

Darwin is highly original



I had been dying to visit 20 Fenchurch Street ever since it first jumped into my consciousness in the most 21st century way possible: by inadvertently melting nearby cars with deflected and magnified sunbeams, writes *Joey Millar...*

While it may have been an engineering nightmare, the ‘fryscraper’ immediately captured the imagination of a city sick to death of buildings that outright refuse to cause even minimum damage to the surrounding infrastructure.

In the end, of course, the futuristic and destructive tendencies of the ‘Walkie Talkie’ were neutered by kill-joy awnings, and bankers and businessmen could once again safely park in EC3 their without fear of returning to a puddle of melted sports car.

Three years after Sunbeamgate, it was the 34th floor’s celebrated Sky Garden, and the equally tempting Darwin Brasserie, that drew me to The City one Saturday lunchtime. The eatery is located within an indoor park, offering incredible views of lush greenery in the foreground and London’s vista beyond – which always looks



**DARWIN BRASSERIE
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different from every new vantage point.

It may have just turned midday but Hattie and I began our meal with two Darwin Punches, which are refreshing cocktails served, without explanation, in exotic stone containers shaped like heads. Combined with the shrubs and leaves, the restaurant took on the feel of its namesake’s beloved Galápagos Islands – all that was missing was a couple of 100-year-old turtles and David Attenborough peering over a rock.

We played healthy for our starters – we had seen the mains and desserts menu and knew what lay ahead. I ordered a crab salad while Hattie trumped me with a spring vegetable salad. Both were tasty - if unspectacular; salad is salad, no matter the view – and whetted the



appetite before our next course.

Aided by another round of cocktails, we moved onto our main courses: a confit duck burger for me, complete with truffled duck egg and fries, and crispy plaice fillet with fries and mushy peas for Hattie. Our pretence of healthy living had disappeared as quickly as our first round of drinks and we tucked in, pausing occasionally to point out another London landmark poking up from the infinite tangle of streets and roofs spread out before us.

For desert we attempted a swift U-turn to health with a peach and apricot salad and a passionfruit tart but the damage was already done. It was hard to feel too guilty, however, when the meal was topped off with two glasses of sweet wine and a stunning view of greenery and concrete intertwined at 500 feet.

Darwin is celebrating summer with a new brunch menu and the launch of Freakshakes - pimped-out milkshakes and dessert mixed into one glutinous glass.



THE DAMAGE

Dorset crab salad	- £14.50
Spring vegetable salad	- £11.75
Confit duck burger	- £18.50
Crispy plaice fillet	- £17.75
Peaches and apricot salad	- £7.95
Passionfruit and coconut tart	- £7.95
Glass of Muscat de Minervois x2	- £17
Glass of Darwin’s Punch x4	- £46

TOTAL - £141.40

FOOD (1-5)	★★★★★
VALUE (1-5)	★★★★★
AMBIENCE (1-5)	★★★★★
DISABLED ACCESS	YES
DISABLED TOILET	NO