

FEBRUARY 2013
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SECRETS OF THE CITY

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London's lovable locations

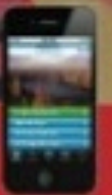
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» DINING

Kung Hei Fat Choi!*

According to ancient Chinese wisdom, a snake in the house means your family won't starve. Which is good news this Chinese New Year (10 Feb), welcoming in the Year Of The Snake. To help celebrate, head to the intimate **Royal China Club** (p. 51) for their famous dim sum (right) and other Hong Kong delicacies, with its larger neighbour **Royal China** (24 Baker St, W1) hosting dragon dancing in the evenings. The prestigious group has been going strong for 25 years in London and is one of the city's finest.

The plush **Min Jiang** also gets into the festive spirit with a special menu, including braised yi mian noodles with wind-dried pork, plus, of course, their famous wood-fired Beijing duck. You'll have to tear your eyes away from the views of Kensington Gardens first (p. 56)!

*May you prosper – a typical New Year wish



Retro look for the new Electric Diner

PHOENIX FROM THE ASHES

Last summer's blaze in the kitchens of Electric Cinema's restaurant led to its closure – but not for long. The brand new **Electric Diner** is part of the reincarnated historic Nottingham cinema scene. The new chef is the

restaurant's helm is Chicago chef Brendan Sodokoff, who creates a blend of heavily carnivorous French and American dishes. Try honey-fried chicken with chili and sesame, or crispy potato hash with duck heart gravy followed by a classic mille-feuille. Heading to a movie? Make room (if you can) for fresh hot donuts, served in the foyer of the overhauled Electric Cinema.

11 Portobello Rd, W11. T: 020-7908 1111. www.electricdiner.com

LEBANESE

Ware Road's eclectic mix of eastern eateries, including the value Lebanese mezza – a mix of small plates or a full meal. What the outlet

in busy Earls Court. The informal **Maroush Bakehouse** has all the classics, from fresh fattoush salad and hot cheese pastries to minced lamb kebab and chicken shawarma. All their 25 varieties of bread and pastry are baked on site – you can even watch the busy bakers at work, through the huge window. 131 Earls Court Rd, SW5. T: 020-7370 4324. www.maroushbakehouse.com

FAST FOOD FASHION

Street food turned stylish has become quite a trend in London recently – just see the queues for **Bubbledogs**. Opened last summer its concept, as the name suggests, of serving hot dogs with bubbly (including their own grower champagne) is still a real hit. 70 Charlotte St, W1. T: 020-7637 7770. www.bubbledogs.co.uk

On a similar note, Soho's latest stripped-back burger joint **BRGR.CO** serves up another much-loved American favourite, with quirky toppings and equally intriguing sides. Tuck into beefy burgers served with parmesan truffle fries and Stateside-inspired milkshakes, while admiring the funky cow heads hanging from the exposed brick walls. 187 Wardour St, W1. T: 020-7734 8750. www.brgr.co

PS: I LOVE YOU!

February 14 is a byword for dinner for two and oysters, and London has some special choices giving a loving nod to St. Valentine. One of the city's most romantic, **Clos Maggiore** (p. 53), with its cherry-blossom canopy and candlelit conservatory, serves up a special five-course menu in the evening – and if you plan to propose, they'll even hide your ring in a bespoke chocolate box.

Or, for something more substantial and down to earth, join your *amore* over a special sharing menu at **Roast** (p. 54) in Borough Market, with meaty produce sourced straight from the local market traders themselves. Book soon!



Fresh fattoush at Maroush



Oysters – the food of love