

Bite

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SUMMER 2024

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see page 30

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Thanks to Harajuku Kitchen
at Edinburgh Street Food



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Mrs Bite



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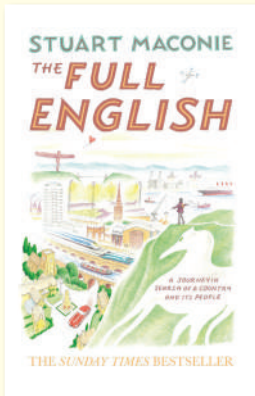
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Salt 'n' Sauce

A sprinkle of what is happening on the eating and drinking scene

5

Bits



For lovers of culture and travel, Mrs Bite can highly recommend the new book by DJ, journalist and broadcaster **Stuart Maconie**. Following in author and social commentator JB Priestly's footsteps (English Journey, 1934) **The Full English** is an insightful travelogue around the country taking in, for example, the jumbo-corduroyed Cotswolds, 'Cov' (Coventry) and The Tyne. His astute social observations and research are a joy.

Kahani - the popular curry house at 1 Antigua Street is now doing home delivery food. Check out www.kahanirestaurant.co.uk for the menu.



Pure Leith Mint Tea - Pure Leith tea is a newly available whole-leaf mint infusion. Grown, hand-picked, dried, and packaged all in Leith - it's unique as it uses the whole leaf (no twigs) and is a hybrid of spearmint, peppermint, and watermint, with an almost sweet well-rounded flavour. The gourmet lover's of mint tea. Very limited season, more information and where to buy yours at www.pureleith.com

The Eden Mill Experience, is the capital's latest drinks experience and Eden Mill's first brand-owned venue in central Edinburgh. Located in the Heads & Tales Gin Bar at 1A, Rutland Place, EH1 2AD in the heart of Edinburgh's West End, the immersive drinks venue offers two interactive mixology experiences. Share the Love Gin and The Guard Bridge Masterclass. Find out more at edenmill.com



Following an extensive £1.2M refurbishment, **The Rutland, The Huxley and Kyloe** have unveiled new interiors offering guests affordable Scottish boutique luxury. Nestled in the heart of the city's historic West End, with breathtaking views of Edinburgh Castle and on the doorstep of the Johnnie Walker experience, the relaunch of the Rutland Hotel and sister eateries marks a pivotal moment in the area's regeneration.



The secret recipe for Scotland's five times World Scotch Pie Champion has been sold by James Pirie and Son. The butcher's world-beating pie is just one of the closely guarded award-winning recipes sold by the Angus business to the UK's Butcher Shop of the Year – **McCaskie's Butcher and Café of Wemyss Bay**. The multi-award-winning Inverclyde butcher takes over the brand, coveted recipes and intellectual property of Pirie's, which closed its business and Newtyle shop earlier this year when owners Alan and Norma Pirie retired after hugely successful careers in the industry.

Caorunn is a small-batch gin made in the heart of The Highlands with a memorable botanical flavour. It's the perfect spirit for crafting refreshing cocktails and summer sipping. In this Honeyblossom Spritz recipe, Caorunn's classic floral notes shine through when paired with orange wine and lime juice, for a refreshing burst of flavour. Homemade honey syrup adds a delicate sweetness to please the tastebuds. Top with vibrant seasonal berries and fresh mint leaves!



Ingredients

50ml Caorunn Classic
30ml Orange wine
15ml Lime juice
15ml Honey syrup*
Seasonal berries | Mint leaves

Method

Combine Caorunn Classic, orange wine, lime juice and honey syrup in a cocktail shaker with ice, shake vigorously for 60 seconds and strain into a highball glass with crushed ice. Garnish with seasonal berries and mint leaves.

*Honey Syrup: 100 gr honey, 100 ml warm water - add 1 part warm water to 1 part honey & stir.



The Spanish Butcher arrived in the city on May 10th. A fusion of ultra-luxe comfort, rich deep tones, the finest natural materials, and bold, edgy industrial accents; all combined with exceptional food and relaxed day-to-night conviviality. Taking centre stage on the à la carte menu is a selection of cuts from the Rubia Gallega, a breed of cattle native to northwest Spain, with a specialised drying process of up to 50 days for some cuts.



If you are looking for a special Father's Day gift we recommend **1800 Blanco Tequila**, a great alternative to socks and beer! 1800 Blanco uses 100% blue agave harvested and handpicked from the highlands ranches in Jalisco, Western Mexico. The liquid is double distilled for a smoother, cleaner flavour and is made from a special selection of white tequilas, blended for added complexity and character, £35 from House of Spirits.

The Rose Street Garden has sprung back into bloom and is open now. Between Rose Street and The Dome the garden has an enchanting ambience and fabulous food and drinks. Rose Street Garden promises an unforgettable experience for locals, tourists, and even the occasional celebrity.



This month Bite is recommending two good Chardonnays to sip.

Firstly, **The King's Legacy** is from Marisco Wines in New Zealand and can be bought at Majestic Wines. It has an RRP of £15.99 but there are deals to be found that make it an absolute STEAL. It combines notes of fresh apple, nectarine, cream, almond and gentle complexity, in other words, everything that is good about this varietal.



Secondly, an eponymous 'Chardonnay' has been released by ChapelDown, the English wine company based in Kent. It is a crisp and fresh white wine with notes of ripe apple and citrus with a creamy texture. Try pairing it with grilled chicken, seafood linguine, or asparagus with poached eggs.



Gravity Beer Festival is

set to happen once again at Summerhall this September 27th and 28th following its debut in 2023. The lineup has been announced and features names such as Closet Brewing, Crossover Blendery, DEYA, Drop Project Brewing Co, Full Circle Brew Co, Moonwake Beer Co, Six Degrees North, Talking Tides Brew Co, Tartarus Beers, Tempest Brewing Co, Timothy Taylor's, Timmermans, Two By Two Brewing Co., as well as Ascension Cider.



Paloma a neighbourhood taco bar from the owners of The Black Grape in the Canongate has opened at 50-54 Henderson Street., serving hand-pressed tortillas, tequila, mezcal and more.

If you want to explore more about orange wines, **Fion Wines** is doing a pop-up at **Fhior** on Friday the 14th of June matching orange wines to Scott Smith's tasting menu at their private dining room.

Follow on Instagram for more info:

[@fionedinburgh](#) and
[@fhiorrestaurant](#)

New brunch, dinner, and drinks place **Brunswick Book Club** has opened on the former site of Vittoria on the corner of Leith Walk and Brunswick Road. Vittoria, the popular Italian restaurant run by three generations of the Crolla family since 1970, has moved a couple of doors along.



Review:

Le Bistrot Institut Français d'Écosse

French Bistro in West Parliament Square

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Bites

Step inside this French Bistro in West Parliament Square and its serenity will immediately strike you. The venue's Gallic air of nonchalance starkly contrasts with the bustling intersection of The Mound, George IV Bridge, and the Royal Mile just outside.

I arrive and one of my dining partners Kerry is already sipping a Pinot Grigio at a corner table. White wine and a nibble of bread and butter is my favourite way to start a meal and I am soon indulging and feeling très français.

The decor is laid back with simple tables and chairs and an eclectic selection of artifacts and adornments that are bistro-typical. The staff are attentive, friendly, and unobtrusive. We could easily be in Paris albeit the signature bistro scent of garlic bubbling in wine is absent.

Kerry and I chat away until Eleonora arrives and we order our meal. The menu warms my cockles as it is a traditional but extensive list of bistro classics. No fancy pants frills with the French. They know what works and stick to it. What a relief from the overly clever all-fur-coat and no-knickers small plates that populate Edinburgh menus and sometimes leave you viscerally disappointed.

I had my heart set on Moules-Frites but decided to go for the Salmon with Barley Risotto, Broccoli and Beurre Blanc instead.

Kerry opts for the slow-cooked Confit of Lamb Shank with mash and slender green beans and Eleonora chooses the Cod. The portions are generous, and we need another bottle of wine. Que Sera.

My salmon is a whopper with a very crispy and consequently edible skin. The pleasant blandness of the barley is a good foil to the orange fatty fish. Kerry and Eleonora seem happy too especially Kerry who praises the tenderness of the meat as she scrapes her plate clean.

This is a quickie meal as we are heading to St Giles for a concert at 8 pm so we haven't had time for starters and desserts. Check out the menu though and you will find smoked salmon, scallops, and goat cheese dishes amongst the former and four classic desserts. I could eat everything happily and am a pushover for Tart au Citron and Millefeuille..

I will return 'toute suite' to explore more of the menu. And the best part is, that Le Bistrot serves breakfast and lunch too; so I can indulge any time of the day. (S. Wilson)

***Le Bistrot Institut Français d'Écosse -
West Parliament Square Edinburgh***

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The Bistro is open every day: 9.00 – 22.00





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I first moved to the Newington area of 'One Day' in the same era of 80s Cold War, mix tapes, neon clothing, Sex on the Beach and Diet Coke.

In East Crosscauseway however, a little corner of good taste was to be found in the form of the Jewish bakery Kleinberg's which served Challah. Every weekend I would greedily break this golden bread, slather it with butter and heap on Bonne Maman conserve. To this day I carry it all on my hips. No regrets.

I mention this as the bakery comes up in conversation at a dinner at Tapas 3 located a bagel's throw from where Kleinberg's once stood.

Tonight reader we are gathered at this flamenco (Alba Flamenco) school come tapas bar. Eleonora and I had dropped in for some Manchego and malty 'sin alcohol' beer previously. We were so impressed with our nibbles (toasted nuts, fruit olive oil, bread and Christmassy quince to complement the salty cheese) that we booked for a larger feast.

Now we have a long table full of tapas and friends. The small dishes include Spinach and Mushroom Croquettes with melting fillings. A Spanish visitor I sit next to tells me she makes her own at home in Barcelona and we chat about the vital Bechamel technique.

She is eating a plate of sunshine in the form of Vine Tomato salad with olives, almonds & basil dressing. It is as striking as a Miro painting and I have food envy.

Across the table, Fiona has an eggy wedge of tortilla which I deduce must be the size of a fat cushion in the kitchen. Morcilla y Cabra is always a favourite with me and there is the people's choice of fiery Patatas Bravas on the table too. We don't hold back so Alabarino is present and Pedro Ximenez and Churros follow savouries.

We are so enthused by our experiences and the warm service at Tapas 3 that more visits are promised and even Flamenco classes are booked. Ole!

If you like good food the Newington neighbourhood of Edinburgh is still delivering after all these years in this wonderful melting pot of food and culture. (S. Wilson)

**Tapas 3 - 6-8 Howden Street, Edinburgh,
EH8 9HL - 0131 667 4564**

**Opening times: Monday & Sunday closed,
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 5-11 pm,
Friday & Saturday noon -11 pm.
Last sitting at 9 pm each night.**



Tomato Salad

Review: **The Roseate Hotel & Rooms**

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Bits

Rosy prospects for the 'New West End'

A new high-end boutique hotel has opened here, at the stone villas on West Coates just past the Donaldson's school development W of Haymarket, raised away from this busy artery on beautiful terraced gardens.

An impressive entrance leads into a contemporary cocktail bar and dining lounge designed for comfort and style, where a sense of calm and peaceful luxury envelops the weary traveller and is conducive to work and leisure. It's hard to tell there are bus, tram and taxi links just outside the lush garden to whisk you to the airport, whilst Haymarket station is walkable.

We are welcomed with house Champagne (Moët), and cute canapés circulate whilst a restorative afternoon tea tempts from a window table. Non-residents are welcome for lunch, dinner and drinks here too. Across a hallway is the first spacious suite of several (every room is individual).

I am led down the garden path where a whisky tasting is in full swing, sheltered by a heated, fairy-lit canopy, and over the convenient crossing by the bus stop to another part of the hotel opposite, set in its own front & rear gardens. Here I discover a delightful garden room preceded by a naturally lit passageway, creating the perfect entrance for a small intimate wedding.

An honesty bar & fridge within a large attractive armoire fills one end of another larger private dining room that would work for business or friends. The charming staff will go above and beyond to adapt to hold any occasion, large or small, in considerable style and comfort.

A useful addition to the city's hospitality portfolio. (E. Bowman)

The Roseate Edinburgh - 4 West Coates & 5 Hampton Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5JQ Scotland - +44 07927132696

Afternoon Tea is served



Garden



Ambian Suffron Chai



Review: **Bistro du Vin**

Classic French food and a tale of a giant profiterole

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Bite

One of the last Christmas meals I had with my family at a gastro pub was summed up on a table card in three words: salmon, turkey, and cheese. Words now freighted with emotional resonance.

I had another 'what3words' menu moment at Bistro du Vin where I tasted the new a la carte menu on a rainy summer evening in May. Oysters, lamb, and chocolate describe a classic French meal centred around three revered foods.

The French adore 'Le Chocolat'; a guild of chocolate makers was established in Bayonne in 1761 and their love of cacao has expressed itself every since delicacies like pain au chocolat, eclairs, pot au chocolat, ganache, truffles, gateaux and profiteroles which brings us to Chef Ian Connor at Bistro du Vin.

He has created a puffball-sized profiterole as a showstopper 'pud'. When it arrives as the finale to our meal it is a dish fit for a bride and groom and nearly had my dining partner Eleonora proposing to Chef. Scoops of vegan vanilla ice cream inside a golden choux pastry coated in snappy chocolate and a pouring dish

of warm chocolate sauce. Chocolate is Valrhona Nyangbo 68% Ghanaian Grand Cru. It coats the mouth and the flavour lingers as it melts to body temperature; a characteristic of quality chocolate. It is an outrageous indulgence of an unforgettable joy-inducing dessert.

Rewind to our starter of half a dozen Cumbrae Oysters bursting with a fresh briny blast of the Scottish west coast. We devour them with a traditional vinegar shallot dressing and a couple of dots of Tabasco.

For the main course, I have Spiced Rump of Lamb with couscous, lemon and tahini yoghurt; a dish combining the North African influence in French cuisine. The spring meat is cut into tender pink noisettes, another old-school classic that seems to have disappeared from Edinburgh menus. The softly steamed couscous and sharp beads of sour pomegranate work well. Eleonora has a Fillet of Sea Bass with pipérade, pesto and fennel. Typical Provencal ingredients but she thinks the sauce overpowers the fish slightly and could be more delicately applied

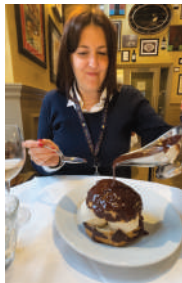
We sip a bottle of Côtes de Provence Château Gairroid Rosé, France [Organic] which is pale pink, limpid and tasting of the herbaceous scorched scrubland of Le Midi along with red berries and white peach. Oooh la la..

So in short we had a gastronomic night out tasting classic French food at Bistro du Vin. It hit the spot and as for that giant profiterole, everyone should experience it. (S. Wilson)

Bistro du Vin at Hotel Du Vin - 11 Bristo Pl. Edinburgh EH1 1EZ - Open everyday



Chef Ian Connor leads the team



Eleonora and the giant profiterole

Review: Scottish Opera *La traviata*

Audiences in Glasgow, Inverness, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh have the chance to experience a revival of world-renowned director Sir David McVicar's production of Giuseppe Verdi's *La traviata* this summer from Scottish Opera.

Soprano Hye-Youn Lee performs Violetta Valéry who lives in the hedonistic social scene of the Belle Époque in Paris, squeezing each day for its joys before her illness catches up with her. When the idealistic young Alfredo offers true love, happiness seems possible – but her past has exacted a price.

After seeing some of the food props from the production, Bite became curious and asked Marian Colquhoun, Head of Props, about her role in the opera.



Marian Colquhoun

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO YOUR PROFESSION?

I was raised by two very creative parents who taught me that often the best way to get what you want is to make it yourself. I loved to sew, sculpt, paint and play musical instruments and then I discovered prop making. I trained at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, in various London workshops and the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. I moved home to Scotland and have had an amazing eleven years working for Scottish Opera, helping to build their Props Department which is now home to some of Scotland's finest artisans.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO CONSIDER WHEN DESIGNING FOOD AND DRINK PROPS?

Food props can often be our favourite type of prop! The story or director will steer whether the food props have to be real or fake. If the food is not to be eaten we will assess the cost of buying food versus the cost of making high-quality props. With the latter, we aim to make them look mouth-watering.

WHAT SCENES ARE MOST IMPORTANT FOR FOOD AND/OR DRINK IN THIS PRODUCTION?

The food props play an important role in Act 1 of *La traviata*. In the Parisien Salon of Violetta Valéry, the courtesan is hosting a lavish party with an abundance of food and alcohol. A large banqueting table is laden with Champagne, platters of oysters, expensive meats, breads, pates and fresh strawberries. The food communicates sensuality as we witness the romantic tension between Violetta and Alfredo. Oysters and strawberries symbolise sex.

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE FOOD OR DRINK PROPS AND WHY?

I enjoy replicating food from the 1960s & 1970s. We often use recipe books from this period as inspiration for making over-the-top

cakes and desserts. The more elaborate and flamboyant the better! It's brilliant fun to make towers of jelly and flans covered in detailed decoration. It's so rewarding when people think they are real, especially when you consider that they are mostly made from foams and chemicals. However, my favourite food prop I have ever helped create was the giant Tunnock's Teacakes for the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in 2014.

WHERE AND HOW WOULD YOU DO RESEARCH?

We do a lot of research online but some of the most interesting references available are documented in old recipe books, history books and paintings. We must research to create food that is 100% accurate because we are recreating a picture of what life was like at the time. People are passionate about food and we must be equally passionate in our representations of it on stage. (S. Wilson)

Festival Theatre Edinburgh
7, 11, 13 & 15 June 2024, 7.15 pm;
9 June 2024, 3 pm (Matinee)



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The Social Bitches Review

Champagne & Oysters with our National Chef

Having shamelessly jumped the queue at Bonnie & Wild, we're here for an experience physically impossible to resist: a cheeky pop-up champagne & oyster bar. Darling! Helloooo! An absolute must at the Edinburgh Seafood Festival, it's also an opportunity to meet Scotland's National Chef, the fabulous Gary Maclean.

Not only a man with a generous pour, Gary's an ambassador for Scottish seafood; an advocate of healthy eating, working with families, schools, even prisons across the country; and in the six seconds of free time he has left, a creator of stunning cookbooks.

In Scottish Kitchen, he reimagines all the big hitters from tattie scone to Arbroath smokie. Meanwhile, his more recent Scottish Celebrations shows how even these bitches can whip up a mouthwatering feast for any occasion, from Burns Night to Hogmanay.

Naturally, we're hinting, rather heavily, for a free autographed copy, though in the meantime we're on to our second saucy bottle of Champagne Piaff [boasting brioche on the nose, pear notes, vanilla finish] and feel we have much to discuss, as well as eat.

Starting with a platter of lush West Coast oysters, dressed with a series of dazzling sauces: Chili Ginger, Shallots Sherry Vinegar, or our absolute fave, the citrus twist that is Yuzu & Toasted Sesame.

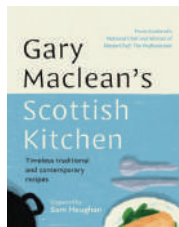
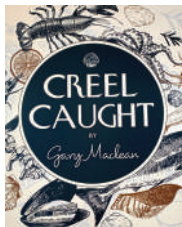
Even more delicious, is Gary's passion for Scotland's fish, shellfish and crustaceans. Inspired by the post-Brexit madness that saw trucks full of fresh seafood stuck at Dover, he wants everyone - especially us Scots - to celebrate this precious resource.

"I like to stick my chest out," he says. "And tell the world we're the best!"

No argument here. After an absolute shedload of oysters, our thought now is to drink this pop-up dry, then head directly to Gary's other food stall for ding-ding round two. The wonderful Creel Caught, sells the finest seafood year-round.

Soon we're enjoying a naughty Albariño, and taking a deep dive into a massive platter of heavenly smoked mackerel pâté, surrounded by lush langoustine, prawn Rose Marie, smoked salmon, olives, cornichons and Arran mustard slaw. Oosh!

Accompanying our "entree" is a trio of sliders - including a rather pleasing artisan fish finger - and the show-stopping Fritto Misto, with its epic selection of perfectly crisp - never oily- prawns, calamari, lemon sole and vege with spiced aioli.



A naughty Albariño



Trio of Seafood Sliders



Champagne Puff Sauce



Seafood Platter



Pop Up at Bonnie & Wild



Fritto Miso Seafood Platter



Fritto Miso



West Coast Oysters



Sauces



Then, to ensure one's gut biome is operating at peak efficiency, we're finishing this particular celebration with our new obsession, Kimchi-loaded potatoes with cheddar.

While our plan was just to pop into Gary's pop-up, now it seems we've been here three hours. Even so, it would be a crime to leave without having at least one more bottle of fizz with this inspiring human being. Gary, you truly are a legend of the sea!

Creel Caught @ Bonnie & Wild
St James Quarter, Level 4, EH1 3AE
Open Monday - Sunday 9 am - 12 pm.
Edinburgh Seafood Festival returns May 2025



Gary Madgen & the Social Bitches

The Frugal Foodie

Kahani - Dining on the national dish

The British love a curry. According to data from Foodhub, 11% of Brits eat curry between three to seven times a week with a further 22% eating curry weekly – reflecting both a serious love of curry and perhaps an over-reliance on takeaways!

Indian (or Pakistani or Nepalese) food is also generally sensibly priced so a good choice for a frugal foodie looking for big flavours without a shocking bill. Responding to a recent 'curry call', I chose Kahani on Leith Walk as it has high-quality food at reasonable prices and, as an extra money-saver, free corkage. If you visit on a Friday or Saturday, they also offer a pre-theatre menu of two courses for £19.85 from 3-6 pm.

Kahani (or Khushi's as it was then) was also my local Indian restaurant for many years, and I enjoyed many a dinner, take-away and office lunch here.

The restaurant itself is bright and welcoming – not your run-of-the-mill curry

house – giving a good feeling for what's to come. Looking at the menu, the list of curries available is not as extensive as in some similar restaurants, but provides a good range, for meat-lovers, seafood fanatics and veggies.

As we are not drinking tonight, we decide to try the tempting range of mocktails on offer – an Anardana Punch (£4.95) with pomegranate, grenadine and lychee juice, and a Peach Cooler (£4.95), muddled lime wedges with mint – both crisp and refreshing, a good match for the rich food.

Sticking to the classics and always a good barometer of a restaurant, we share Onion Bhajis (£5.95) to start, which have a good level of texture and spice, and add Crispy Chilli Squid (£6.95) from the Signature Starters, which is deliciously tender with an incredibly light batter.

For mains we choose a Chicken Karahi (£13.95), flavoursome but slightly lacking in heat, and a Lamb Saag (£14.95) – this packs more of a punch, nicely mellowed with creamy spinach. While sometimes it can feel your curry is 90% sauce, these are both full of tender meat. For sides, a Pilau Rice (£3.50), not the best ever, but still very tasty, and a sweet Peshwari Naan (£3.95).

I would love to try the Indian Rice Pudding (£5.50) for afters, but sadly, and predictably, I am much too full, so opt for fruity Mango Kulfi (£5.95) instead. It was nice to come away without a stodgy, greasy feeling – a testament to the quality of the produce.



Kahani is near The Playhouse

The next time that curry craving hits, I suggest giving Kahani a try – and as they now do delivery for the first time, you can even enjoy an Indian feast without leaving the sofa. (D. Spencer)

Kahani Indian Restaurant -
10 Antigua Street, Edinburgh EH1 3NH1
0131 558 1947 - Open Sun-Thu 12:00 pm – 10:00 pm. Fri-Sat 12:00 pm – 11:00 pm



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1745 Coltbridge Canter
8 Murrayfield Place, EH12 6AA
0131 374 4800



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on the bank of the Union Canal
101b Colinton Rd, EH14 1AL
0131 229 2929



THE TOLLHOUSE

Overlooking the meandering flow
of the Water of Leith at Canonmills
50 Brandon Terrace, EH3 5BX
0131 224 2424

Review: **Pizza Geeks**

80s nostalgia pizzeria

21

Bite

This trio of city pizza houses is owned by a former oil rig worker Patrick Ward who wanted to pursue his twin passions for fresh, hand-made Neapolitan-inspired pizzas and gaming.

I met Vivian in the latest Easter Road location which joins Leith (The Mothership) and Dalry (The Tardis).

This latest venture's interior draws on 80's nostalgia, featuring gaming to movies, 8-bit graphics, blockbuster vibes and a nod to 80s-influenced shows like Stranger Things. Fun fact: Patrick's dog is called Chewbacca.

I immediately loved Geeks as it took me back to my student dive bar days. It's a no-frills environment with a cook station in the corner where you can watch Chef John assemble and fire the pizzas. We think Michael J. Fox would approve of the pizzas too.

I plump for The Chorizado: tomato base, mozzarella, chorizo, black pudding, fresh chillies & hot honey, while Viv chooses

The Flower Power Mario: tomato base, Vegan mozzarella, vegan pepperoni, mushrooms & fresh basil and The Wildling (this one is Vegetarian): garlic rosemary oil base, spinach, goat's cheese, butternut squash & sweet chilli jam.

It's a short but perfectly tempting menu with vegetarian and vegan options. Ditto the three beers on tap and a new selection of 80s fun, colourful cocktails containing ingredients such as Amaretto, Kahlua, and Midori. Our barman mocks up a cocktail on the spot for Vivian which he calls Cuddle on the Beach.

Prices are keen, pizza is tasty, and we would return to the Geeks.

Cocktails are £5 Monday - Wednesday and a Monday night sees an eat-all-the-pizza-you-can for £15 deal. John tells us the record is six! In true geeky fashion, he tells us that the moisture content of the dough at Pizza Geeks is 80% (standard is around 67%); this makes the dough extra stretchy resulting in Geek's house style of leopard-spotted pizzas.

Pizzaiolo John is also heartfelt about the Geek's Pizza for the People initiative; they have given over 40,000 pizzas to people in need.

We need two doggy bags for the leftovers from our three pizzas. But in true Geeks style, Vivian gives one to a homeless person. (S. Wilson)

Pizza Geeks - 126 Easter Rd, Edinburgh EH7 5RJ - 0131 202 9306

Opening times: Sunday - Thursday noon-9.30 pm; Friday & Saturday noon-9.30 pm.



The Chorizado

Review:

The Gailes Hotel & Spa, Irvine

I'm captivated by a beautiful big sky of cerulean blue complemented by a few cauliflower cumulus clouds.

It's not the Netherlands or Kansas but Irvine on the Ayrshire coast and Mr Bite and I are taking a break at The Gailes Hotel & Spa.

I have just had a sauna, hot tub and steam session in the spa complex which boasts low indigo lighting, foliage and loungers. I feel very Zen and, as I wander back to our room, I stop to take in the gardens which feature a pagoda, fountain, pond, terrace, and the endless emerald lawns of the Golf Links.

This luxury resort is part of the local SimpsInns hospitality group, a family-owned business including The Potting Shed, The Terrace, The Waterside and Old Loans Inn in Troon. Karen and Malcolm Simpson, and sons Jack and Lee appear to have this stretch of the West Coast sewn up.

We had lunch at the colourful, eclectically decorated Potting Shed, a roadside joint in Irvine. A pedestrian menu of wraps, salads, waffles, pancakes and sandwiches relies more on assembly of pre-made ingredients

than home cooking. Mr B has a Cajun Chicken Wrap and I have Steak Salad. We also chose a Strawberry Tart and a giant Nutella Empire biscuit from a display of cakes which gives Mr Bite saucer-like eyes. Service is friendly. Despite living in Glasgow for many years, the magnetic west coast warmth gets me every time.

Onwards to Marine Drive (sounds very Florida) and The Gailes which despite its roadside location is set in stunning grounds.

Our room is very stylish for a standard. A king-size bed facilitates a great night's sleep following dinner in the Coast restaurant.

The dinner menu is crowd-pleasing and generic. I am torn between ordering Fish and Chips or Salmon with Chorizo and sauteed potatoes in a paprika cream sauce. I opt for the latter, which is delicious, ditto Mr Bite's Beef Pie. I can forgive a standard menu if the dishes are tasty and well-presented. However, adding one or two specials with actual West Coast seafood and Ayrshire local meat would enhance the dining experience. There is such good produce in this part of Scotland. We share Sticky Toffee Pudding



with Arran Ice Cream for pudding which is springy and treacly.

A tasty breakfast of Smoked Salmon with Scrambled Eggs and Poached Eggs with Ayrshire Ham (hurrah) fuels us for our onward journey.

The hotel website has helpfully listed tourist attractions and we opt to visit Kelburn Estate. The drive takes us along the coast with stunning views of Arran and Goat Fell. We lament not being able to stay longer at The Gailes with bikes as the cycle paths beckon. The hotel is an excellent base for relaxation, sightseeing and activity.

"Two of us riding nowhere, spending someone's hard-earned pay. You and me, Sunday driving, not arriving, on our way back home" (The Beatles)

At Kelburn we pay £5 only for parking which allows you to trek the native woodlands, taking in wildlife, waterfalls, the country house gardens with ancient yew trees, and the castle that has had a makeover painted by Brazilian artists. There is also a cafe, a gift shop and plenty of kids' entertainment making it an accessible day out for families.

As we head home we encounter Easter 'Carmageddon' coming the other way but our trip has been smooth and stress-free.

The Gailes is somewhere I would recommend as a base to explore the manifold attractions of Ayrshire and for parties and get-togethers. (S. Wilson)

**The Gailes Hotel & Spa -
Marine Dr, Irvine KA11 5AE - 01294 204040
www.gailshotel.com**



Coast Restaurant and Bar



Spa Outdoor Hydro Pool



Spa Thermal Suite Vitality Pool

Review: **Origin Coffee**

Single-origin coffee that is good for us and good for the planet

There is something special about a good cup of coffee to get your day going.

This coffee shop, tucked away on the side street of South College Street, is the latest addition to the specialty coffee scene in Edinburgh, and it's called Origin Coffee.

Freshly brewed from Cornwall, they mean business but with a purpose. This is B-Corp-certified, coffee that tastes good and is sustainable. Let's check them out.

Our host Fraser welcomes me, and heads to the workshop room to set up for the 'Latte Art' session, ready to share the tricks of making the perfect latte, something he has over 10 years of experience in.

Our group is ready; next to me is Natalie, the owner of Disposition Coffee, and she does well in the latte art, making a beautiful heart. Fraser adds: "It's all about the steaming, the pouring, and the timing."

I listen and make a... radish. I am a novice so forgiven, and I am into nutrition, so it is healthy latte art.



The class is finished with a coffee tasting; we are invited to enjoy a cuppa in the café area. It's bright and modern with 36 seats.

I go for Atlas Decaf, beans from Colombia that have gone through a chemical-free sugar cane process, with apple, chocolate, and caramel notes; it's very smooth. Natalie chooses Resolute, a Latin American blend with fruity, honey, and chocolate notes. The coffee is served in Japanese-style cups, and it looks good.

We are here for the beverages, but if you are feeling peckish, they have sweet and savoury pastries from Fieldwork Café and Company Bakery.

Origin Coffee wants to brew good vibes, an uncomplicated coffee place to hang out, cool workshops (Latte Art and Specialty Coffee) to attend, and possibly other events.

So, pop in, say hi, and grab that cup of Joe to get your day going. (V. Maeda)

**Origin Coffee - 6-8 S. College Street,
Edinburgh EH8 9AA Open daily 8 am-5 pm**

Review: **The Real Food Cafe, Tyndrum**

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Bite

This iconic roadside pit stop is in Tyndrum, the busy gateway to the Highlands.

Mr Bite and I have driven past the cafe many times and admired its facade so it was great to get the opportunity to review it.

Those of a certain vintage may remember the cafe as a Little Chef but the present owner Sara Howard took the reins 19 years ago.

Tyndrum is a maelstrom of coach parties, bikers, families, dogs, cars, and walkers and although The Real Food Cafe is always busy it manages to also be an oasis of calm. Large windows expose nature (there's a row of bird feeders outside) and muffle the outside hubbub. If you suffer from overwhelm it's a good retreat.

Mr Bite observes that the haddock is MSC certified and a chalkboard above the fryers and hotplates identifies the Langsoy Trawler in the Barents Sea, Spitzbergen (Norway) as the vessel we can thank for today's catch.

Provenance joins traceability in the cafe's portfolio of ethical standards. The beer we drink is from Loch Lomond Brewery; a Blonde and Bonnie and a Southern Summit complement our food.

First up are Jalapeño Bites; a mix of cream cheese and chilli peppers with a chilli sauce piques our appetite. They are light and crispy as all dishes are served to order. This is noted with Mr Bite's Fish and Chips also. Not only is the dish award-winning but the café is a Coeliac UK Accredited Caterer, with an A grade rating for its gluten-free fish and chips. Vegans and vegetarians are also catered for.

The menu features homemade soup, Scotch beef and venison burgers, Scottish salmon, home baking and organic and fair-trade coffee. I choose the Salmon Salad with fish from Letterfinaly Smokehouse near Fort William. Serious contenders are a Chip Butty (only £4) and Fish Chowder.

Service is outstanding and there is a prestigious listing on 'The Best Places to Work in Hospitality' Awards 2023, run by The Caterer magazine. The awards identify and showcase the Top 30 operators who lead the way in people engagement and workplace culture.

We leave with a doggy bag of sausage rolls and home-baking. The Haggis and Pork Sausage Roll was declared third best in the land at the annual 'Great Sausage Roll Off' competition which was held in London in February. Jeremy Vine "loved it".

I can't see us ever driving past the Real Food Cafe again without succumbing to its siren call of temptation.

Oh, and speaking of doggies there is a dog and boot washing station at the entrance to the Cafe. But, it's not just a dog-friendly cafe it's an everyone-friendly cafe. (S. Wilson)

**Real Food Cafe - Tyndrum, Crianlarich,
FK20 8RY - 01383 400235 - Closes 9 pm**



Review: 55 Bearsden Cross

Miraculous

This eatery in leafy Bearsden is part of the Worq Hospitality Group that also owns the spectacular El Santo in Glasgow, Hemingway's in Edinburgh and a clutch of other venues. Testimony enough to spur Mr Bite and me to spend a day in the 'Dear Green Place'.

We build up an appetite by visiting Mugdock Country Park one of the many green spaces that give Glasgow its nickname. The 270-hectare space is found in the shadow of the Campsie Fells and includes a 13th-century castle, loch, wood, abandoned zoo, wildlife aplenty and it verges onto the West Highland Way and the Allander River. After more than 10,000 steps of exploring, and a shared ice cream we drive three short miles to Drymen Road to refuel properly.

55 Bearsden Cross's exterior is painted bright green; a colour that combines with classy dark blue when it extends to the interior. There is the characteristic bustle and warmth of the west coast inside. Football is on the telly and the place is busy with a diverse crowd from families with babies to dogs to elderly folk.



Tacos

We are seated in a spacious booth where I order a Green Lady, a cocktail based around Shipyard Gin in a nod to the West's heritage. Mr Bite has a pint of Neck Oil.

The chef at 55 Bearsden is Glaswegian John Keenan whose major claim to fame is the dance classic FRAGMA's "I Need a Miracle" (there's your earworm for the day). We hope his culinary skills are just as impressive.



Neck Oil & Neck Oil

To start, I have a plate of Beef Carpaccio, juicy sumptuous slices of iron-rich meat piqued with pickled red onion rings. A recommendation of Zatar Fried Chicken on a gargantuan dimpled Waffle with Maple Syrup and Fried Egg is eaten with gusto across the table. I note how the sweetness and spice neutralize and complement each other resulting in an Americana nirvana of lusty mouth pleasure.

Sometimes I wonder how Mr Bite can fit in the amount of food. His 'main', a double-patty burger with all the colourful works and fries, is demolished with enviable ease. As with the chicken, the portion could feed two. The beef is sourced from local butcher Christies.

I chose two modest tacos with fried chicken and haddock swaddled in mini fluffy tortillas. Salsa or a squirt of sriracha would provide the kick they missed but for £3.50 each you won't hear me complain.

We are impressed enough to share a Chocolate and Coffee Mousse which is a more solid ganache in a rum, and caramel sauce, oh mamma it's good.

I have to order a Negroni (of course I do) and it is perfectly built and balanced with a dramatic garnish of rosemary sprig and orange twist. Considering the coronary-inducing prices of some Edinburgh establishments, my thoughts now turn to more trips out west.

Even verdant Bearsden establishments like 55 Bearsden Cross are offering great value feasts. Make a day of it. (S. Wilson)

55 Bearsden Cross -
128 Drymen Road, Bearsden, Glasgow
0141 465 2710 - Open Wed & Thursday
noon-late, Friday & Saturday 11am-1am,
Sunday 11am - late



Zaheer Fried Chicken

COME JOIN
OUR TABLE
ON INSTAGRAM



@bite_mag

Review: Season Quayside

Tastes of the world in Leith

Tucked away at The Shore in Leith, Season Quayside was opened by event caterers Season Catering before Covid-19 dealt its terrible blow to hospitality businesses across the city. Relying on their expertise in events, once the world opened up again, the Commercial Quay venue refocused on private parties and weddings and has built a strong reputation for hosting such events. However, keen to try out some new dishes in the kitchen, and use the restaurant during the week, Season has launched a Thursday night pop-up.

It is a lovely sunny evening when I visit, perfect conditions for enjoying the restaurant's bright conservatory area. The focus is on international small plates to share, with a limited but well-thought-out and varied menu. Never happy to stick to one choice, I heartily encourage the small plates trend – in this case, we are intrigued by every option.

We finally settle for the Turkish Flat Breads with hummus, sundried tomato and

pumpkin seeds, Crispy Cauliflower Laksa Curry, Venison Gyoza Dumplings, and Malaysian Crisp Pork Belly with pineapple and Vietnamese slaw. The attitude is relaxed and diners are encouraged to order as appetite requires, so I can't resist adding the Japanese Panko and Nori Fried Sole with Wasabi mayo and the Scottish Arbroath Smoke Fish Cake with mango salsa on a second round, pure greed on my part.

While each plate is well-balanced, high quality and unique, the stand-out dishes are surprising ones. The cauliflower is deliciously crispy in its creamy curry sauce and tastes light and indulgent. And, not usually a favourite admittedly, the pork belly has to be the best I have tried, not too fatty, and complemented by the fresh Asian-style accompaniments of roasted pineapple and slaw.

After so much food, the dessert options are thankfully light and suit the season. Mango sorbet and cardamom-poached pineapple is a sweet and morish combination to finish.

Though limited, the menu caters well for dietary requirements, with three vegan options and five that are either gluten-free or can be adapted. As a frugal foodie, I was also impressed by the prices. Most plates come in at £7-9, with sides at £4. While four plates and a side between two is probably more than enough for most people, I recommend arriving hungry, as you will want to try everything. (D. Spencer)

Season Quayside, 72 Commercial St, Leith, Edinburgh EH6 6LX - 0131 555 5066
www.seasonquayside.co.uk
Pop-up dining Thursdays from 5pm



Pork Belly



Sip Better #5 with Miguel Crunia

ORANGE WINE 101

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Bits

Orange wine is a term that entered our vinous vocab during the last decade. Today it is not unusual to see wine lists and indie wine retailers with a section dedicated to 'orange, amber or skin contact wines'.

And although many readers may be initiated I am still asked about the wine style daily. Is it innovation? Are the wines made from oranges? Do the makers add colourings?

Imagine that you are in an art gallery in front of a painting that dates back to the 18th century or earlier. Pay close attention to that person holding a glass of white wine in their hand. Is it white? Or maybe it has an amber or orange colour? Were our ancestors' hipsters?

White wine as we understand it today is a technological innovation; the result of presses that separate grape skins from grape must to eliminate contact during fermentation, obtaining clear, translucent wine. Formerly, wines were made in a more rudimentary way. The must was fermented with skins on (as with red wine). Thus orange wine is reclaiming this tradition.

The time the skin remains in contact with the must determines the colour's intensity and the aromatics (expect black tea, dry leaves, candied citrus peel, chamomile, dry shiitakes, miso, toasted pumpkin seeds, etc), tannins, and structure.

If you are a virgin imbiber I recommend wines with less maceration time as prolonged exposure can be challenging to the uninitiated. Longevity on the skin yields more complexity and structure (I recommend drinking them at 14-16 degrees).

If you're getting your feet wet try **Humus, Curtimenta, 2020** Made in Alvorinha (north of Lisbon) by Rodrigo Filipe. He uses the free-run juice of a red variety (Touriga Nacional) that ferments on the skins of Arinto and Fernão Pires in amphoras. The wine then ages for 9 months in chestnut barrels. Find it in fionwines.co.uk



Keep exploring with **Bojan Baša, Jantar, 2017** An outstanding Pinot Grigio sourced from Serbia. It is fermented on mature skins for almost a week (gaining a light red colour, aye, red!) and then aged in oak and acacia barrels for two years. Find it in fionwines.co.uk



The pinnacle of Orange wine for me is **Gravner, Ribolla Gialla, 2014**. A masterpiece by the guy who revived it all in Oslavia (northern Italy). Fermented in amphora and then aged in large oak barrels for a whopping 6 years! Find it at Raeburn Fine Wines.



(M. Crunia)

Miguel Crunia is a partner in Fion Wines and was voted fourteenth in Harper's Top Sommeliers list.

He specializes in minimum intervention wines, particularly Atlantic wines from his native Galicia. Follow for more online @miguelcrunia @fionedinburgh



WIN A 10-COURSE TASTING MENU AT DHOOM INDIAN STREATERY IN DUNFERMLINE



Chef/patron Prasad Daneshawar has developed a family business with a positive vibe and a loyal following. The restaurant is colourful with a warm welcome and Prasad enjoys researching dishes from different areas of India that inspire the restaurant's tasting menus.

Prasad's latest menu comes from Chennai in Southern India and comprises 10 innovative dishes.

Mrs Bite tasted the new dishes and concluded that this was the 'best-tasting menu yet.'

You too can win a trip to experience this fabulous restaurant by emailing us at bitepublishing@gmail.com with your full name and address and answer to the following question:

By what name was Chennai formerly known?

Closing Date: June 21 noon

19-25 New Row, Dunfermline KY12 7EA



TERMS & CONDITIONS

A winner will be picked at random on the closing date and the judge's decision will be final.

Applies to Food Only. Valid Sunday - Thursday. No Cash alternative.

Must be over 18 to enter.

Whisky Chat from Topsy Midgie

WHISKY BAR
OF THE YEAR

WHISKY GURU
OF THE YEAR

As rum sales soar I am increasingly asked if whisky is experiencing a downturn. However, with a steady contribution of circa 7 billion to the Scottish economy I have my doubts. Especially when you consider distillery, online and seasonal releases. Then consider how many bottles are in cupboards, hidden under beds or being stored as nest eggs.

However, there is a shift from quantity to quality as distilleries look to elevate certain brands.

At Topsy Midgie, for example, we are enjoying the stunning new Glen Scotia Fino Cask 2024 festival edition and Ardbeg's new "spectacular". The latter is Ardbeg's first to be finished in Port Cask and is a carnival of flavour. For something more sunny the new Cu Bocan Creation 6 "Rum and Raisin" is a tasty rum cake of a dram!

We have been so spoiled at the Topsy Midgie in the last few months with some of the best tastings around. On Thursdays, we invite different distilleries to showcase their bottles and guests can sample a minimum of five drams which are all original bottles, sometimes very

limited editions, often straight from the cask, sometimes discontinued and always hosted by someone from the featured distillery. Tickets can be purchased on our website and sell jolly fast, but it is worth keeping an eye out for the future!

With us extending the cabinets in the bar to increase our bottles, we are now sitting at around 1000 bottles at Topsy Midgie, with the largest selection in Edinburgh we always have a lot to say on whisky, and drams to suit all budgets.

Slainte! (C. Hinds)

Colin Hinds runs Topsy Midgie - Whisky & Gin Drinkery at 67 St Leonards Hill, Edinburgh, EH8 9SB www.topsymidgie.com



HARD TO FIND
WHISKY
www.HTFW.com

Review: Love Ice Cream



It's summertime and we Love Ice Cream!

Partners in business and life, Claire and Martin Wilson are the proud founders of Love Ice Cream. Their mission is simple – to make the best possible ice cream in the most delicious flavours using good-quality local ingredients. They may be familiar to you from La Cerise, a wonderful patisserie formerly on Great Junction Street. And dare I say, I think they were partly responsible for the huge upswing in pastry offerings in Leith. From La Cerise, they developed a love of making ice cream, so naming their next venture was easy.

Based in Haddington and featuring many East Lothian ingredients, they are forging their way, their own way, with direct sales at markets and farm shops.

Martin previously worked with Brose, perfecting their oat milk recipe, and Love Ice Cream was originally going to be vegan ice cream, but the call of traditional was stronger, so they now do both. The four vegan flavours include Double chocolate with Chocolate Tree chocolate and Honeycomb (honeycomb made with sugar and bicarb). They also offer SLF (Super Low Fat) made with yoghurt and skim milk: Strawberry, Blackberry or Mango. Their

Lemon sorbet is rather special, Martin has mastered the texture so it's not too icy but has a slight gooey-ness – a perfect palate cleanser for dinner parties. Other flavours include the brand new Biscoff Caramel crunch, Mint Choc Chip, Jumble Berry (a mix of East Lothian berries), Raspberry Ripple, Salted caramel and Bubblegum - you know, for kids. Love Icecream run regular competitions on their 'socials' for new flavours.

Claire emphasises that environmental responsibility is high on their agenda: All packaging is recyclable, there's almost zero food waste, and they choose the best ingredients for the planet (no palm oil, no soy).

This summer they launch a mobile icecream parlour, Annie. In true Love Ice Cream style, Martin has renovated a horsebox, transforming it into a mobile ice cream outlet that will pop up at weddings and events. The biggie this year is the Haddington Agricultural Show on Saturday 29 June. See <https://haddingtonshow.co.uk/> for more info. (T. Griffen)

Find Claire, Martin and Banjo the dog at Haddington market on the last Saturday of every month.

Visit www.loveicecream.biz for more info and delivery throughout East Lothian. Instagram / Facebook: @loveicecream

I regularly see things on Instagram that look too good to be true. So when I found a “Microbakery” in my neighbourhood, delivering artisan bread and treats to my door, I was a bit skeptical.

The term “microbakery” was new to me. While there’s no official definition, the clue is in the name. It’s a small bakery, often with a sole baker and a single premise. The Real Bread Campaign says a micro-bakery has no more than 9 employees. Some bakeries have a single baker in a home kitchen, or there can be several full-time bakers with a small commercial space. Bakers listed on the Real Bread Campaign also focus on their ingredients - avoiding additives, and improvers, and trying to use local, organic ingredients.

The Instagram bakery that caught my eye was Dainty Monkey Baking, run by Canadian ex-pat Tara Heron, and I’m delighted to say it delivers the real deal.

Dainty Monkey is probably Europe’s smallest microbakery. Tara began by baking for her neighbours, but it gradually turned into a business and she registered her bakery in 2019. Tara bakes alone, in her kitchen, and delivers

1 day a week. She has a strict catchment area and no plans to expand. For her, part of the pleasure is being able to hand deliver to her customers and accommodate their individual preferences.



Tara is largely self-taught, but there’s very little she doesn’t know about bread and baking. But what really comes across is her passion: for using top ingredients, and making excellent products in small batches where she can guarantee quality. So far I’ve tried Canadian butter tarts (wonderful), granola (delicious and organic), English muffins (unlike anything you find in the shops and about twice the size), white sourdough (amazing), and my favourite: Scottish Milk bread. This is one of Tara’s award winners, having placed silver in the Scottish Bread Championships. The temptation to eat the entire loaf, buttered, in a single sitting was hard to resist. Her favourite thing to bake is yeasted sourdough, while her most popular is her 100% wholemeal yeasted loaf.

Sometimes things on Instagram aren’t too good to be true, and this microbakery is the best thing since sliced bread. If you’re lucky enough to live in the EH5 postcode, Dainty Monkey has you covered. But there are other micro bakeries in Edinburgh: have a look at the Real Bread Campaign website to find one nearby. (R. Edwards)

www.sustainweb.org/realbread/
Tara’s Instagram: [@daintymonkey](https://www.instagram.com/daintymonkey)

What's in Season:

Bring Me Sunshine, Please!

I don't know about you lot, but as I write my usual guff for WiS (it's the first week of May BTW), it is pissing down once again! I'm contemplating getting the thermal thong back out of mothballs, having porridge for breakfast, warming soup for lunch and a rib-sticking stew for supper! What we all want and need, is some warmth in our bones, sun on our faces, and long, bright evenings on the beach for a bbq and cocktails with friends. I'm fed up with this driech weather, when every time I look at my feet, if I squint really hard without my glasses, I swear there's webbing between my toes.

I'm being a sad old git, a typical Brit moaning about the weather; it's either too hot, too cold, too dry, too wet or it could just be the menopause. You just can't bloody win.

Anyway, enough of this misery, let's hope that by the time this gets into print, we'll be bathed in glorious sunshine, fantastic produce, and some good company.

There will be wonderful soft fruits that the only thing they will need is hefty dollops of cream, glorious veggies for the perfect salad, spankingly fresh fish and some good bread, all washed down with something cold and white or if you really want to be decadent, then how about a rather grown-up soda float? Which is this WiS recipe. Chin-chin!

Lea Harris aka @BakersBunny on Instagram

Raspberry Soda Float



- 2 measures of gin, whisky, or vodka - your choice
- 1 measure of raspberry liqueur
- Raspberry coulis
- Cream soda (I like Bon Accord cream soda or their rhubarb one)
- Ice cream – any flavour you like, but white chocolate works amazingly well
- Crushed raspberries

Method

- Pour the booze into a tall, pretty glass.
- Add the raspberry coulis to taste.
- Add the cream soda, slowly. When I made this, it frothed up and I had to slurp the spill from the work surface.
- Gently plop in the ice cream and sprinkle on the crushed raspberries.

Serve with a long spoon, and a straw, and sit back watching the world drift by.

What Else is in my Basket



Clams, crab, grey mullet, herring, mackerel, pike, salmon, sardines, sea bass, sea trout, spoots, wild trout, hare, lamb, artichokes, asparagus, aubergines, broad, runner and French beans, chicory, courgettes, fennel, garlic, kohlrabi, mange tout, new potatoes, peas, rocket, samphire, tomatoes, watercress, apricots, blackcurrants, blaeberrries, blueberries, cherries, elderflowers, gooseberries, greengages, lavender, nasturtiums, peaches, raspberries, strawberries, tayberries.

Magnaccioni:

My Food...My Italy

by Anne Pia

Book Review by Fiona Richmond,
Head of Regional Food, Scotland Food & Drink



I'm sure that many readers of these pages are fellow Italophiles. What's

not to love about a country with so much beauty and culture which centres around savouring regional food and drink at the table? And also like me, I bet the word '*Magnaccioni*' in this book's title sparked your interest. New to me, it's Roman dialect for 'people who live to eat and drink well'. Oh yes, that's us!

I was introduced to author Anne Pia by a food historian who managed to squeeze me into the launch event at none other than Valvona & Crolla (where else?), the treasure trove of Italian (and Scottish) produce celebrating its 90th anniversary this year.

I could have listened to Anne all night, as she so evocatively read extracts from the book and shared her food memories. The way she described the joy of watching Italians with "visceral" pleasure; the rituals around making and drinking coffee, shopping for pastries on a Sunday or relaxing with antipasti in the sunshine, perfectly captured how so many of us feel about this special country's food and drink culture. It was infectious.

An esteemed author and poet, this is surprisingly her first foray into food writing. A very personal memoir, as the grandchild of Southern Italian immigrants, Anne invites us to share her Italian food heritage, and the recipes, stories and music that have influenced her.

Divided into enticingly named chapters, from 'Antipasti...relaxing with guests' to 'The best of life', 'L'ora dell'aperitivo' (that delicious drink and snack before dinner) and 'The sweet South', Anne lyrically describes traditions and food customs, her memories and anecdotes, with accompanying recipes, from her famous *frittata* and *beef sugo* to *homemade ricotta*, *mushrooms with lemons and walnuts* and *focaccia*. There are drink recommendations too, as well as playlists of classical and modern Italian tunes (oh I can hear them now).

Anne's philosophy is one of simple food, made with good ingredients that respect the land and seas, to be shared around the table with music and conversation. They are dishes and ingredients that are easy to make at home and to get stuck into with friends and family.

It's easy to romanticise Italian food culture, but this book doesn't aim to do that. It's about sharing joy, real food inspired by precious heritage, reminding us of all of the pleasures of the table and what this can add to our lives. Whether a fellow Italophile or not, this is surely something that we can all get behind. Buon appetito!

Anne's book can be purchased online at Luath Press or, at the time of writing, Valvona & Crolla and The Edinburgh Bookshop.



Restaurants

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 for 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 too in the 'whisky snug'. Outdoor terrace area. Simply kick back, relax, and enjoy! **11 Bristo Pl, Edinburgh EH1 1EZ - 0131 285 1479**

Dine – (above the Traverse Theatre), is a relaxed multi 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 at its very best and is a passionate advocate of Scottish produce. There are 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 from 8.30 am serving breakfasts, coffees, brunch and lunches, and evening meals. Be sure to check out the lunchtime and fixed menu serving Mon-Sat 12pm / 6pm; Sun 1pm – 6pm (roast included). **101B Colinton Road, Edinburgh, EH14 1AL 0131 229 2929 www.craiglockhart.scot**

Dine Murrayfield – is a neighbourhood sibling of Dine in the city centre. This restaurant is nestled by the Water of Leith within the vicinity

of Murrayfield Stadium and is open every day for breakfast, brunch, lunch and dinner. Menus are designed by Executive Chef and Award-Winning Chef Stuart Muir and put Scottish produce firmly centre stage. 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 - www.murrayfield.scot | restaurant@murrayfield.scot**

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

The Walnut – Located halfway down Leith Walk this bijou Bistro has a top-notch reputation for 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. The tram stop is MacDonald Road. Lunch 2 courses £27 - 3 courses - £30- Wed-Sat 12:30 - 2 pm; Dinner - 2 courses £30 - 3 courses £34 with canapé and petit four. Tues -Sat 17.30 - 21.00 **9 Croall Pl, Leith Walk, Edinburgh EH7 4LT - 0131 281 1236**

French

L'escargot bleu – provenance, sourcing, and sustainability define the menu and cooking style at 'bleu', namely French classics with a Scottish twist. Patron Fred Berkmillier sources ingredients from small-scale traditional producers and suppliers from the length and breadth of Scotland and grows his own vegetables and herbs at Monkton Garden on the outskirts of Edinburgh. With wife Betty and daughter Mathilde, 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 Garrigue – Regional French cuisine and terroir wines from the Languedoc/Roussillon with spectacular views over Calton Hill. This warm, relaxed bistro brings all the warmth of Provence to you on a plate. Multiple awards include Gordon Ramsay's Best French Restaurant 2010 and a Michelin AA Rosette. Expect the best Scottish produce presented in classic French dishes such as Soupe de Poissons, Canard, Les Coquilles Saint Jacques, Clafoutis, Lavender 37 Listings Crème Brûlée. **0131 557 3032 – 31 Jeffrey Street, Edinburgh – reservations@lagarrigue.co.uk visit www.lagarrigue.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 – www.lapititefolie.co.uk**

Greek

From Kafeneion to STEKI – Cretan-influenced small plates (Mezedakia) designed for sharing. Extensive Greek wine list from the oldest wine-producing country in the world and a comprehensive drinks list. Food is all home-cooked and includes daily specials. The location is in a leafy corner of Leith next to the water of Leith. Neighbourhood vibe. **52 Coburg Street, Leith, EH6 6HJ, 0.5 miles from Royal Yacht Britannia. 01313482919 - kafeneion.tosteki@gmail.com - Open Tues & Wed 5-10pm. Thurs 12-10pm, Fri & Sat 12-11pm, Sun 12-5pm. Closed Monday.**

Indian

Kahani – Indian Street Food and Restaurant. Five minutes from St James Quarter and The Playhouse Theatre. BYOB with No Corkage. Delicious range of curries, authentic dishes and street food catering to all tastes and dietary requirements, vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options. Enjoy dishes such as Goan Monkfish Curry, Punjabi Roast Lamb, Old School Pakora and much more. Suitable for every occasion from supper for two through to large parties. Outdoor lounge, private room, 75 seats. **10/11 Antigua St, Edinburgh EH1 3NH – 0131 558 1947 kahanirestaurant.co.uk Open Sun-Thurs 12-10pm, Fri & Sat 12-11pm**

Shezan Indian Cuisine – authentic Indian cuisine at the top of Leith Walk since 1977. Opposite The Playhouse Theatre and Omni Centre Cinema. Whether you are enjoying a night out or relaxing with home delivery; treat yourself to beautifully crafted and succulent Punjabi cuisine. The menu includes pakoras and samosas, tandoori and grill specials, specialty main courses plus vegetarian and children's selections. Three-course pre-theatre menu is available. Tasty food, great taste, and dietary requirements catered for. Competitively priced wine and drinks menu. **25 Union Place, Edinburgh EH1 3NQ. - 0131 557 5098. Open Mon-Thu 2-11 pm, Fri-Sat 12-11.30pm, Sun 2-11:30pm.**

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. **10 Gillespie Place, Edinburgh – 0131 281 0526 @Harajukukitchen harajukukitchen.co.uk Open Mon-Fri 12-3pm, 5-10pm; Sat-Sun 12-11pm. Closed Tuesday.**

Scottish

No. 35 at The Bonham Hotel – The restaurant is located inside an elegant townhouse hotel tucked away in a leafy, oasis close to the city's bustling west end. There is a European-inspired menu with a distinctively Scottish twist, and it uses the finest local seasonal ingredients. Dishes such as pork tenderloin and poached Scottish salmon are cooked with skill and care. 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 £38 per person. Served Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 12.30pm–2.30pm. **35 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh, EH3 7RN - 0131 226 6050 or email restaurant@thebonham.com**

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 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. Est. 1898 (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' restaurant above. **1-5 West Register Street, Edinburgh 0131 556 4312 – www.guildfordarms.com, or email enquiries@guildfordarms.com**

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

Teuchters Bar & Bunker – Tucked away on cobbled William Street this is a hidden gem popular with the locals. It is also 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 also around a dozen international & blended whiskies on offer as well as 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 too. 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 Sun-Wed 12pm-12am, Fri & Sat 12pm-1am. Food available Sun-Thu 12-9pm, Fri & Sat 12-9.30pm. **26 William Street Edinburgh EH3 7NH – 0131 225 2973 – 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 then opens out onto an extensive beer garden & floating

pontoon with an outside bar too. This then leads to 'the bothy', another indoor area to escape those odd summer showers. There is an extensive malt whisky selection, around 140, as well as around a dozen international & blended whiskies. The famous 'hoop of destiny' is popular with everyone & was featured on the BBC documentary "Scotch"! The Story of Whisky". There is also a great range of Scottish cask keg & bottled beers as well as a great wine list, gin, rum & soft drinks. Something for all tastes. The eclectic food menu focuses on Scottish produce & is served 7 days a week. Food available everyday 9.15am-9.30pm. Bar open every day 11am-1am. **1a-1c Dock Place, Leith EH6 6LU 0131 554 7427 – www.teuchtersbar.co.uk**

Spanish Café

Indaba Café Bar – Delicatessen and tapas bar featuring authentic produce and dishes from Spain and South Africa. Favourites such as jamon, manchego, Valencian almonds, olives, tortilla, chorizo, empanadas, tarta de Santiago, and daily specials like carrot and lentil stew. Charming space frequented by Spanish people in Edinburgh for good reason. **88 S Clerk St, Newington, Edinburgh EH8 9PT. 0131 667 4511. To eat in or take out, Open Mon-Thurs 10am-6pm, Fri-Sat 10am-10pm. Book in advance for a table after 6pm.**

Street Food

Harajuku Street Food Van – Has moved! And is now at Edinburgh Street Food at the Omni Centre Award-winning chef Kaori Simpson serves up noodles, poke bowls and sushi burritos. Leith Street.

Food & Wine Shopping

Fion – Miguel Crunia and Vera Cebotari run this e-shop and wine agency in Edinburgh. Fion focuses on low-intervention wines from emerging regions. Miguel recently came #14 in Harper's Top 25 Sommeliers and is fast making a name as a sommelier of Atlantic Wines in particular.

For those who would like to discover wines that are ethical, interesting, and different please visit the shop online at fionwines.co.uk (next-day delivery to all EH addresses) where you can also subscribe to their monthly wine club where interesting, carefully curated wines await you. Vera & Miguel also specialize in running bespoke private and corporate tastings and in consultancy services on how to curate your own cellar - info@fionwines.co.uk | fionwines.co.uk

Wine Bars

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

L'escargot bleu wine bar – L'escargot Bleu wine bar – this cosy wine bar is situated beneath L'escargot Bleu restaurant on Broughton Street. You will find a convivial and welcoming bar where you can enjoy an aperitif before dining, a digestif after dining upstairs or just pop in for a drink and a nibble. The bar serves cheese, charcuterie, olives, bread, and other carefully sourced produce that perfectly complement a glass of wine or two! 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, Edinburgh EH1 3SA – 0131 557 1600 - www.lescargotbleu.co.uk**





HARAJUKU KITCHEN

SUSHI RESTAURANT & JAPANESE CUISINE

Chef Kaori Simpson fuses traditional family recipes passed down for three generations, with innovative AA rosette-level flair, to bring the finest Japanese cuisines to Edinburgh.



Lunch
Offer

Pop in and grab your lunch any weekday for just £14.90.
Choose 2 dishes from the menu. Deal includes rice and miso soup.

Reservations 10 Gillespie Street - 0131 285 8182

OPEN EVERYDAY - TAKEAWAY ALSO AVAILABLE