



dining fay maschler

mfood&drink@standard.co.uk

One-O-One

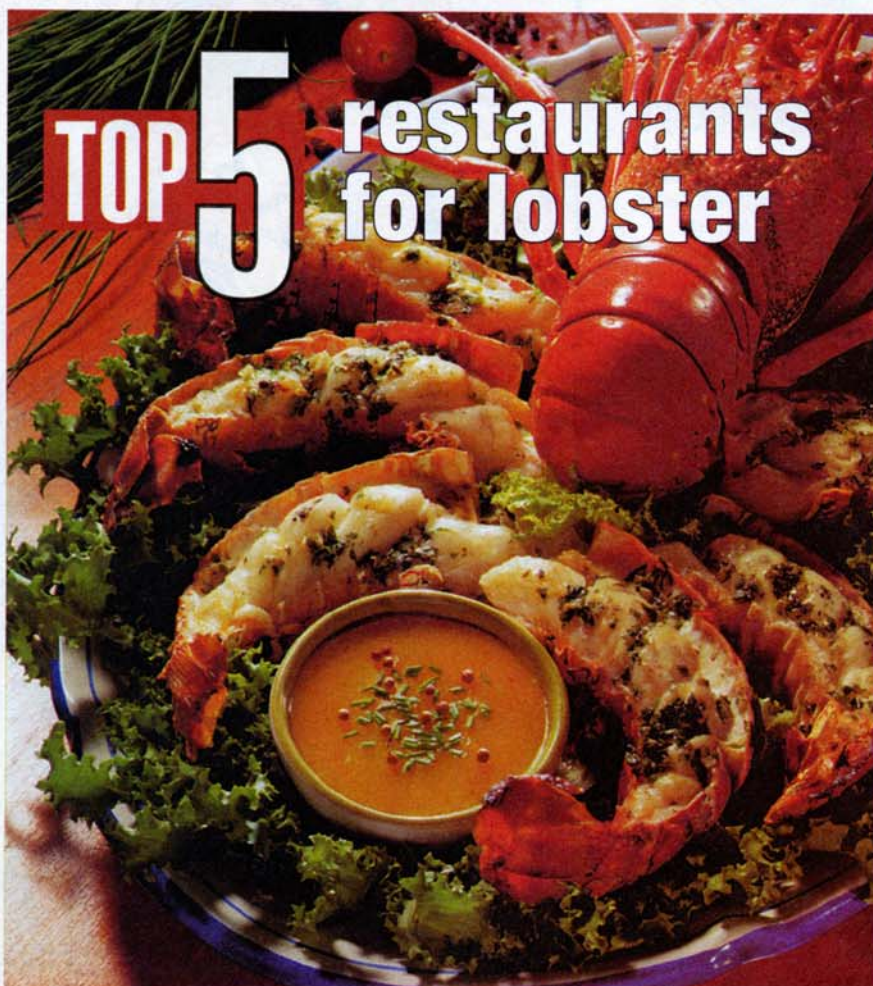
Sheraton Park Tower,
101 William Street, SW1
(020-7290 7101). Mon-Sun
£130 ●●

Breton chef Pascal Proyart, with his passion for cooking fish, has managed to rise above the corporate surroundings of the 'Pineapple Hotel' on Knightsbridge and hook a creditable number of non-resident diners. They manage to turn a blind eye to turquoise upholstery, pictures of fish and other evocations of the ocean wave and concentrate on dishes such as royal king crab legs – bigger legs than your average crab – seaweed-steamed langoustines, oven-roasted turbot and the speciality of sea bass cooked in a crust of Brittany sea salt served for two. The petrified block of salt is brought to the table and cracked open, revealing perfectly cooked and seasoned fish. Lobster lovers find their satisfaction in lobster and tomato gazpacho and roasted peppered lobster. Seafood is an expensive commodity and hotel dining exacerbates the fact. Make 'savings' on dessert, the weakest course. Staff aim to please.

Aaura

37-38 Gerrard Street, W1
(020-7287 8033). Mon-Sun
£70 ●

Buy live lobsters at the shop next to the Newport Place car park in Chinatown. At the time of writing they were being sold for £8.50 a pound, with their claws waving a greeting. Their price and liveliness make set-price lobster menus in the surrounding restaurants generally a good deal. At this new arrival in Gerrard Street, where you are ushered in by young ladies in maroon uniforms waving a greeting, the Seafood Special Set Menu is £25 per person (minimum ●●● Excellent ●● Very good ● Good



two people). It kicks off with steamed fresh scallops with garlic and moves on to baked lobster with spicy salt and pepper, braised grouper with chef's sauce, king prawns with leek and cashew nut, braised Chinese mushrooms with bok-choi and, of course, egg fried rice. When you consider that a lobster ordered à la carte is £22.50, a saving is clearly being made. To embellish the feast, add roasted pigeon.

Zilli Fish

36-40 Brewer Street, W1
(020-7734 8649). Mon-Sun
£100 ●

Aldo Zilli owns Zilli Enterprises and what an enterprising chap he is, popping up on daytime TV

food shows, writing books and still finding the time to schmooze his clientele from the ad agencies and film companies of Soho who hang out here, at Signor Zilli in Dean Street and at Zilli Fish Too (clock the witty way with the English language) in Covent Garden. Spaghetti with lobster is a signature dish at these restaurants. A luxurious garnish on a humble staple is the gastronomic exemplar of rags to riches and, as such, strikes a chord with every media hopeful. Tomato sauce is the agent or

www.thisislondon.co.uk

Visit our website for full venue info, menus, special offers and maps for thousands of restaurants

manager in the scenario and at Zilli Enterprises it is usually a good one. At this branch service is sometimes criticised, but surely waiting is just more time for networking.

FishWorks

6 Turnham Green Terrace, W4
(020-8994 0086). Tue-Sat £78 ●

The first London outlet of a business established in the West Country, the formula, devised by TV chef and author Mitchell Tonks and his business partner Roy Morris, is fundamentally that of a fish shop with tables. Starting at 8am, the shop stays open until 10.30pm, which is more accommodating hours than fishmongers usually

keep. Up a short flight of stairs, the restaurant is brightly lit and painted a Devon dinghy blue. Seaside paintings contribute to a bucket-and-spade holiday atmosphere, as do the terrace and garden at the back, warmed by the reliable sun of gas-fired heaters. The day's delivery is described on a blackboard menu and when I was last there a tenderly cooked small native lobster was priced at £19. Mayonnaise and other sauces might not be as noble as the raw ingredient but FishWorks is as close to the seaside as you'll find in Chiswick.

Lobster Pot

3 Kennington Lane, SE11
(020-7582 5556). Tue-Sat £78 ●

The habits of un-farmed lobsters are such that they can only be caught in special lobster pots and fishing for them is relatively expensive and arduous. Caught in Hervé and Nathalie Regent's eccentric restaurant, subjected to the recorded sounds of seagulls, foghorns and crashing waves, you might feel some sympathy with the creatures. Here is more son et lumière or theme park ride than the usual lunch or dinner out, but the warmth and enthusiasm that fuels the venture is heart-warming. Plateaux de fruits de mer – the expensive variety sporting lobster – and ebullient fish soups and casseroles are assemblies that the kitchen does well. Some other dishes tend to look too creamy, boozy sauces for their distinction. It is French cooking of the rich, old-fashioned kind. Prices are high and supplements a nuisance on the set-price menus, but savings can be made at lunch time.

Prices indicate the average cost of a meal for two with wine