



**Star quality:** The Ivy in London's West End attracts A-listers

# AYRTON

WINDOWS & DOORS

[www.ayrtonbespoke.com](http://www.ayrtonbespoke.com)



## Make an entrance

Replacing beautiful timber windows and doors, beautifully

Call 020 8877 8920 for 10% off orders placed by July 31 (Quote AYREM1807). Or visit our showrooms at 406 Merton Road, SW18 5AD and 61 - 63 Tottenham Lane, Crouch End, N8 9BE.

**N**OT many London restaurants can claim to have been around for 100 years but this year, The Ivy, long a haunt for the see and be seen, of the capital, celebrates its centenary. What was originally a café on the corner of West Street and Litchfield Street, in between Soho and Covent Garden, has passed through many hands over the past ten decades. It's now owned by Richard Caring, the restaurant supremo behind the likes of Scott's, J Sheekey, Daphne's and Le Caprice, and continues to draw A-list celebrities.

Yes, some will wax lyrical about its green leather banquettes, its stained glass, and its oak panelling. And others will go into raptures about the shepherd's pie, the salmon fishcakes or the bang bang chicken, but The Ivy has long been about the people who go there, and it's that which is reflected in a new book, *The Ivy Now*.

Admittedly, there are more than 100 recipes in there from the executive head chef Gary Lee, and a history of the place, but every page is peppered with recollections of the household names – many from the nearby theatres – who have made it their work canteen. It's rare that a day goes by without a paparazzo being stationed outside the place, and with good reason.

There's a wonderful anecdote from actress Dawn French about the time she was there with Jennifer Saunders and a playwright, and she spotted her friend Terry Gilliam lunching with Brad Pitt.

"I faked a trip to the loo so I could ask a waiter for a pad and pen, and I wrote a note to Terry, which read as follows: 'Make Brad kiss me as if he adores me, or I will kill your family. Fact. Love, Dawn of French x.'" I witnessed the note being delivered, and Terry shot me a cheeky wink. An hour or so later, Brad Pitt's lips were on mine. He said something like, "Hey, Dawn, great to see you. God you look gorgeous. I can see you're busy right now, but is there any chance we can hook up again? I would sooo love that, can I call you?"

**Get fresh:** Heritage tomato salad with sumac, lemon and feta



PHOTOS: JENNY ZARINS / PAUL WINCH-FURNISS



"Please?" Then he waved and was gone."

This is, it seems, the sort of thing that happens at The Ivy. And it's testament to how fond the A-list are of the place that they've contributed their stories. David Walliams recounts being introduced to Roger Moore there and finding out he was a fan of Little Britain. "At the end of the evening, the world's favourite James Bond approached my table and quoted one of my catchphrases back to me. "I'm a lady!" said Sir Roger. It was all the more hilarious as he delivered it in his deadpan style. From that moment

on, Sir Roger and I became friends." Walliams recalls another occasion when dining there with his mother and Roger Moore.

"We both had the shepherd's pie and Sir Roger remarked that this particular dish was one of the things he missed most about Britain now that he lived abroad. My mother couldn't stop flirting with him. "I make a lovely shepherd's pie, Sir Roger! I'd cook one for you any day!" she cooed. It was one of those moments where I had to pinch myself. Here I was in one of the best restaurants in the world with James Bond, and my mother is actually flirting with him. It must have been a dream. Except it wasn't. It was just another night at



**Kitchen confidential:** The Ivy's executive head chef Gary Lee



**Glass act:** diners wax lyrical about the green leather banquettes and oak panelling

## POTATO PANCAKES WITH

- Potato pancakes**
- 1 medium floury potato
  - 1 large egg
  - 50g plain flour
  - 50g potato flour
  - 1/2tsp baking powder
  - 125ml whole milk
  - pinch of ground nutmeg
  - 2tbsp sunflower or light olive oil
  - sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- To serve**
- 120g [1/2cup] crème fraîche
  - 1Tbsp horseradish cream
  - 250-300g [83/4-101/2oz] smoked salmon, thinly sliced
  - small handful of dill





# Bringing THE IVY home...

All the gossip and all the food, but without the hassle of booking. By **Claire Coleman**

## HERITAGE TOMATO SALAD WITH SUMAC, LEMON AND FETA SERVES 4

- 100g plum tomatoes
- 100ml olive oil
- 1kg mixed heritage tomatoes
- 200g feta
- 1 preserved lemon, skin only finely sliced
- 1 small bunch of mint
- Sea salt and black pepper
- 2 pinches of sumac, to serve

**1** To make the dressing, roughly chop the plum tomatoes and blitz until almost smooth. Scoop into a sieve lined with muslin and leave the tomato juices to drip through. Discard the pulp. Gradually add the

oil to the tomato juice, whisking until emulsified, then season. **2** Slice the larger tomatoes – these will go on the base of the plate. Smaller varieties should be halved and medium tomatoes cut into wedges so you have a variety of shapes. **3** Arrange the slices of tomato overlapping on the plate. Top with the wedges and halved tomatoes and crumble the feta over the top. Scatter the preserved lemon skin over the tomatoes with the mint. Drizzle with the dressing and dust with sumac to serve.

The Ivy.' And the roll call of glittering names goes on. Damien Hirst talking about dinners there with Keith Allen and Alex James – 'Keith would throw a spider crab on the floor and chase it with his fork, shouting, "Call Rentokil! Look at the size of these cockroaches!"' and Alex would be buying Dom Pérignon for tables of girls when he knew I was paying.' There's Stephen Fry remembering 'sitting two tables away from Paul Newman who was having a very animated conversation with John Malkovich. As the woman on the table next to them stared open-mouthed, Mr Newman leaned over, turned those extraordinary blue eyes on her and said: "You can look, but you can't touch."'

There are memories from Barbara Windsor, Tracey Emin, Angela Rippon and Simon Callow, who talks about seeing the Beckhams dining there – and the explosion of camera flashes that greeted them as they left the restaurant. And James Corden, who recalls knowing he'd made it when he 'called up to ask for a table at 8pm on a Saturday night and I got it. That was a big moment.'

With The Ivy Now, whether or not you can get a table, you can not only find out the secrets of that much loved shepherd's pie, but also be witness to some of those stardust-spangled showbiz moments that have taken place within those ancient walls.

■ *The Ivy Now by Fernando Peire and Gary Lee is published by Quadrille*

## BEEF CARPACCIO, PEPPERED FIGS, ROCKET AND PECORINO

### SERVES 4

- 400g (14oz) beef fillet
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 6 figs (optional)
- 1 tbsp clear honey
- a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil
- handful of rocket leaves
- 50g pecorino cheese, shaved
- sea salt flakes and freshly cracked black pepper

**1** Rub the beef fillet in the olive oil and season. Sear the beef until blackened all over. Once cool enough to handle, trim all the cooked outside meat from the beef. Leave the beef until cold, then slice the beef into 4 slices.



**2** Lay each slice of beef between a double thickness of clingfilm and gently hammer it out using either a meat tenderiser or a rolling pin, until it is only 2-3 mm thick. Place each slice of beef on a chilled plate, cover and chill until ready to serve. **3** Cut the figs (if using) in half through the stalks, brush each half with honey and sprinkle with cracked black pepper. Place under a hot grill, cut side uppermost, and cook for a few minutes. **4** To serve, drizzle the beef with a little extra virgin olive oil, season with sea salt flakes and arrange 3 fig halves (if using) on top of the beef. Scatter with the rocket and pecorino. Serve immediately.

**Better Bathrooms.com**

**NORTH CIRCULAR SHOWROOM NOW OPEN!**

THOUSANDS OF PRODUCTS ON DISPLAY...



**TABOR™ SUITE DEAL  
NOW ONLY £499.95**

Tabor™ 1700 Shower Bath Bathroom Suite Including Taps and Waste Code 11643



VISIT YOUR LOCAL INSPIRATIONAL SHOWROOMS IN...

Romford, RM3 0BX  
01708 548 214

Slough, SL1 6JA  
01753 465 563

North Circular, NW2 7JR  
020 8181 3840

Visit: [www.betterbathrooms.com](http://www.betterbathrooms.com)

\*Terms and Conditions apply. For a limited time only. On selected products only. While stocks last. Prices correct at time of going to print 28/06/17. For more details and latest prices, please ask in-store or visit [www.betterbathrooms.com](http://www.betterbathrooms.com).

## SMOKED SALMON AND HORSE RADISH CREAM SERVES 4



**1** Peel the potato and cook in a pan of boiling salted water until tender. Drain, mash, and leave to cool. Once it is cool, add the egg, both flours and baking powder and mix to combine. Gradually add the milk, whisking until a smooth paste forms. Add the nutmeg and season. **2** Heat 1/2 tbsp of the oil in a non-stick frying pan and spoon about 2-3 tablespoons of the potato pancake batter into the hot pan – the pancakes should be quite thick. Allow

it to cook for a couple of minutes until the underside is golden brown, then cook on the other side until golden. Remove from the pan and keep warm while you cook the remaining batter to make 3 more pancakes. Whisk the crème fraîche and horseradish together. **3** To serve, place a warm pancake on each plate, arrange 1/4 of the smoked salmon on top of each and finish with a spoonful of the horseradish cream and a little dill to garnish.