

GLAMOUR RETURNS TO LONDON'S RESTAURANTS

10th September, 2015 by Patrick Schmitt

Glamour, big sites, and specialisation are three themes characterising London's latest restaurants, according to one prominent on-trade wine supplier.



(<http://www.thedrinksbusiness.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Milos-Fish-Counter.jpg>)

Milos, a top end Greek restaurant that has just opened on St James's, features a massive fish and seafood display, as well as linen-covered tables and lots of attentive staff

The trends were identified during a discussion last week between *the drinks business* and Damian Carrington, who has spent over 20 years working in the UK wine trade, including almost 10 years supplying restaurants at Enotria, and 10 years working closely with the London on-premise at Fields,

Morris & Verdin, where he is managing director – a post he was promoted to in April this year.

Initially, looking back, he observed the emergence of “small, intimate, fantastic neighbourhood places since the collapse of Lehmann Brothers in 2008” – restaurants he described as “relatively simple, and based on great quality ingredients,” while noting in particular the number of new openings in east and north east London, mentioning the likes of Verden (<http://www.verdene5.com/>) and Primeur (<http://primeurn5.co.uk/>) as good examples.

He also said that symptomatic of such a trend towards informality and simplicity was the decision two years ago by Marcus Wareing to take all the linen off the tables at his two-star restaurant in the Berkeley Hotel (<http://www.marcus-wareing.com/>), renaming the place “Marcus”, to reflect its more relaxed feel.

However, according to Carrington, today people are putting the glamour and formality back into the London restaurant scene. For instance, he recorded how Fortnum & Mason has closed its Fountain Brasserie and will be shortly opening a new restaurant called 45 Jermyn Street promising “old school glamour”, while he also mentioned St James’s newest arrival, Milos (<http://milos.ca/restaurants/london>), a top-end Greek restaurant featuring a massive fish and seafood display loaded with vast lobsters, as well as lots of white linen and, seemingly, a surplus of staff to look after your every need.

“We are seeing a bit of glamour come back to eating out in London,” he stated.

Indeed, he noted the success of Chris Corbin and Jeremy King (<http://www.corbinandking.com/>), restaurateurs behind some of London’s most successful and glamorous concepts, from The Wolseley to The Colony at The Beaumont Hotel.

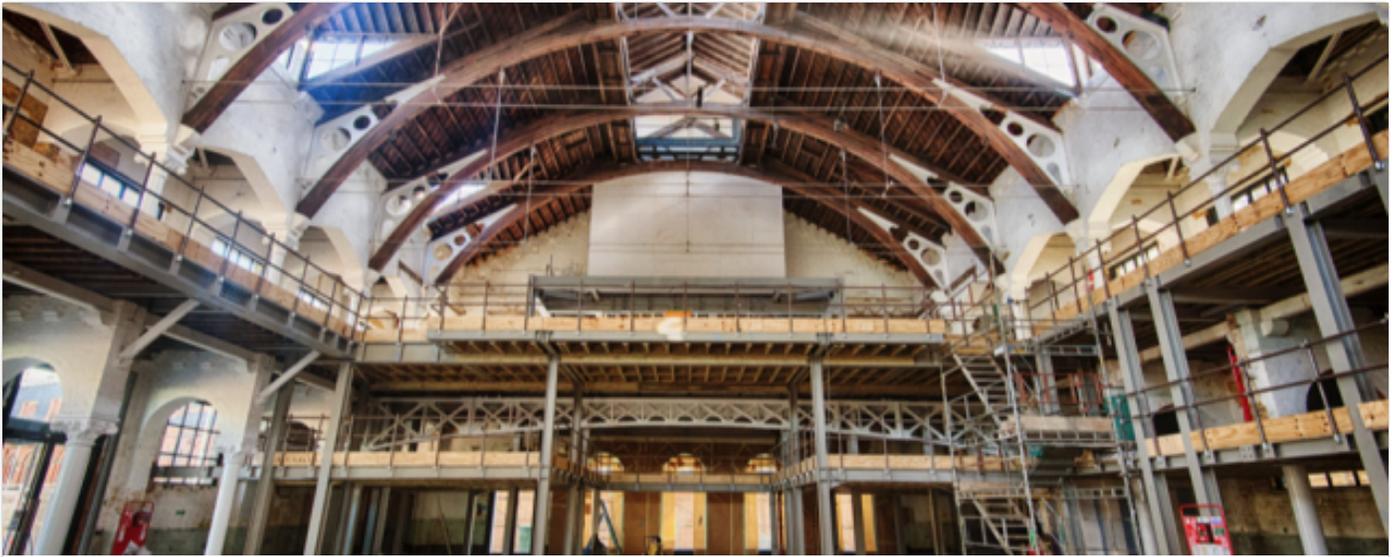
“Corbin and King have been the least swayed by fashion over the past 15 years and their view is that restaurants should be glamorous places to be seen and have fun,” he remarked.

Carrington also recorded the advent of major investments in large sites in the capital, proving a renewed confidence in the market for eating out in London.

“Over the next few months there are some big places opening, such as the German Gymnasium (<http://www.danddlondon.com/whats-on/other/introducing-german-gymnasium/>), which is an enormous site,” he said.

The new outlet is due to open in November, and will be the latest and largest restaurant from D&D. It is located in an old German school right by King’s Cross St Pancras station and Eurostar terminal, and has been described by the operator as offering “industrial glamour”.

“There are some big, chunky investments coming along,” said Carrington.



(<http://www.thedrinksbusiness.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/German-Gymnasium.png>)

Inside D&D's latest site: a former German school which will be converted in a restaurant specialising in wines and foods from Germany

Looking ahead, he also observed a trend towards specialisation in the food and wine offering from future restaurants.

“Specialisation is coming down the track,” he stated, citing the focus on wines from Alsace for Corbin & King’s next opening, The Bellanger in Islington (<https://www.thedrinksbusiness.com/2015/05/corbin-king-to-open-alsace-restaurant/>), as well as the aforementioned German Gynasium, which will centre on ingredients and drinks from Germany.

Finally, he recorded that many of London’s latest or impending openings are from existing operators, rather than complete newcomers to the London restaurant scene.

“A lot of the openings are the second or third sites from existing operators, such as new restaurants from Hawksmoor, Barrafina or Vinoteca,” he said, as well as those mentioned above from groups D&D and Corbin & King, while Milos London is the latest outlet for an upmarket Greek seafood chain with sites in New York, Montreal, Miami, Las Vegas and Athens.

Explaining the reason for this development, he suggested that it may be because “landlords are more comfortable putting in something that is a proven concept.”

In the future, however, he pondered whether crowd funding might be used more commonly to raise money for new restaurants in the capital, citing the inspiring approach by BrewDog, which is using this technique to expand its brewing operations (<http://www.thedrinksbusiness.com/2015/04/brewdog-launches-25m-crowdfunding-bid/>), as well as roll out its bars.
