

AROUND TOWN

Going Green at Arthur Hooper's

I'll be up front: vegan cuisine isn't my cup of tea (after all, I prefer mine with milk). However, after hearing top Borough eatery Arthur Hooper's had launched a new dedicated menu I decided it was time to give in and embrace the green shoots of change, writes Joey Millar...

Overlooking Borough Market, Arthur Hooper's is still in its salad days having opened only last year. However the experienced staff and chefs at the restaurant are anything but green and have put together a new vegan menu – alongside their usual, varied offerings – using products often sourced just across the road.

That is apt: after all, the restaurant's namesake Arthur Hooper was a fruit-seller in Borough Market back in the Victorian Era. Rest assured, however, that these days Arthur Hooper (the restaurant, not the man – he's long gone, despite all that fruit and veg) serves up a very modern mix of European cuisine, from tapas style dishes to hearty set menus (two courses for £15, three for £18). As well as all this, the restaurant has also opened a new private dining rooms for parties and groups, suitably named the 'Fruit & Veg' room.

As I walked through Borough Market, where traders were slowly becoming outnumbered by revellers, it was impossible not to think of how it must have looked during Arthur's time. So much had changed (after all, he lived in a bizarre period in which Millwall had yet to evolve into Lions and were still nicknamed Rovers) but a lot, I thought as I accidentally brought my foot down into a puddle of greyish water dumped in front of a fishfood stall, would still be familiar to him even today.

At this point I could describe for you each dish in detail (that's probably what my editor wants, too, but they have long since accepted most of my word count will be taken up with historical rambling) but what good would that really do? Sure, I could say the samphire and almond salad was the perfectly fresh opening dish, or I could describe the frigitelli peppers as being big and tasty enough to pass for a meal all in itself. I could say the sauteed new potatoes literally make me exclaim with joy as they were brought over while the crispy artichokes instead resulted in a satisfied silence.

Really, though, the best thing



Arthur Hooper's

8 Stoney Street
SE1 9AA
0207 940 0169
ArthurHoopers.co.uk



is to not just take my word for it – after all, I'm the standard of food reviewer who uses the same vegan/green pun twice in the opening two paragraphs – but to try it out for yourself. Because take it from me: anyone who isn't lucky enough to experience Arthur Hooper's new vegan menu should be green with envy (I'm sorry). And with vegan dessert and wine options available too, you really have no excuse not to turnip.

THE DAMAGE

Olives	£3.50
Peppered almonds	£4
Sapphire and almond salad	£8
Hariissa butter beans, broccoli and nigella seeds	£7
Crispy artichokes, courgettes and Brussel tops, chilli aioli	£9
Roasted onion squash, lentils, turnip tops, roasted peppers	£14.5
Frigitelli peppers with sea salt	£5
Sauteed rosemary new potatoes	£4
TOTAL	£55.00

FOOD (1-5)	★★★★★
AMBIENCE (1-5)	★★★★★
VALUE (1-5)	★★★★★
DISABLED ACCESS	YES
DISABLED TOILET	YES

STAYING LOCAL

A cosy little place with good value cuisine

Ziyafet

200 Eltham High Street
SE9 1DB
020 8850 4967
ziyafet.webs.com



Eltham has become well-known in recent years for the eclectic mix of Mediterranean cuisine on offer on the high street. But with so many establishments, seemingly serving the same thing, how do you choose which one to go to? Well, if you're anything like me, rather than selecting one, you'll gradually eat your way around them all, writes Nicky Sweetland

And my latest foray into the world of exotic fodder was with a trip to Ziyafet. The tiny establishment on Eltham High Street serves a mixture of Mediterranean, European, Turkish and middle eastern dishes and is a cosy little place to stop off for a light bite. I popped along on a Saturday lunchtime, when the town centre was buzzing with people getting their weekly shopping, but I was able to detach myself from the hurly burly as soon as I crossed the threshold of the bijou restaurant.

It was filled with families enjoying a weekend treat and couples sharing intimate lunches, but what was also great, was the fact that I wasn't the only person dining alone (again!). In fact, there were a few single diners and the atmosphere was so chilled that I didn't get that awkwardness you sometimes feel when you're eating on your own.

With a subtle soundtrack of Mediterranean-style music playing in the background I sampled some of the choices from the special two-

course lunchtime set menu, which at just £7.50 is a steal.

I started with toasted pitta and hummus, which was creamy, tangy and satisfying and washed it down with a glass of crisp dry white wine (a very classy Pinot Grigio). I chose to have chicken shish served with couscous for my main meal and the mouthwatering chunks of succulent chicken were truly delightful. I might hasten to add that the addition of chili sauce blew my socks off, such was the intense heat, but luckily I hadn't guzzled my wine too quickly, so I was able to put out the fire in my mouth.

It was by no means haute cuisine, but then what do you expect for £7.50? What you can guarantee from a meal at Ziyafet is a good value, well prepared meal in welcoming and comfortable surroundings.

THE DAMAGE

Set lunch menu	£7.50
Drinks	£4.50
TOTAL	£12.00

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