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PRESS RELEASE

London restaurants "in overdrive" with record rate of growth

The highest ever rate of net new restaurant openings in the capital is recorded in the 24th edition of *Harden's London Restaurants*, whose 2015 edition is published on Thursday 4th December.

The guide has tracked restaurant openings since 1991. The new edition records 148 new openings, very high by historical standards. Moreover the figure for closings, 47, was the lowest this millennium, resulting in net openings this year of 101 – nearly a third higher than the previous record of 75 (noted in the guide's 2006 edition). The ratio of openings to closings stood at 3.1x, a ratio beaten only once in the guide's history (in 1996).

The guide's co-founder, Peter Harden said:

"This exceptional level of growth is a fabulous achievement for the capital, but raises questions about its sustainability. It underlines London's continued emergence as the greatest restaurant city on the planet, but – in the 24 years in which we have tracked openings – such highpoints have also often heralded more competitive times ahead."

The guide's introduction notes the continued emergence of East London as a major dining out destination, with three of the guide's most notable 2014 newcomers in Shoreditch and Bethnal Green (**Lyle's**, **The Merchant's Tavern** and **The Typing Room**). Another notable newcomer, **Kurobuta**, reflects the growing for pop-up restaurants finding a permanent home.

Winners & losers in the 2015 survey of restaurant-goers

Ratings and reviews in the guides are based on one of the UK's most detailed annual polls of restaurant goers with over 6,250 people contributing over 65,000 reports for the 2015 edition.

Brett Graham further consolidated his position as London's best chef as **The Ledbury** won the coveted title of 'Top Gastronomic Experience' for the first time, as well as topping the food rankings.



Chez Bruce, the neighbourhood restaurant that continues to transcend its somewhat obscure location, was – for the 10th year running – voted **London's Favourite Restaurant**, marking an incredible double for restaurateur Nigel Platts-Marín who is also the backer of The Ledbury.

Simon Rogan's relaunch of Claridge's dining room – **Fera at Claridge's** – was the highest rated newcomer of the year, going straight in at number four in the **overall rankings** (for food, service and ambience). The chef's first major foray into London (after his pop-up Roganic last year) has won high praise for its "phenomenal" meals – which are "so different" to the usual dining scene – and "gloriously attentive" service.

It continues to be a great year for **Gymkhana** as Harden's reporters heap more praise on the lauded nouvelle Indian. The yearling is already **London's 12th most talked about** restaurant thanks to its "sensationally subtle" cuisine.

Jason Atherton continues to be the surest bet when it comes to finding a quality meal at a celebrity chef's sprawling restaurant empire. While others have felt the strain of expansion, Atherton continues to knock out hit after hit, notably opening **City Social** and backing **Lee Westcott** at **The Typing Room** this year.

By contrast, appearing on the **Most Disappointing Cooking** list for the first time is **Ollie Dabbous's** eponymous flagship, Dabbous (10). It appears alongside **Marcus Wareing's** relaunched **Marcus** at the Berkeley (8) and **Heston Blumenthal's** hotel dining room, **Dinner** at the Mandarin Oriental (2). Ratings at all these restaurants softened this year, and Ollie Dabbous and Marcus Wareing also notched up nothing-to-write-home-about performances at their spin-off ventures, **Barnyard** and **The Gilbert Scott** respectively.

Meanwhile the chef behind Viajante, **Nuno Mendes** – who arguably put Bethnal Green on the culinary map – moved west to the **Chiltern Firehouse** and became an instant celebrity darling. But while it may be an "amazing" room the Harden's survey finds the food is actually pretty "meh" at Andre Balazs's hotel where "poseurs and paparazzi abound".

After his disappearance from the Top 10 gastronomic experience list last year, **Gordon Ramsay** mounted something of a comeback. His flagship Royal Hospital Road restaurant (helmed by Clare Smyth) has returned to the list (at 7).

Once again **Oxo Tower** retains its unenviable status as the home of London's Most Disappointing Cooking, but for the first time in 15 years it has escaped a double on the "lists of shame"! When it comes to the Most Overpriced Restaurant List, for the first time, **The River Café**, has the dubious honour of taking up that mantle!



Prices in line with inflation

The average price of dinner for one at establishments listed in this guide is £49.46 (compared to £47.68 last year). Prices have risen by 2.7% in the past 12 months. This is a little less than last year's rise, and broadly in line with inflation as recorded by the Retail Price Index.

Top 10 most notable newcomers (editor's pick)

Every year the Harden's editors choose what to them seem to be the most significant openings of the year. This year, their selection is as follows:

Chiltern Firehouse
Fera at Claridge's
Lyle's
The New Angel
The Typing Room

City Social
Kurobuta
Merchants Tavern
The Palomar
Uni

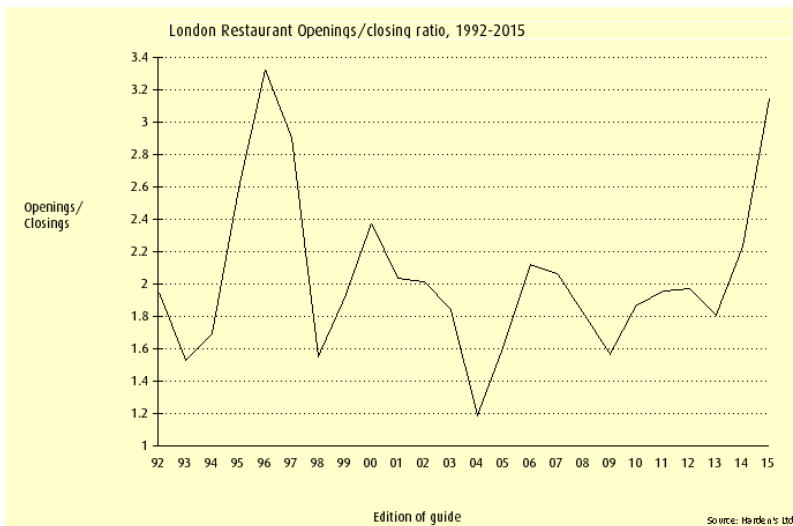
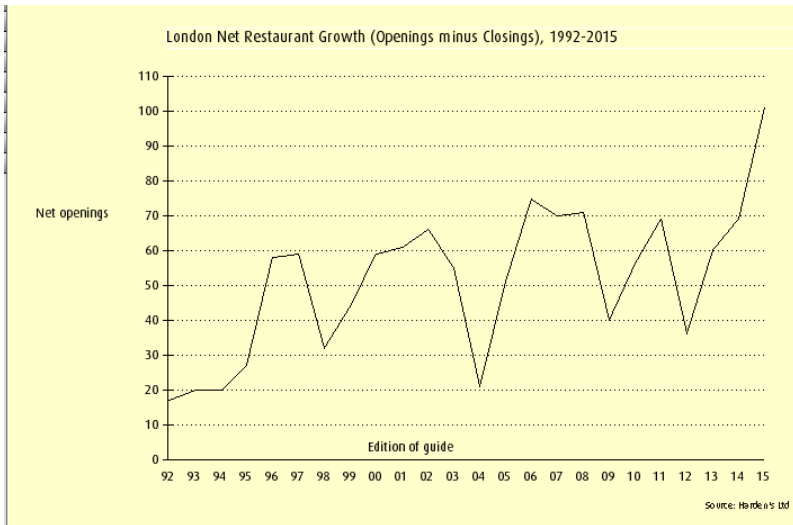
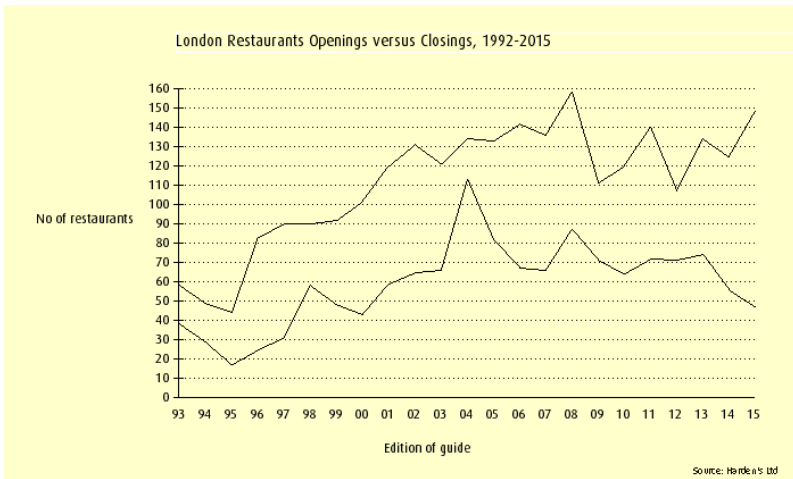
Notes for editors

For further information or to arrange an interview, contact Karen Moss on 020 7839 4763

Notes for Editors

1. Harden's is the UK's original 'user-generated content' restaurant guide. The Harden's survey of regular restaurant-goers is now in its 24th year. It has been national in scope since 1999. Harden's is the only established detailed annual survey of restaurant-goers across the UK
2. Harden's content is available in guidebook format, and in apps for iPhone; and also at www.hardens.com.
3. *Harden's London Restaurants 2015*, £12.99, is available in all good bookshops, including Waterstone's and Amazon.com, and from www.hardens.com.

OPENINGS & CLOSINGS





SURVEY RESULTS

Most mentioned

- 1 J Sheekey (1)
- 2 Scott's (3)
- 3 Le Gavroche (2)
- 4 Clos Maggiore (4)
- 5 The Ledbury (8)
- 6 The Delaunay (11)
- 7 Chez Bruce (6)
- 8 Pollen Street Social (10)
- 9 Dinner (7)
- 10 The Wolseley (9)

- 11 Brasserie Zédel (5)
- 12 Gymkhana*
- 13 The Cinnamon Club (17)
- 14 Galvin La Chapelle (20)
- 15 The Square (12)
- 16 Bleeding Heart (16)
- 17 The River Café (19)
- 18 Bocca Di Lupo (23)
- 19 La Trompette (13)
- 20 Pied à Terre (40)

- 21 Medlar (13)
- 22= La Poule au Pot (21)
- 22= Marcus (15)
- 24= The Berners Tavern (-)
- 24= Benares (23)
- 26 Galvin Bistrot de Luxe (18)
- 27 Zucca*
- 28= Gauthier Soho (38)
- 28= Trinity (28)

- 30= Grain Store*
- 30= Le Caprice (20)
- 32 Zuma (34)
- 33 Gordon Ramsay (30)
- 34 The Ivy (26)
- 35 Andrew Edmunds (37)
- 36= Tayyabs (35)
- 36= The Anchor & Hope (-)
- 38 Terroirs (33)
- 39 Yauatcha (-)
- 40 Amaya (25)

Top gastronomic experience

- 1 The Ledbury (2)
- 2 Le Gavroche (1)
- 3 Dinner (3)
- 4 Chez Bruce (4)
- 5 Pollen Street Social (5)
- 6 Pied à Terre (10)
- 7 Gordon Ramsay (-)
- 8 The Square (8)
- 9 Marcus (6)
- 10 Medlar (9)

Favourite

- 1 Chez Bruce (1)
- 2 J Sheekey (5)
- 3 Clos Maggiore (-)
- 4 The Ledbury (8)
- 5 Le Gavroche (2)
- 6 The River Café (10)
- 7 The Delaunay (6)
- 8 Le Caprice (4)
- 9 Pollen Street Social (9)
- 10 The Wolseley (3)

Best for business

- 1 The Wolseley (1)
- 2 The Delaunay (3)
- 3 The Square (2)
- 4 Galvin La Chapelle (4)
- 5 Bleeding Heart (6)
- 6 The Don (5)
- 7 Coq d'Argent (-)
- 8 Scott's (8)
- 9 L'Anima (7)
- 10 Pollen Street Social*

Best for romance

- 1 Clos Maggiore (1)
- 2 La Poule au Pot (2)
- 3 Andrew Edmunds (3)
- 4 Bleeding Heart (4)
- 5 Le Gavroche (5)
- 6 Chez Bruce (7)
- 7 Galvin at Windows (6)
- 8 Galvin La Chapelle (-)
- 9 The Ledbury (-)
- 10 Gauthier Soho (-)

Best breakfast/brunch

- 1 The Wolseley (1)
- 2 The Delaunay (2)
- 3 Duck & Waffle (8)
- 4 Riding House Café (5)
- 5 Roast (3)
- 6 Colbert*
- 7 Cecconi's (3)
- 8 3 South Place*
- 9 The Pantechicon (-)
- 10 Balthazar*

Best bar/pub food

- 1 The Anchor & Hope (1)
- 2 Bull & Last (2)
- 3 Harwood Arms (3)
- 4 The Jugged Hare*
- 5 Canton Arms (7)
- 6 The Gun (8)
- 7 Ladbroke Arms (10)
- 8 Pig & Butcher*
- 9 Truscott Arms*
- 10 Thomas Cubitt (4)

Most disappointing cooking

- 1 Oxo Tower (Rest') (1)
- 2 Dinner (6)
- 3 Colbert (5)
- 4 The Ivy (8)
- 5 Gordon Ramsay (3)
- 6 Le Gavroche (-)
- 7 Balthazar (2)
- 8 Marcus (-)
- 9 Alain Ducasse (9)
- 10 Dabbous*

Most overpriced restaurant

- 1 The River Café (3)
- 2 Oxo Tower (Rest') (1)
- 3 Dinner (4)
- 4 Gordon Ramsay (2)
- 5 Marcus (7)
- 6 Alain Ducasse (5)
- 7 Le Gavroche (8)
- 8 Cut (6)
- 9 Balthazar*
- 10 Pollen Street Social (10)

Highest ratings

Food	Overall
£85+	£85+
1 The Ledbury	1 The Ledbury
2 Rasoi	2 Bubbledogs KT
3 Pied à Terre	3 Le Gavroche
4 Le Gavroche	4 Fera at Claridge's
5 One-O-One	5 Pied à Terre
£65-£84	£65-£84
1 The Five Fields	1 The Five Fields
2 Hedone	2 The Goring Hotel
3 Chez Bruce	3 Chez Bruce
4 Zuma	4 Scott's
5 HKK	5 Galvin La Chapelle
£50-£64	£50-£64
1 Sushi Tetsu	1 Sushi Tetsu
2 Moro	2 Clos Maggiore
3 Dinings	3 L'Aventure
4 Sukho Fine Thai Cuisine	4 Randall & Aubin
5 Gauthier Soho	5 J Sheekey Oyster Bar
£40-£49	£40-£49
1 Sushi-Say	1 Lamberts
2 Lamberts	2 Donostia
3 Jin Kichi	3 Brawn
4 Brawn	4 Sushi-Say
5 Donostia	5 José
£39 or less	£39 or less
1 Pitt Cue Co	1 Carom at Meza
2 Ragam	2 The Begging Bowl
3 Mangal 1	3 Pitt Cue Co
4 Santa Maria	4 Paradise Hampstead
5 Silk Road	5 Meat Mission