



## Putting on the Ritz

**Helena Lang** shares a table at an opulent London dining room and discovers the art of classic service is alive and well

Mayfair is home to London's largest cluster of luxury hotels and upmarket restaurants. Rates and rents here are among the highest in the world. So, if you need to impress a client, lunch or dinner at a smart Mayfair address will undoubtedly do the job. And where could be more impressive than the **Ritz restaurant**, surely one of Europe's most exquisite dining rooms with its opulent and dazzling chandeliers?

Executive chef John Williams has launched a Les Arts de la Table menu, a theatrical display of the forgotten art of table service. Classic dishes are prepared with the finest ingredients and presented whole to diners before being expertly carved and beautifully plated up.

At £75 per head, this is superb



**Discreet:** Mews of Mayfair, a self-styled British brasserie, offers quality comfort food at reasonable prices



**Elegant:** the magnificent Ritz restaurant, top, and, above, its sumptuous Amedie chocolate dessert

fine dining, with a glass of Ritz Cuvée Champagne thrown in. We enjoyed starters of dressed crab roll with avocado and Charentais melon, then shared a whole Bresse chicken garnished with Périgord truffles and served with vegetables and a delicious Madeira sauce, before finishing with Amedie chocolate ganache.

**Mews of Mayfair**, tucked away off London's New Bond Street,



styles itself as a British brasserie, and couldn't be more different. But here also the quality of food, the attentive service and the beautiful décor all combine to make for a wonderful dinner – at more humble prices, naturally.

In an upstairs dining room decorated with warm-looking leather and wood, with faded botanical prints on the walls, we savoured a delicious ham hock terrine and crab mayonnaise, both served with moreish home-made bread. The portions were large, showcasing good old-fashioned comfort food from quality British suppliers. Our main courses of tender fillet steak and a Mediterranean-inspired fillet of hake with peppers and tomato just left enough room for an excellent apple and blackberry crumble.

Of course, appointments at Savile Row tailors or Bond Street boutiques should be made before dining at either of these establishments to minimise the risk of tape measure shame.

[www.theritzlondon.com/restaurant](http://www.theritzlondon.com/restaurant)  
[www.mewsofmayfair.com](http://www.mewsofmayfair.com)

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They're all talking about...

### The Wellington Arms in Baughurst, Hampshire

Grab a table at this gorgeous country pub serving wonderful food. Chef Jason King (voted best pub chef by *The Good Food Guide 2011*) uses ingredients from the beautiful gardens here. Dine on country terrines or Marksbury cheddar soufflé, fish from Brixham market or roe deer braised in red wine, and finish with an Eccles cake with a wedge of Lancashire cheese. It really doesn't get more British.

[www.thewellingtonarms.com](http://www.thewellingtonarms.com)

What to order at...

### The Quality Chop House

92-94 Farringdon Road, London EC1



This listed building – a long-time favourite of authors and journalists – has a new team in the

kitchen and front of house, including Will Lander, son of wine guru Jancis Robinson and food writer Nicholas Lander. Dinner is a great value set menu of four courses for £35 while the short à la carte lunch menu features the day's best market buys. Try the **pork chop with mash and onions** and some Fleur du Périgord.

[www.thequalitychophouse.com](http://www.thequalitychophouse.com)



Where I do business...

**Andy Brown**, managing director, Tailors of Harrogate

"It's hard to talk about amazing food in Harrogate and not mention **Bettys**. The breakfasts are incredible and I usually order the Bircher muesli in the warmer months as a great alternative to winter porridge. And the bacon muffins are second to none. For lunch or dinner, I recommend **J Baker's** in York, which styles itself as a "bistro moderne". I like to share a selection of the grazing plates, which are all made using vibrant seasonal ingredients."

[www.bettys.co.uk](http://www.bettys.co.uk)  
[www.jbakerys.co.uk](http://www.jbakerys.co.uk)