

attitude



JANUARY 2009 £6.50



Bumpkin



Coach & Horses



Le Bouchon Breton

LE BOUCHON BRETON

When culinary heavyweight Michel Roux came up with the idea for a champers and shellfish bar, local bankers still had expense accounts – and jobs. Post credit-crunch, the sound of popping corks is all but a distant memory but this impressive French brasserie has enough gusto to see it through the hard times. Nestling under the pitched iron and glass roof of Spitalfields Market, there is a lovely all-year-round terrace bar and alfresco dining area, which overlooks the (now rather soulless) market below. Shellfish is brought in daily to create a selection of Les Plateaux de Fruits de Mer to share. There's also some comforting, well-priced brasserie classics including moules marinières and steak frites. We went for the rather delicious Dover sole, which was divine. Like all true brasseries, Le Bouchon Breton keeps its doors open from morning through to night and with an average cost of £35 a head it won't break the bank.

8 Horner Square, Spitalfields Market, London E1.
Tel: 0800 019 1704; www.lebouchon.co.uk

S&M

Comfort food doesn't come better than bangers and mash, and comfort is just what we need right now. Founded on sites that were once family-owned British 'caffs', the s&m cafes are famous for keeping classic materials such as formica, linoleum and vitrolite. In fact, their retro-ness makes them newer than now. Each s&m represents a reaction against the ever increasing presence of chain coffee shops, which often favour an unimaginative, 'paint-by-numbers' contemporary interior. Besides the sausage-and-mash range, which features a daily selection of up to 14 varieties including a number of vegetarian and vegan options, there are a variety of 'caff' options – including shepherd's pie, toad in the hole, apple crumble and other British favourites. For those with a discerning palate as well as a nostalgic urge for homemade comfort food, s&m is a favourite with celebrities such as Tracey Emin, Damon Albarn and Paul Weller with branches all over London.

s&m, 28 Leadenhall Market, London EC3. Tel: 020 7626 6646; www.sandmcafe.co.uk

Hermet, the man behind post-brat hangout Boujis, and is a jolly sort of place "for city folk that like a little country living". The rustic interior is based on a kind of funky farmhouse aesthetic, so lots of bare brick, big chunks of wood dotted about for chopping bread on and antique crockery creating a wonky, woolly, warm setting for a cosy dinner. The well-priced menu is like a bible of comfort food: fish pie, macaroni cheese and pork belly with apple sauce, to name but a few. All of the seasonal fruit and vegetables come from Secretts Farm in Guildford, while all the meat comes from Frank Godfrey, the award-winning butcher. Matthew Williamson and Twiggy were in there the night we went, not that anybody really noticed or cared – everyone was more into what was on their plates. *Bumpkin South Kensington, 102 Old Brompton Road, London SW7. Tel: 020 7341 0802; www.bumpkinuk.com*

COACH & HORSES

Nothing quite hits the spot like a proper pub. Originally an ale house and bear pit, the Coach & Horses is packed with media types being located right behind the Guardian's offices. But don't let that put you off. Head chef Henry Herbert (even his name has a nice old-fashioned ring to it) forages for wild ingredients in and around London. So expect crab apples from his favourite tree at the Oval, blackberries from Hampstead Heath and mushrooms from Epping Forest (on second thoughts think I might give the blackberries a miss given what goes on up on the Heath). Go at lunchtime and tuck into small plates that start at £4 and might include rabbit rillettes with cornichons on toast, while an original à la carte menu is available in the evenings, featuring starters such as roast beetroot and shallots with goats curd and watercress salad, or whole roast lamb's heart with celeriac remoulade. There's a brilliant value £10 roast with all the trimmings on Sundays and bargains such as £5 Bellinis and Bloody Marys. *Coach & Horses, 26-28 Ray Street, Clerkenwell, London EC1. Tel: 020 7278 8990; www.thecoachandhorses.com*

