we are seated at the corner table below the John Bellany painting "The Cockenzie Cafe", which has a direct connection to the Contini family. It depicts the café run by Carina Contini's family in Cockenzie, East Lothian, reflecting the Italian-Scottish café culture that shaped generations of immigrant families.

We could happily disappear down a rabbit hole discussing the differing olive oils, aged balsamics and vincotto (cooked grape must) but that would require a much longer essay, so for now, you'll have to infer the extraordinary attention to detail from what follows.

I begin with the best way to enjoy an Italian meal in October, New Season Figs with hazelnuts, Capezzana extra virgin olive oil, fresh ricotta and eight-year-old vincotto. The refreshing fruit, creamy cheese and crunchy nuts combine to create autumn on a plate. Meanwhile, Mr Bite devours 18 Months aged San Daniele DOP Prosciutto served with cantaloupe melon and La Marina extra virgin olive oil. The complex flavour of the cured ham is perfectly balanced by the palate-cleansing freshness of the fruit.

Main courses see us going somewhat overboard. I cannot resist the opportunity to enjoy proper Creamy Polenta with 24-month-aged Parmigiano Reggiano DOP and garlic-sautéed king oyster mushrooms. This is Italian comfort food at its finest, with thick slices of mushroom cooked with thyme and salt until they develop a meaty depth and texture. Mr Bite can only sigh with pleasure as he tucks into Porchetta e Fagioli stuffed with that revered Italian vegetable, fennel, and finished with crispy sage. These dishes draw on the peasant traditions of cucina povera, delivering classic seasonal comfort food.

There is also Homemade Ravioli stuffed with burrata and 24-month-aged Parmigiano Reggiano DOP, served in a butter sauce with porcini soil and shaved black truffle. It is pasta heaven on a plate. I silently promise myself a small treat in the near future: a return visit to enjoy this dish alone with a glass of Italian red.

By dessert, we are stuffed to the gills, so we share Torta Cioccolato, a 70% cocoa chocolate torta served with Katy Rodger's crème fraîche and sour cherry compote. The result is a beautifully balanced combination of richness and fruit, the sour cherries complementing the deep notes of dark chocolate, while the crème fraîche is quite simply the most voluptuous, luxurious cream imaginable.



Uncompromising sourcing and seasonality remain the bedrock of everything Contini does. For me, the restaurant sits comfortably within Edinburgh's top tier of establishments that hold firm to such principles. Like Rosario Sartore at Locanda de Gusti and Fred Berkmiller at L'Escargot Bleu, the Contini team cooks according to their roots. They have a clear philosophy and refuse to compromise it. In a dining scene increasingly driven by novelty, there is something hugely reassuring about that. (Sharon Wilson)

Contini George Street — 103 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 3ES - 0330 164 9385 Opening hours: Mon to Thu 9am-11pm, Fri 9am-11.30pm, Sat 10am-11.30pm, Sun 10am-11pm.



Creamy Polenta with King Yester Mushroom



Contini Festive Italian Menu



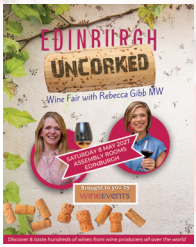
San Daniele DOP Prosciutto

Ethical Festive Gift Guide

Between the rush of December and the pressure to find “the perfect present,” it’s easy for our good intentions to slip. The season can be a challenging time to put our values into practice, yet choosing gifts with a low or positive impact on the planet can be meaningful. Here are some foodie ideas to consider:

- Giving a donation to charity or buying gifts at charity shops
- Finding inventive ways to wrap presents, you can use recycled paper, cloth, boxes, bags, ribbons, tea towels, beeswax wraps, sheet music.
- Give a restaurant gift voucher.
- Treat your family and friends to a night out, a cooking class or an experience. Preferably local.
- Give gifts of organic and/or locally produced food and drink.
- Give your family and friends homemade jam, chutneys, jellies, cakes or truffles as presents.
- Serve organic and /or locally produced food and drink at your Christmas parties.
- Avoid using disposable cups, plates and cutlery and products with an unnecessary amount of packaging.

Looking for a memorable experience to give to the wine enthusiast in your life? **Edinburgh Uncorked Wine Festival** returns to the Assembly Rooms on George Street on Saturday 8 May 2027, offering a day of discovery, tasting and learning. Guests can enjoy unlimited samples from hundreds of wines, meet producers and explore exciting new favourites from around the world. Award-winning wine writer and Master of Wine Rebecca Gibb MW will join founder Diana Thompson throughout the day, adding expert insight to the experience. Better still, Bite readers can enjoy an exclusive 25% discount on a pair of tickets, details at www.bite-magazine.com.



This award-winning Islay spirit is an excellent choice for those looking to support Scottish food and drink. Produced by Islay's first rum distillery in the restored Old Lemonade Factory in Port Ellen, **The Original Islay Rum Barrel Aged** combines exceptional craftsmanship with a strong sense of place. Its Great Taste 2026 three-star accolade, awarded to just 2% of entries, makes it a memorable gift for discerning drinkers, while supporting an independent Scottish producer committed to creating a distinctive island spirit.

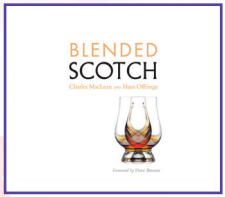




Skip the clutter and give an experience this Christmas. After swapping corporate life for the kitchen, Edinburgh chef Kevin McPadden now runs **Gringo Supperclub** full-time, hosting intimate eight-course dinners inspired by his travels through Mexico and Peru. Guests arrive as strangers and leave with full stomachs, new friends and a memorable night to talk about. Also supports a small local biz! Vouchers available.



The Big Cheese has a range of Hampers and they will let you select from a list of eight signature cheeses. The hampers are available in three sizes, for two, four, or six people and include artisan crackers and chutneys, with the larger sizes including house wines and premium Great Glen venison chorizo. Prices start from £45 and can be ordered online until Sunday 13th December. All orders must be collected in person from 27 Broughton Street between Friday 18th December and Tuesday 22nd December.



For the whisky lover who values heritage and craftsmanship, **Blended Scotch** by Charles MacLean and Hans Offringa is a thoughtful Christmas gift. Combining expert insight, fascinating stories and stunning photography, this beautifully produced hardback celebrates the often-overlooked art of blended Scotch whisky, making it an ideal present for everyone from curious newcomers to dedicated enthusiasts.(£30, Birlinn).

Rosevear Tea is a local business comprising three loose leaf tea shops (thus avoiding micro plastics) in Broughton Street, Bruntsfield Place and Clerk Street together with an online shop. They have hundreds of teas to choose from plus refillable caddies and other tea-related gifts.



BISCUITS is the perfect gift for bakers, food lovers and anyone who appreciates beautiful publishing. It is the latest book from Edinburgh cook, stylist and creative Jess Elliott. Celebrating the rituals, memories and simple pleasures that surround baking, it combines thoughtfully crafted recipes with Elliott's signature aesthetic. Produced independently and designed to be treasured, it's the sort of gift that will see flour-dusted pages and regular returns to the kitchen long after Christmas is over.



We are big fans of giving books as presents and **The Cookbook Shop** opened in March 2026 to showcase the incredible diversity, ingenuity, and artistry of cookbooks and food writing broadly, and lesser-known cuisines and creators in particular. It is currently the only bookshop in Scotland dedicated to food and cooking. Find them at 19a Haddington Place at the top of Leith Walk.



For a gift that supports sustainable agriculture and puts growers first, **CrowdFarming** offers an alternative to traditional Christmas hampers. The platform connects consumers directly with farmers across Europe, allowing you to adopt trees, vines or beehives, and receive seasonal produce straight from the source. By cutting out intermediaries and encouraging responsible farming practices, CrowdFarming helps support fairer incomes for producers while reducing food waste.





Bite contributor Vivian Maeda runs regular foraging walks and can be found on Facebook at **VM Nutrition**. Buy an experience and learn how to eat nature's bounty.

From Aiket and Arran Brie to Rainton Tomme and Strathearn scottish cheese has much to offer. Buy any of them for a great Christmas treat or go one step further and gift a course at the newly established **Scottish Cheese Academy**. Led by Affineur Tanny Gill, he founded the academy in 2026 as a way to build a dedicated professional education pathway from foundation level through to specialist qualifications. Courses include a live masterclass The Scottish Cheese Renaissance and the beginner friendly course The Secrets of Scottish Cheese.





For a Christmas gift with genuine sustainability credentials, the **Hebridean Cream Liqueur** from Isle of Mull Cheese is a thoughtful choice. Crafted using spirit distilled from surplus whey produced during the cheesemaking process, this rich cream liqueur gives new life to what was once a by-product. Made on the family-run Sgriob-ruadh Farm, where a circular economy underpins production, it reflects a commitment to using every resource the land provides. The liqueur has an alcohol content of 17% and comes in a 70cl bottle, offering a smooth, sweet, and creamy taste ideal for sipping or mixing into cocktails such as White Russians and Flat White Martinis.



A festive favourite with a playful twist, **Pickering's Gin Christmas Baubles** return for 2026 featuring three handcrafted flavours: Winter Berry, Blood Orange and Strawberry & Black Pepper. The decorative baubles double as miniature gin gifts, making them ideal for Secret Santa exchanges, stocking fillers or a festive treat for the gin lover in your life. This year, a handful of lucky customers will discover one of three hidden Golden Baubles, with prizes including a year's supply of Pickering's Gin worth more than £400. Available exclusively through the Summerhall Distillery website, the gift pack costs £15 and is available while stocks last.



Sea Change Wines offers a range of vegan-friendly reds that combine quality winemaking with environmental credentials. From the rich, velvety new Mendoza Malbec to the characterful Southern Italian Negroamaro, these bottles make thoughtful gifts for wine lovers who appreciate flavour as much as sustainability. Beyond the wine itself, Sea Change has raised more than €750,000 for ocean conservation and has removed unnecessary plastic from its packaging, using lighter-weight bottles, plant-based closures and labels partly made from grape waste. seachangewine.com.



For the coffee enthusiast on your Christmas list, **Dear Green Coffee Roasters** combines exceptional quality with a strong commitment to sustainability. The Glasgow-based roastery was recently recognised at the Scottish Food & Drink Excellence Awards for its sustainability achievements and continues to champion ethical sourcing through long-term relationships with coffee producers. Alongside specialty coffees, Dear Green offers a variety of gifts, from coffee subscriptions and brewing equipment to gift sets.



Review: The Murrayfield Bar & Dining

Sports bar meets neighbourhood dining at Scotch Corner

Pubs are enjoying something of a resurgence. Milnes and The Beehive have had a glow-up, The Lyon Pub has arrived on George Street complete with pianos and a pie window, and now this sports-loving stalwart has received an expensive-sounding polish of its own.

Bite photographer Simone and Mrs Bite head along to sample the menu and find a warm, welcoming space with friendly staff, a bustling open pass, a good standard of food and a cocktail list that deserves attention in its own right. General Manager Donald looks after us throughout the evening and chats about the new "Scotch Corner" identity along with the bespoke match-day menus available for rugby and football fixtures.

To start, Simone chooses the Dressed Crab on Sourdough, topped with an abundance of fresh, glossy leaves, while I opt for the Smoked Salmon Galette, generously topped with herby cream cheese, pickled red onion, mixed seeds and crispy capers. Both dishes hit the mark and, judging by what was passing through the open kitchen, the selection of small plates would warrant a return visit on its own.



Donald, General Manager



Pub Classics

Being in a sports pub, we harbour mild concerns about whether the portions will be too substantial for us. I order the "small" Fish 'n' Chips which turns out to be anything but small. The fish is excellent, with a light, crisp batter, although the chips are a little underpowered and somewhat peely-wally in appearance.

Simone wins the main course round with the Braised Scotch Beef Pie, made using meat from Midlothian's Edgefield Craft Butcher. Served with creamy mashed potato, seasonal vegetables and rich gravy, it is everything a pie should be. Simone particularly praises the quality of the beef and the beautifully short pastry.

So engrossed are we in conversation that we completely miss the kitchen closing and lose our chance to sample dessert. Fortunately, the cocktail menu comes to the rescue. I choose the Highland Sour, served in a satisfyingly weighty glass. The balance is spot on and the drink wouldn't be out of place in one of Edinburgh's leading cocktail bars. Across the table, Simone enjoys an Edinburgh 75 comprising gin, St-Germain, prosecco and lemon.

The Murrayfield Bar & Dining is exactly the sort of place I'd happily drop into for a meal, a drink, or to soak up the atmosphere on a match day. The welcome is genuine, and the operation feels well thought through. A solid, dependable local that successfully bridges the gap between sports bar and neighbourhood dining room. (Sharon Wilson)

The Murrayfield Bar & Dining — 57-59 Roseburn Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5NQ 0131 297 7145

Review: The Voyage of Buck

Ten Years of Buck Vs Four Hours of Bitches

Today, these Bitches are toasting The Voyage of Buck's 10th Birthday (Seriously?? Where has the time, and one's liver function actually gone???) With a new, award-winning chef, plus dazzling autumn menu, what better excuse for one of our legendary four-hour lunches? In other words: DING DONG!

We begin at our fave table, obvs, complete with lighty-up cocktail sign, and a saucy libation called Sun Bear— a sublime mix of spiced rum, whisky, Campari, pineapple and lime. Hmmm… fabulous!

We're not even Campari people, but three rounds in, this wonderfully bittersweet cocktail with a zesty finish, has made us absolute converts. And of course, strangely thirsty…

But let's talk about Buck. The fictional adventurer who's inspired many an exciting flavour, impeccable atmosphere, and a decor we LOVE! A mash up of Victorian and art deco, with curiosities and tropical wallpaper-a-go-go.



We're also delighted to say— as we pop open our first Vinho Verde, and "nibble" on the lush homemade focaccia— that the menu is just as eccentric, and even more enticing.

Clearly, the arrival of head chef Nathan Graham (formerly of Purslane and Dùthchas) brings serious invention to the table, marrying Scottish flavours with European influence and the odd unexpected twist.

First round: Cullen Skink Bon Bons, with smoked haddock, toasted oat, whisky, and a cheeky pea sauce. Now this— boasting all the warmth of the classic dish— is deconstruction at its best Bitches.

Even better is the Ox Cheek Gnocchi with harissa, manchego, and the herbaceous joy that is beef fat chermoula. Oosh. Lavish on the ox, wonderfully tender, a little chilli, then lightly fried. This intense dish is breathtaking.

Obviously, Nathan has a fine line to walk— gastro pub versus his skills in fine dining— but he navigates it so deliciously! Plus, the portions are beyond generous. But the biggest surprise of all?

Well, for these Bitches, that would be…
Fries with CHICKEN SALT.

This umami-packed seasoning is practically a religion Down Under, but here in Scotland it's more elusive. Naturally, Nathan makes his own, bless him, and added to the humble french fry: IT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE!


Starters


Mains


Desserts

Several bowls later, there's also more Vinho to be tossed back, honey-drizzled Aubergine Fritters to demolish, and oh yes… our mains.

The Pork Cheek Ragu, layered with lasagne, spinach pistou and pine nuts is again bursting with unexpected flavours. Love, love, LOVE.

And then there's Venison, lightly charred, beautifully pink inside, with braised chicory, turnip fondant, and fig chutney delivering gorgeous bursts of sweetness. Perfection.

Now into our fourth hour, we're totes full, but... another cocktail?? Well, don't mind if we do. Say hello to: Spiced Vietnamese Coffee, a dangerously drinkable mix of Mount Gay rum, coconut, condensed milk, coffee and WOW.

While it's easily dessert in a glass, we're instead calling it a cheeky "palate cleanser". After all, there's still the Custard Tart, Sticky Toffee Pudding, and at least two bottles of Primitivo demanding our immediate attention.

So, after ten glorious years, Voyage of Buck remains at the top of its game. A hugely inventive menu, quirky decor, and fabulous staff make it an experience to be savoured, never rushed. Not that these long-lunching Bitches EVER would!
(Derek and Isaac AKA The Social Bitches)

The Voyage of Buck —
29-31 William Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7NG
Mon-Thu 12pm-12am / Fri-Sat 12pm-1am / Sun 12-11pm



Happy Birthday Buck-a-neers!


Fabulous Decor



Just one more cheeky cocktail...

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Wine Fair with Rebecca Gibb MW



SATURDAY 8 MAY 2027
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Review: Brasas by The Peruvian

Peru on a plate

Let me start by saying I am a creature of habit. Once I find something I like, I stick with it. Which is why I frequent Edinburgh Street Food on a near-weekly basis. It is my local haunt, a vibrant and friendly place to stop for a quick bite before or after a movie. I tend to eat the same foods time and again, but this is why I am so glad I write for Bite Magazine — because without it, I may have never tried Brasas by The Peruvian.

Now, don't get me wrong — I've always thought it sounded and looked delicious — and I am beyond excited to have found a new favourite at my old favourite. Brasas by the Peruvian is brimming with fresh, citrus-led Peruvian classics with a modern twist. Created by Carlo Carozzi after years of missing the delicious food of his home country, his menu is inspired by the dishes he grew up eating, many made by his grandmother, some he calls "Peru on a plate".

My friend Riley and I arrive at Edinburgh Street Food, grateful for its warm and neon embrace on a windy Edinburgh night. What surprises me is that everything on Brasas' menu sounds amazing to me — usually there is something I won't go for — but that's not the case tonight. Which is a problem, because I'm stuck trying to figure out what to try. Instantly, I know I must try the Arroz Chaufa, a Peruvian-style fried rice, as fried rice is one of my favourite foods.

Riley and I opt for the Arroz Chaufa with chicken, the Smoked Pork with avocado uchucuta sauce, the Beetroot & Feta Salad, and the Ultimate Salchipapa, which had me at 'hot dogs'. Each dish is as delicious as it sounds — a delectable combination of carbs and meat, drizzled with zingy and moreish sauces.

Afterwards, I speak with the lovely man who cooked our delicious meal and gush over the Arroz Chaufa with him. With a big smile, he explains the rice tastes even better when ordered with smoky pork, as the flavour seeps into the rice. I know for next time and am already craving it again!
(Bronwyn Eley)

Brasas by The Peruvian — Edinburgh Street Food, Leith Street, Edinburgh EH1 3AU Open Sun-Thurs 12–9pm, Fri-Sat 12–10pm @theperuvianscotland



48-hour Marinated Rotisserie Chicken



Carlo Carozzi

Seasonal books for food lovers



A chat with Liz Bryson
The Cookbook Shop
Edinburgh

Books are a pleasure all year round, but there's something about Christmas when books take on a whole new meaning.

There is something deeply nostalgic, rooted in childhood, about books. My mother still tells the tale of, as a child, discovering two Annuals (one being The Girls' Crystal) in a bedroom trunk. She naughtily unwrapped them, read them and then rewrapped them hoping her own mother wouldn't notice. Such was the excitement about the Christmas Annuals, that she couldn't wait until the 25th. One book featured a girl making steak pie and my mother said to herself, "When I grow up, I want to make steak pie". Many of us treasure memories like that.

Things have moved on and we're now blessed with an incredible array of books. We are even luckier to have The Cookbook Shop in Edinburgh, a sweetie shop for food lovers, packed with beautifully curated titles. It's a very special place to lose yourself in (they also sell quirky food-related gifts and run a brilliant programme of events).



So, to inspire your seasonal shopping and reading list, I had a chat with co-owner Liz Bryson.

What makes the perfect Christmas book gift and why?

Artistry, specificity, and nostalgia. For reasons we need not enumerate here, beautiful gifts made with human brains and hearts are more sought after than ever. A good cookbook should combine sumptuous visuals

that build anticipation for the dishes with clear, confidently presented instructions that demonstrate expertise and passion. The best also provide a warm feeling of connection with others that only food can provide, whether with the people you share meals with or the author themselves.

What are your top 5 recommendations for book gifts and why?

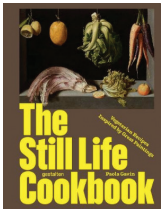
***The Still Life Cookbook* by Paola Gavin**
This one has an obvious appeal for those who appreciate art and art history, but it's also just a beautiful coffee table (or kitchen counter) book for anyone who has ever seen a painting of a lavish feast and wanted to taste it.

***Obsessed with the Best* by Ella Quittner**
Quittner's scientific quest for perfection is deeply enjoyable even if you never cook a single recipe out of it (though you should—her carrot recipe takes the basic veg to heights we would have never thought possible). It's fascinating to watch an expert obsess over their area of expertise. The meticulous pictorial charts are quite satisfying to behold. Best for the slightly nerdy, fans of The Food Lab, and those after precision in their cooking.

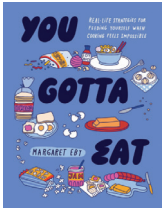
***You Gotta Eat: Real-Life Strategies for Feeding Yourself When Cooking Feels Impossible* by Margaret Eby**
The stocking-stuffer-sized *You Gotta Eat* is one of the best books ever written about feeding yourself when cooking seems out of the question. Simply find the chapter that best captures your current state—from 'can barely open a packet' to 'could perhaps manage to chop something'.

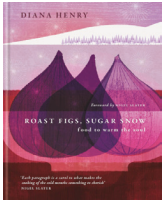
***Roast Figs, Sugar Snow* by Diana Henry**
In the UK, winter cooking can feel like whiplash: there's plenty of rich, sugary feasting, but also a lot of meagre, uninspiring produce that lacks the zest of the warmer months. Here, Henry makes a compelling case that eating in winter can also be colourful, wholesome, complex—though, yes, often smothered in cheese. Very few cookbooks treat this season as tenderly, with as much affection, as *Roast Figs*. An excellent gift for your friend who dreads winter or anyone who'd appreciate dinner party (or just dinner) inspiration from December to March.

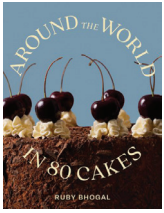
***Around the World in 80 Cakes* by Ruby Bhogal**
Cakes are an uncomplicated delight, and this is a dream cookbook for those interested in both beautiful bakes and cross-cultural exploration. It is full of lush cream swoops and multicoloured decorations that anyone would enjoy perusing on Christmas morning.











Sponsored by the Cookbook Shop

What are your customers enjoying most/asking you for just now?

Books about soups and stews.
This one's straightforward: it's soup season, and it's easy to fall into a rut with soups we make at home. Luckily, there are quite a few great sources of inspiration: *Korean Soups* by Clara Lee & Eddo Kim; *Lozhka: Eastern European Soups, Stews & Other Things We Eat with a Spoon* by Alissa Timoshkina; *Healing Herbal Soups: Boost Your Immunity and Weather the Seasons with Traditional Chinese Recipes* by Genevieve Wong & Rose Cheung.

Books arranged by season.
Whether it's to daydream about sunnier times or to feel closer to nature, seasonal cookbooks are very in demand. We generally recommend *Six Seasons: A New Way with Vegetables* by Joshua McFadden, *The Modern Cook's Year* by Anna Jones, or *Recipes from The Jam Shack II: Preserving the Seasons at Knightsward Farm* by Fiona Audsley.

Books related to specific media.
Popular titles in this category include Salvador Dalí's *Les dîners de Gala, The Rocky Horror Cookbook* by Kim Laidlaw, *Cooking with Scorsese* by Hato Studio, and *Sylvia Plath's Tomato Soup Cake* by Bee Wilson.

What do you buy someone whose taste you're not quite sure of but would be a safe bet?

This is one of our favourite customer requests. While it's tempting to go for something general if you're not sure about someone's tastes, there's a good chance you do know enough about them to find a more personal gift. Are they...

• ...enthusiastic about cooking, an adventurous eater, or do they work in food?
Try a deep-dive, single-subject book, e.g *Flavorama* by Arielle Johnson; *Spiced* by Priya Mani; *The Flavour Thesaurus* by Niki Segnit.

• ...raving about a particular restaurant, or a holiday food?
We might have a book from that very establishment, or another restaurant in the same city.

• ...vegetarian, vegan, or gluten-free?
Great new titles include *Tamu: A Journey Through Africa's Plant-Based Cuisine* by Jane Nshuti and *The Art of Gluten-Free Bread* by Aran Goyoaga.

• ...always hosting?
It's hard to beat *Nothing Fancy* by Alison Roman or *The Dinner Party: A Chef's Guide to Home Entertaining* by Martin Benn & Vicki Wild.

Interview by Fiona Richmond, Head of Regional Food, Scotland Food & Drink

Sponsored by the Cookbook Shop

19A Haddington Pl, Leith Walk Edinburgh EH7 4AF
www.thecookbookshop.co.uk

Review: McLarens on the Corner

Christmas comes to the Corner – with a little Alpine magic

Guy Fawkes has hardly had time to fall back to earth and here we are, diving headlong into the Christmas Spirit.

So, in the appropriate location of Holy Corner, Edinburgh's four-ways to heaven by virtue of a church on each of the quartet of streets that meet in this Southside location, we're diving into McLarens on the Corner for a spot of seasonal seasoning.

The Signature Pub Group took the clever step of acquiring a batch of alpine-style cable car pods during the pandemic. They've not yodelled a backward step since.

And why would they? These repurposed gondolas have found a rather different après-ski existence in Morningside. No expensive lift passes, questionable skiing technique or falling off a button lift required.

Christmas at McLarens is about more than novelty transport. The festive menu, available until 31 December, offers a traditional selection with a few twists along the way.

We're treated to a selection, delivered as fast as the high-tech car of the same name. Vroom. Never mind, the multi-screens inside give enthusiasts a sporting chance of catching the festive fixtures in style.

Starters Sweet Potato and Chilli Soup, Gin-glazed Smoked Salmon, Chicken Liver Pâté and a Goat's Cheese and Beetroot Tart.

There's no motoring connection by the way. McLarens is based on the far less racy Victorian businessman and civic leader who made his name in Edinburgh, and it lives on at McLarens on the Corner.

The canapés on offer give a flavour of Roast Turkey, pork stuffing, roast potatoes, and maple-glazed root vegetables. Of course, Brussels sprouts and pigs in blankets constitute the inevitable seasonal heavyweights. Sit down diners can embellish their credentials with Braised Beef with potato fondant and Bordelaise sauce. We had the Pan-Roasted Salmon and a Butternut Squash and Mushroom Wellington.

McLarens also caters for larger Christmas parties, with private dining options for those whose seasonal celebrations require a little separation from the rest of humanity.

It's the Alpine pods that remain the conversation starter. Edinburgh winters can be a fairly damp affair, so the prospect of a cosy mountain retreat without having to negotiate the A9, never mind the Alps, has obvious attractions.

All told, McLarens offers a welcome combination of seasonal fare, convivial surroundings and a little novelty. It isn't trying to reinvent Christmas, and nor does it need to. Good food, good company and somewhere with a bit of character are quite enough. (Simon Walton)

McLaren's on the Corner —
8 Morningside Rd, Edinburgh EH10 4DD





The Frugal Foodie

Chez Bernard — A home from home at the Shore

Sometimes the universe sends you a sign. At least that's what Isla and Jonathan felt when their search for a location for their new wine bar brought up a vacancy just off Bernard Street on the Shore in Leith. Bernard was Jonathan's grandfather, a great inspiration behind Jonathan's career and their new venture for his love of welcoming everyone around the table, sharing food and wine. They secured the space, which was previously Victor Hugo, and there could only be one name…

"So much of what inspired this place comes from my memories of my grandfather. That's the warmth and hospitality I grew up with, and something we'd love to share with everyone who visits us here on The Shore." Jonathan explains."What we'd really love to bring is that relaxed French wine bar atmosphere. Somewhere people can feel at home, whether they fancy popping in for a glass of wine or two, having something small to share, or staying for a long lunch that turns into an afternoon, or even an evening! That's something I've always loved about French culture: taking your time, enjoying food and wine, and not feeling rushed."



Mr. FF with Isla

The warm welcome is apparent as soon as you arrive at the spacious yet cosy bar. Furry friends are also very much welcome, indeed, you might even meet 'The Manager', Jack Russell Rocky.

Yet the reason Chez Bernard has made it to my Frugal Foodie column is that other feature of French food culture— an egalitarian attitude to the cost of dining. At lunchtime during the week, each of the Plats Chauds are available for a very reasonable £8 each, including classics like Croque Monsieur, Quiche Lorraine, Buckwheat Galette and Smoked salmon tartine.

We go in the evening as we are keen to try the 'Formule Bernard' a 500ml carafe of wine with either a Medium planchette or 10 Oysters for £40. We opt for the former and the board is overflowing as it arrives— loaded high with Italian and French cheese and charcuterie, pickles, grapes and chutneys. The house red is a very quaffable Merlot Syrah from Ardèche, France. The cheeses particularly impress: a super creamy Délice de Bourgogne contrasts to the spice of the Tomme aux Fleurs and picante Bleu d'Auvergne, while the mild Morbier pairs well with everything. Isla explains the board in detail, enthusiasm betraying her love for the produce, which is mostly sourced directly from France.

This is your sign to hit up Chez Bernard for an authentically French convivial long lunch or relaxed evening that won't break the bank. The recent addition of Raclette at £30 per person means it certainly won't be long till my next visit. Hopefully see you there. (Diana Turner)

Chez Bernard —
38 Shore, Leith, Edinburgh EH6 6QU
Open 12pm until late 0131 564 0358
www.chezbernard.co.uk

Review: The Bonnington, Leith

I Moved to Scotland for Pubs Like This

Half the reason I moved to Scotland, from Australia, was for the epic pubs, so I was thrilled to be invited to sample the menu at The Bonnington, a well-kept local in the Leith area of Edinburgh with the Peruvian Carlo Carozzi patron at the helm of the operation.

Riley and I arrive ready to feast. Our lovely server has only been working there for three days, but he tells us that he was a regular well before joining the ranks. He gives us his personal tips for both the drink and food menus, and we heed his advice when it comes to taking full advantage of Wings Wednesday!

We unashamedly over-order and know our food needs to be staggered, as our booth for four is not big enough. The second I take a bite of the spicy and juicy Famous Korean Ketchup Chicken Wings, I know we've ordered right. The menu has a wonderfully varied range, and I take pleasure in flitting between the dense and powerful Blaggis Bon Bons (that's Black Pudding x Haggis — a Scottish staple), and the fresh zing of the Bruschetta with fresh pesto, Pico de Gallo and shaved parmesan.



Blaggis Bon Bons



Famous Korean Ketchup Wings

There are at least four mains that catch my eye straight away, but Riley makes a good point: we must sample the pub classics. So, we order two such dishes: the Steak and Ale Pie and the Bangers and Mash.

The pie arrives with a golden pastry lid giving way to a deeply savoury filling, while the flavoursome snags from Findlays of Portobello are paired with exceptionally creamy, buttery mash on a bed of rich onion gravy. Now, my dad is English and, while his cooking repertoire is somewhat limited, pub classics are his speciality. My standards are high going in, but these more than win my approval. Sorry Dad, you have some competition. Judging by the lack of complaints from across the table, Riley is equally impressed.

Nearly in a meat-coma by the end of our meal, we both clock the Summer Pavlova on the dessert menu. A perfectly refreshing way to end our dining experience, almost as if the cook knew exactly what we'd need.

It's always overwhelming when people ask for pub recommendations in Edinburgh. The city is blessed with no shortage of great boozers, each with its own loyal following. But after just one evening at The Bonnington, I can confidently say it has earned a place near the top of my list. Great food, warm service and an atmosphere that feels instantly familiar make it the kind of pub you'll return to time and again. (Bronwyn Eley)

The Bonnington —
284 Bonnington Rd, Edinburgh EH6 5BE
Open Mon – Thurs 3pm–12am, Fri – Sat 12pm–1am, Sun 12pm–12am

What's in Season: The Terrine

This month, Mrs Bite steps in for Lea Harris.

If you're reading this article, you'll have seen our front cover and the content packed inside these pages. Hopefully you've noticed the strong ethical and local focus that runs throughout the magazine. It's an approach that's central to everything we do, and it was this guiding ethos that inspired our festive cover theme this year: the humble terrine.

A terrine may be a classic French dish, but it is also one of the most versatile and practical additions to any seasonal table. It can be made ahead of time, adapted to dietary preferences, showcases local produce, and can incorporate foraged ingredients.

Think about it. Whether you're hosting a party, serving a starter, preparing a leisurely lunch or simply enjoying Christmas Eve in front of the telly, a terrine fits the bill. It's also economical. It goes a long way, keeps well in the fridge, can be made with ingredients close to hand.

When I began thinking about featuring a terrine there was one chef who sprang to mind, Fred Berkmiller of L'Escargot Bleu. Fred hails from Tours in France's Loire Valley, an area renowned for its gastronomy, bustling food markets and long tradition of charcuterie, pâtés and seasonal cooking. Historically, meat and game would have been the ingredients of choice, sourced fresh from local markets.



Terrine — the ultimate festive food

But while this dish is steeped in tradition, it also lends itself to contemporary variations whether you're vegan, vegetarian, pescatarian or a dedicated carnivore. It's also the perfect canvas for seasonal ingredients from cranberries and nuts to fragrant, spiky winter herbs.

For pairing possibilities think chutneys, pickles, relishes, crusty bread, toasted brioche or oatcakes; sparkling and still wines or cocktails.

Perhaps that's the beauty of the dish. It bridges tradition and modernity, elegance and practicality. At a time of year when we're all looking for dishes that deliver maximum impact with minimum fuss, it might just be the ultimate festive food.

What Else is in my Basket

Goose, pheasant, rabbit, turkey, wild duck, venison, clams, cockle, hake, langoustines, lobster, mussels, oysters, razor clams, sea bass, sprats, wild salmon, winkles, beetroot, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celeriac, horseradish, Jerusalem artichoke, kale, kohlrabi, leeks, parsnips, salsify, swede, truffles, winter squash, apples, blood oranges, chestnuts, clementines, cranberries, dates, figs, forced rhubarb, pomegranates, satsumas, Seville oranges, tangerines, walnuts, Bûche de Noël, Christmas cake, Cumberland sauce, gingerbread, mincemeat, paneforte, panettone, rum butter, Stollen, trifle.

Bite Festive Quiz

1. “Fricy” was a predicted food trend for 2026 - but what is the word a mash-up of?

2. What is a pickle puffer?

3. Bake Off has a well-established history of scandals. Match the scandal to the person/people:

1. Baked Alaska in the bin
2. Custard theft
3. Accidentally revealing the winner before the final
4. £10,000 worth of bets placed on the 2015 winner
5. Revealing on radio the name of the leaving contestant before the show aired

a. Production staff and crew
b. Mary Berry
c. Iain/Diana
d. Prue Leith
e. Howard/Deborah

4. What Scottish breakfast classic is part of a bid for Unesco recognition on the Inventories of Living Heritage in the UK?

5. Which of these is not a layer in Morrison’s Festive Triple sandwich?

a. Chicken, stuffing and cranberry
b. Christmas pudding patty
c. Prawn cocktail
d. Cheddar, Wensleydale and chutney cheeseboard

6. Hispi, red, Dutch and Chinese are all types of which vegetable?

7. What festive drink is thought to have originated as a medieval posset used for cold and flu?

8. How many Tunnock’s caramel wafers are made each week?

9. Match these Christmas themed pasta shapes to their meaning:

1. Capellini
2. Tortelloni
3. Stellini
4. Cavatappi
5. Natalini

a. little stars
b. corkscrews
c. little cakes
d. angel hair
e. Christmas

10. Stanley Tucci visited Edinburgh in the summer, eating his way around town. But which New Town restaurant that opened in 2024 did he name his favourite?

Merry Christmas to all and to all a good Bite!

QUIZ By Rachel Edwards

ANSWERS

1. Fruity and spicy. Mexican and Thai cuisines are thought to offer the best examples and it includes combinations like lime and chilli salt with mango or pineapple. 2. A puffer jacket filled with pickles and pickle juice, made to promote KFC’s ‘Pickle Mania’. mann in March. 3. 1C, 2E, 3D, 4A, 5B 4. The morning roll. Paisley-based food researcher Peter Gilchrist launched a campaign to have the act of ordering a morning roll recognised in UNESCO’s 2027 inventories of living heritage in the UK. 5. b. The sandwich offers a 3 course dinner but sadly (or luckily) does not include a dessert layer. However, Morrisons is making amends by offering 2 puddings in one with its Christmas pudding trifle. 6. Cabbage 7. Eggnog. Although the origins and etymology of eggnog aren’t clear, some think it originated as a spiced hot milk drink curdled with alcohol. 8. 7 million and 4.5 million teacakes 9. 1D, 2C, 3A, 4B, 5E 10. Little Capo, where he praised the wine, the cocktails, and in particular the pasta della Nonna.

Restaurants

Argentinian

La Querencia — Family run restaurant with a menu focused on empanadas, steaks, and 'Bodegon' - traditional tavern food suc as stews, pies and hearty dishes of lentils, chorizo, chocolate! There is also a very reasonably priced wine list including Pinot Noir, sparkling wine, Chardonnays, Malbecs and Cabernet Sauvignons. There is also Lemon Beer and Pisco Sours. Look out for regular entertainment nights featuring Tango. ***215 Leith Walk, Edinburgh EH6 8NX - 0131 555 2150 and 45 Dalry Rd, Edinburgh EH11 2BU - 0131 337 4545***

Brasseries & Bistros

Bistro Du Vin — Inside Hotel Du Vin. French-inspired classics such as Moules marinière, Chateaubriand, Crème Brûlée, Scallops Lyonnaise, and much more; all served in a cosy, laidback bistro setting. Open breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner & Sunday brunch. Expert sommeliers have chosen the most quaffable wines from around the world to complement the great food. Enjoy an excellent range of whisky in the 'whisky snug'. Outdoor terrace area. Simply kick back, relax, and enjoy! ***11 Bristo Pl, EH1 1EZ - 0131 285 1479***

Dine — (above the Traverse Theatre) Relaxed mutli award brasserie-style dining and drinking venue in the heart of the city centre. The venue also features a smart cocktail and champagne lounge with classic and innovative drinks served with style. Executive Chef Stuart Muir, (formerly of Harvey Nichols, The Old Course Hotel, St.Andrews, and Michelin-starred), presents dining with Scottish produce at its very best with à la carte and market menus every day. ***Saltire Court (1st floor), 10 Cambridge St, Edinburgh EH1 2ED – 0131 218 1818 email restaurant@dine.scot - dineedinburgh.co.uk***

Dine Craiglockhart — nestled on the bank of the Union Canal, you will find this chic and polished fourth member of the Dine family of restaurants. Open daily 8.30am for breakfasts, coffees, brunch and lunches, and evening meals. Be sure to check out the lunchtime and fixed menus. Mon-Sat 12pm / 6pm; Sun 1pm – 6pm (roast included). ***101B Colinton Road, Edinburgh, EH14 1AL 0131 229 2929 craiglockhart.scot***

Dine Murrayfield — A neighbourhood sibling of Dine in the city centre. Nestled by the Water of Leith near Murrayfield Stadium and open every day for breakfast, brunch, lunch and dinner. Menus are designed by Executive Chef and Award-Winning Chef Stuart Muir. Winner of 'Best Neighbourhood Restaurant 2021', the venue is smart, light and airy with a leafy outlook. ***Dine Murrayfield Limited, 8 Murrayfield Place, Edinburgh, EH12 6AA - 0131 374 4800 - murrayfield.scot | restaurant@murrayfield.scot***

The Tollhouse — Spectacular setting and perched above the Water of Leith in the Canonmills neighbourhood. Relax and watch the river flow from the dining room or sip a sundowner of your choice in the heated outdoor terrace. Bookings are required. ***50 Brandon Terrace, Edinburgh EH3 5BX - 0131 224 2424 - www.tollhouse.scot***

The Walnut — Located down Leith Walk this bijou Bistro has a top-notch seasonal dishes cooked with flair and local produce. The restaurant is tastefully decorated with a warm, welcoming ambience. The menu changes regularly but the signature dessert 'The Walnut Whip' is a must-have permanent feature. Lunch 2 courses £30, 3 courses £34, Wed-Sat 12:30-2pm; Dinner 2 courses £34, 3 courses £38 with canapé and petit four. Tues -Sat 5:30-9pm. ***9 Croall Pl, Leith Walk, Edinburgh EH7 4LT - 0131 281 1236***

French

Bistro Coco — A modern, bright bistro serving seasonal French cooking, including regional dishes and meat, fish and authentic bouillabaisse. Two courses £25, three courses £31. Open Tues–Sun for lunch and dinner. Predominantly French wine list including champagne and Kir Royale. ***32B Broughton St, Edinburgh EH1 3SB - Tel 0131 556 8092 contact@bistrococo.co.uk***

L'escargot bleu — Provenance, sourcing, and sustainability define the menu and cooking style at 'bleu', namely French classics with a Scottish twist. Patron Fred Berkmiller sources ingredients from small-scale traditional producers and local suppliers and grows his own vegetables and herbs at Monkton Garden near Edinburgh. This family-run bistro offers a warm and friendly welcome and a regularly changing produce-driven menu. Fred has a clutch of awards, and his restaurant is certified by Pasture for Life, an organisation that promotes the restorative power and benefits of grazing animals on pasture.
56 Broughton Street, 0131 557 1600 – www.lescargotbleu.co.uk

La P'tite Folie — Informal, bustling bistro with mixed clientele. Favourites include moules frites, steak frites, beef bourguignon, duck etc. Extensive wine list. Two course lunch £19.50 noon-3pm. Dinner à la carte 6-10pm. Closed Sundays & Mondays. Large groups catered for, set dinner available. ***9 Randolph Place, Edinburgh – 0131 225 8678 – laptitefolie.co.uk***

Greek

From Kafeneion to STEKI — Traditional Greek taverna specializing in Cretan cuisine, serving small dishes-mezedakia (everything goes 'in the middle'). What makes Cretan cuisine different? Olive oil, legumes, cheeses, herbs, vegetables, homemade bread (not pitta bread), limited use of meat. Cretan cuisine is one of the healthiest in the world. Neighborhood vibe. Open Tues to Fri 10am-3pm lunch, 5-10pm dinner, Sat 12-3pm lunch, 5-10pm dinner, Sun 12-3pm lunch, 5-8pm dinner. ***52 Coburg Street, Leith, EH6 6HJ, near Royal Yacht Britannia, 01313482919 - kafeneion.tosteki@gmail.com***

Indian

Celestia — A luxury Indian dining spot in Edinburgh's New Town, ideal for occasions, romantic evenings, or business meals. Chef's specials like Kerala CjHilli Garlic Prawns, Butter Chicken and Baby Lamb Vindalooshowcase refined Indian cuisine in an elegant setting. The central location adds to its appeal for upscale yet flexible dining. Celestia promises a sensory journey through India's rich gastronomic landscape. With a perfect rating on TripAdvisor (5*), it's a must-visit for lovers of fine Indian cuisine. Open daily 1–10pm (Fri–Sat till 10:30pm). ***18 Eyre Place, EH3 5EP www.celestiarestaurant.co.uk***

Cilantro — Tucked away in Leith, Cilantro is a warm, family-run Indian restaurant perfect for casual dinners, relaxed date nights, affordable group gatherings or a spontaneous curry craving. Signature dishes offer comforting, authentic flavours. The welcoming atmosphere and BYOB policy with just £1.95 corkage per person make it a great choice for Indian dining with plenty of vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free options. 4.9* rating on TripAdvisor and a loyal following. Open daily 4–10:30pm (Fri–Sat till 11pm). ***4 Albert Place, www.cilantrorestaurant.co.uk***

Italian

Contini — A stunning, vibrant, family-owned restaurant located inside a grand, columned Georgian former banking hall in the heart of Edinburgh's New Town. For nearly 20 years, it has stood as a definitive landmark of authentic Italian-Scottish dining, blending direct Italian market imports with fresh produce grown in the family's own local kitchen garden. ***103 George St, Edinburgh EH2 3ES - +44 330 164 9385***

Japanese

Harajuku Kitchen — Edinburgh's most authentic Japanese restaurant. Awarded one AA Rosette for its outstanding cuisine and sushi which is always prepared with care, understanding and skill, using good quality ingredients. This light, bright and relaxed bistro specializes in small dishes, ideal for sharing, from classics such as Beef Tataki and Chicken Karaage to more unusual delicacies such as Salmon Nanban, Gomadare Salad and Takoyaki. They also offer a range of noodle and Japanese curry dishes and a wide variety of freshly made sushi, sashimi and maki — guaranteed to have you coming for more.
Open Mon-Fri 12-3pm, 5-10pm; Sat-Sun 12-11pm.
10 Gillespie Place – 0131 281 0526 @Harajukukitchen harajukukitchen.co.uk

Our Partners

Luso Asian Cuisine

Macau Kitchen — The UK's only Macanese restaurant, Macau Kitchen celebrates the flavours of the Portuguese spice routes through progressive Luso-Asian cuisine. Exceptional Scottish produce, bold spices, time-honoured family recipes and a menu that changes regularly to reflect the seasons and culinary traditions of Macau, Goa, Malacca and beyond. A genuinely unique gastronomic experience in Edinburgh and beyond. ***93 St Leonard's Street, Edinburgh EH8 9QY 07577 667334 -www.macaukitchen.uk***

Scottish

No. 35 at The Bonham Hotel — Located inside an elegant townhouse hotel tucked away in a leafy, oasis close to the city's bustling west end. European-inspired menu with a distinctively Scottish twist, and it uses the finest local seasonal ingredients. A La Carte Dinner is available on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 6:30pm–9:30pm. The famous Boozy Snoozy lunch is not to be missed! Enjoy 3-courses from the Market Menu and half a bottle of wine for just £40 per person. Served Fri-Sun from 12.30pm-2.30pm. ***35 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh, EH3 7RN - 0131 226 6050 or restaurant@thebonham.com***

Street Food

Brasas by The Peruvian — Serving authentic, award-winning Peruvian street food cooked over open wood and charcoal embers. The fiery menu features 48-hour marinated rotisserie chicken, smoked pork, and iconic stir-fried Lomo Saltado. Founded by Carlo Carozzi, the popular concept evolved from a small Edinburgh Fringe stall into a permanent culinary destination celebrating the vibrant flavours of his homeland. ***Edinburgh Street Food, OMNi Centre, Leith St, EH1 3AU***

Harajuku Street Food — Award-winning chef Kaori Simpson serves up noodles, poke bowls and sushi burritos. ***@streetfoodbyharajuku Edinburgh Street Food, OMNi Centre, Leith St, EH1 3AU***

Bars

The Abbotsford — The city's finest 'island bar'. Est. 1902 specialising in Scottish real ales (8) and malt whiskies (100). Food served all day. Lunch & dinner in the restaurant 'Above'. ***3-5 Rose Street, Edinburgh EH2 2PR – 0131 225 5276 www.theabbotsford.com, or email enquiries@theabbotsford.com***

The Bonnington in Leith — A cosy local neighbourhood pub with food served throughout the day. Enjoy comfort classics made with good Scottish produce. Dive into dishes such as the Mac 'n' Cheese, Bangers and Mash, a range of Chicken Wings, Pulled Pork and Burgers. As well as a selection of beers, wine and spirits there is also the largest Pisco selection in Scotland. The diverse cocktail list is curated by Peruvian owner Carlo Carozzi, formerly of bars like The Voodoo Rooms and Dragonfly. Bar shows matches of Champions League and Rugby on the screens. ***Open every day noon-midnight - 0131 554 5824***

The Cumberland Bar — Spacious New Town local, lots of rooms and large beer garden. Eight real ales on tap. Plus a good wine list. Food all day Sat & Sun, Mon-Fri from 4pm. ***1 Cumberland Street, Edinburgh EH3 6RT – 0131 558 3134 – www.cumberlandbar.co.uk or email enquiries@cumberlandbar.co.uk***

The Guildford Arms — Edinburgh's finest real ale bar. Established in 1898, this bar boasts 10 real ale taps mainly Scottish, 13 keg beers/ciders, good wine and whisky lists. Food served all day in the Victorian bar or boutique 'Gallery' in the restaurant above. ***1-5 West Register Street, Edinburgh 0131 556 4312 guildfordarms.com, enquiries@guildfordarms.com***

Ryrie's Bar — Lovingly restored iconic bar next to Haymarket Station, established in 1868. Offering 8 real ales on tap, upstairs lounge / dining and cocktails. Food served all day; pub classics including sharing bowls & plates. ***Edinburgh EH12 5EY - 0131 337 0550 – www.ryriesbar.com***

Teuchters Bar & Bunker — Tucked away on cobbled William Street is a hidden gem popular with locals. One of the most well-known rugby venues in the city with all international & Scottish Pro team games shown live on TV. The pub is centred around its extensive malt whisky selection with around 140 on display. There are around a dozen international & blended whiskies on offer and the famous 'hoop of destiny' for those who cannot decide or just want a bit of fun. Teuchters also has an impressive draught beer selection which is predominantly Scottish. There are 5 cask ales of which 2 are rotating guests whilst the keg selection of 18 includes 4 rotational taps. Bottled beers, a cracking wine list, gin, rum & soft drinks make up an eclectic mix of options for one & all. Bar open Sunday - Thursday 12pm-12am, Fri & Sat 12pm-1am. Food available Monday-Sunday 12-9.30pm. ***26 William Street Edinburgh EH3 7NH – 0131 225 2973 – www.teuchtersbar.co.uk***

Teuchters Landing — Bar, bothy & beer garden – Much-loved Scottish bar with an emphasis on Scottish food & drink. A traditional style freehouse in the shore area of Leith. The main bar is the former waiting room for the Leith to Aberdeen steamboat ferry which opens out onto an extensive beer garden & floating pontoon with an outside bar. This leads to 'the bothy', an indoor area to escape those odd summer showers. An extensive malt whisky selection, around 140, around a dozen international & blended whiskies. The famous 'hoop of destiny' is popular and was featured on the BBC documentary" Scotch"! The Story of Whisky". A great range of Scottish cask keg & bottled beers plus a great wine list, gin, rum & soft drinks. The eclectic food menu focuses on Scottish produce. Food available everyday til 9pm. Bar open every day 11am-1am. ***1a-1c Dock Place, Leith EH6 6LU - 0131 554 7427 – teuchtersbar.co.uk***

More to explore!
bite-magazine.com

Shopping

The Cookbook Shop — opened in March 2026 to showcase the incredible diversity, ingenuity, and artistry of cookbooks and food writing broadly, and lesser-known cuisines and creators in particular. It is currently the only bookshop in Scotland dedicated to food and cooking. As well as books the shop stocks a range of interesting gifts. ***19A Haddintgon Place, Edinburgh, EH7 4AF - 0131 314 2944***

Wine Bars

Le Di-Vin — Edinburgh's most sophisticated wine bar beside French restaurant La P'tite Folie on Randolph Place. Charcuterie, Cheese and Fish platters and light plates. Wines by the glass from around the world. Open Mon-Sat noon 'til late. Closed Sundays. ***9 Randolph Place, EH3 7TE – 0131 538 1815 – www.ledivin.co.uk***

L'escargot bleu wine bar — Cosy wine bar situated beneath L'escargot Bleu restaurant on Broughton Street. A convivial and welcoming bar where you can enjoy an aperitif/digestif or just pop in for a drink and a nibble. The bar serves cheese, charcuterie, olives, bread, and other carefully sourced produce. There are also two secluded little rooms with music systems where you can relax with friends. Open during restaurant opening times. Dogs are welcome. ***56 Broughton Street, EH1 3SA, 0131 557 1600, lescargotbleu.co.uk***



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