

The Guardian

Brands such as Eggslut know that people still need casual breakfast dining options. It also knows that Gen Z doesn't quite believe that eschewing fancy, £9.95 scrambled eggs, which Eggslut serves on a glossy roll with cheese, sriracha mayo, chives and caramelised onions, will help them to save up for a £300k starter flat, so they've decided to enjoy the eggs anyway.

Eggslut's menu is brief; it is comfort food made ostensibly of good produce, and almost everything comes in a brioche bun. There are eggs with apple-wood smoked bacon, Cheddar and chipotle ketchup, eggs with portobello mushroom pâté and hollandaise, chopped hard-boiled eggs with honey mustard aioli and dressed rocket.

Having tried Eggslut several times now, and after weathering several collapsing £15 sandwiches, their OK if forgettable lash browns and a dessert list that offers an odd-looking chocolate chip cookie covered in grey salt and served in a bag, I can't help thinking that, for the price, it should all just be a bit better.

Eggslut is the plain, minimalist reaction to the bright, multicoloured, kid-friendly McDonald's or Burger King, with their glowing, above-counter menus and enforced

Grace Dent splashes out on egg butties at Eggslut in London



"I can't help thinking that, for the price, it should all just be a bit better"

jolliness. Eggslut is a sea of cement where no chair is the best chair, and where they take £45 out of your account for two of you to eat an unmemorable fried-egg butty with a slice of salmon, a filter coffee and perhaps a doughnut each, before heading back out into the February winds with egg yolk down your sleeve and a creeping feeling that the local greasy spoon, where set menu A, with double bubble and a cup of tea for about £6.99, used to be so nice.

The Observer

Dietaries are no issue at London's Levante for Jay Rayner

Turkish food is accidentally custom-engineered as a response to the question, "Have you got any dietaries?" It does animal and vegetable with equal enthusiasm.

From the list of cold meze we have shredded green beans, marinated in a deep sauce of tomato, herbs and garlic. There's the sour hit of sumac and sparkling green pools of peppery olive oil. Aubergines are roasted until soft, sweet and messy. More of the aubergine turns up as a topping for a hot-crust breaded canoe of pile. A bowl of herb-speckled lentil soup is thick, cumin-spiked and a deep colour that Dulux

might name Burnt Orange, and Farrow & Ball would call Charlotte's Locks. The grills include a kebab of slumping onions, aubergines and mushrooms generously swamped in a long-reduced tomato sauce.

From the keto side of the dietaries, we have chicken livers, grilled until crusty, but seared quickly enough to save them from becoming dry. Then there are the salty-sweet, crisply fatty lamb ribs.

They insist the kumefe is made on site. Honestly, it's so good I don't care where it comes from. Noodle-like shredded pastry is packed into a metal dish and layered with sweet, stringy cheese, which is then covered with more of the shredded wheat-like pastry. It's baked until golden and crisp, then doused in syrup. Oh God. Order a Turkish coffee to defend against well-earned droop and drowsiness.

London Evening Standard

Jimi Famurewa visits the scrappy Paradise Cove in south-west London

Paradise Cove 3.0 sits in a corner site, opposite the vacant shell of its original home, along a stretch of Wandsworth Road. Self-built on a shoestring budget, it's a scrappy, DIY sunburst of a space: blue and yellow accents, toilet cubicles constructed from salvaged chipboard, and a plasma screen playing Bob Marley videos on a loop.

That hugging domesticity could be found in the jerk chicken too. Comprising vigorously browned legs of seemingly unbarbecued bird, it nonetheless had fall-apart succulence, a rising swell of clove-scented heat, and a strange, seductive savour that, I think, comes from a dous-

ing of soy sauce. A pale orange clump of coleslaw, dandruffed in coconut, was a useful, muffling foil. And then the vegan ital curry was, frankly, extraordinary: chickpeas, sweet potato, peppers and more, coated to compliant softness, and cloaked in a scotch bonnet-laced wonder of a rough-hewn, elegantly complex stew.

But after that, there were some head-scratchers. Jerk-spiced rice offered little but blunt, unkind heat. Spicy cucumber salad, meanwhile, needed more counterpunching acidity and fewer swamping fistfuls of bagged baby spinach.

Paradise Cove's enabler experimentation did occasionally cause me to yearn for a little of the sure-footedness and clarity of, say, a spot like Britton's Fish, Wings & Tings. Case in point: a wedge of ravishingly moist ginger cake that, for reasons unknown, was drenched in enough rum to fell a horse.

The Telegraph

Opening its oak front doors, it feels a little like stepping into a grand family home – sepia family photos and letters are framed on the walls, stained glass windows flicker with light from the crackling fires, tartan sofas tempt from snug living rooms. The bar is the cutest I've ever pulled up a stool in – room for just four or five people, home to three times as many whiskeys. A vast, oak-paneled drawing room looks out over the 19th-century terraced gardens, which peter out into wild paths or slope vertiginously down to the swollen Mawddach Estuary.

Penmaenochaf was bought in 2022 by Neil and Zoe Kedward, owners of Pembrokeshire's cult Grove of Narberth hotel. A slow and sensitive renovation is underway. The first phase – focusing on the four bedrooms right at the top of the hotel – is finished and, my goodness, they are like Narnia in reverse. Instead of passing, unexpectedly, from boring bedroom into wooded fairyland, you come in from the wild world outside, climb the staircase and find yourself in a wonderland of witty wallpapering, warm colours and lovely textiles.

By happenstance, these new rooms are also perfect for fami-

Hattie Garlick finds the service to be a joy at Penmaenochaf, Dolgellau



lies. Each pair has its own separate staircase. Take two and you almost have your own private apartment. The children claim Lyrri – a rose-coloured haven with vaulted ceilings, green-gingham curtains, roll-top bath and a red-wine velvet headboard.

The 12 further bedrooms' downsides are – for the moment – more conservative. The dining room could use a wave of Harding's magic wand. The Kedwards funnelled cash into the kitchen instead, where head

chef Thomas Hine can now fully realise his potential. Dish after wondrous dish comes at dinner – each cosmopolitan but rooted in local produce and tradition, precise but never pretentious.

Service is a joy too – staffing slipping seamlessly between Welsh and English, formality and friendliness. A couple of exceedingly famous faces are dining, separately, on the same night as us, allowed to settle into blissful and absolute anonymity.

YOU MAGAZINE

Tom Parker Bowles has his mind changed about Pollini in North Kensington, London

It wasn't love at first bite. It wasn't even like. In fact, on my initial visit to Pollini, an Italian restaurant in North Kensington's newly restored Ladbroke Hall, I hated the place.

The room was cold and cavernous, the din cacophonous, with a huge bar plonked in the middle. Meaning the space was awkwardly hewn in two.

[But] service is as slick as it is sweet. And the food, under the command of the eponymous Emanuele Pollini, is very good indeed. Ingredients are top notch. And left mercifully untouched too – an exceptional yellowtail crudo, with sashimi-

quality fish sliced so thin that you can see the plate below, drenched in a golden, grassy olive oil.

Amalfi anchovies, possessing the intense depth of the very best, served with cold butter. A fritto misto is beautifully done, the crisp, greaseless butter clinging lightly to vast, gloriously fresh prawns. They remind me of southern Italian summers, in the drear depths of west London winter. And six of the buggers too, for £14. Which, for this part of town, is almost a bargain.

That "interpretation" of Pollini's mother's lasagne is far better than it sounds – fresh pasta stuffed with bechamel, surrounded by neat piles of serious beef ragu. Along with slivers of fried pasta.

But why bother with the "interpretation"? I want the real thing. Anyway, Pollini has some of the best Italian cooking in London. It just needs to fill that room.

The Telegraph

William Sitwell indulges at 1 York Place, Bristol

The menu, which is beautifully crafted and written – to the point, but bursting with appealing ideas and tastes – casts a net across Europe and is matched by a clever wine list.

I mention this specifically as it introduced a new grape to my repertoire which, in a world shortish on joy, is almost monolithic. And you may sniff that Palomino is old hat and well known in Spain, but I'm still revelling in the soft minerality and calming, reassuring charm that presented itself in a bottle of Cunequeiro Palomino Ribeiro (Casal do Vila) 2022.

There was fresh and perfect sourdough and butter that

enabled a pair of 'bar snacks'. Whipped cod's roe was light and dreamy and came with strips of fennel – a clever way to get you to eat the vegetable, fennel being the equivalent of a sensible nanny giving one a bollocking (right, proper, just and good for you but not especially enjoyable). Here it was a clever foil for the fluffy taranna. Some tomatoes came covered in thin, lardo-type strips of pork belly (which is what happens in a decent Madrid restaurant when a British vegetarian orders a tomato salad, tee-hee-hee).

There were razor clams, soft and rich and dripping in garlic and parsley; delicate and moreish lobster and prawn on a blini; and a lamb sweetbread. The sweetbread came in a crisp batter, had an anchovy draped over it and sat in a salsa verde sauce. It was a dish that swirled in the mouth like a whirlpool of discovery.