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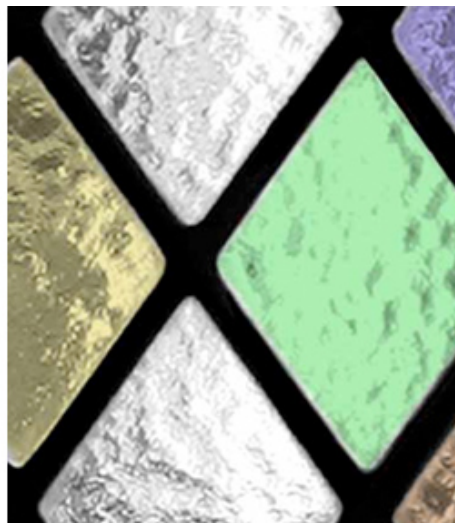
EAT & DRINK

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WineChap Q&A: The Ivy's Fernando Peire

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Fernando Peire is the face of [The Ivy](#), starting as Senior Maitre D' over 20 years ago and currently the Director of the restaurant and members' club next door. He has recently been filming a series 'The Restaurant Inspector' for Five, trouble-shooting for ailing restaurants à la 'Kitchen Nightmares' – but with less foul language and considerably more élan.

Q. What are the current top dishes on the menu?

A. The Dressed Crab is a favourite, but White Asparagus and Gulls' Eggs have come in recently, and Atlantic Char and Lambs' Sweetbreads are new additions to the menu. We're also doing a pre and post theatre menu (two courses £21.75; three courses £26.25) which not enough people know about.

Q. Best value wine? Or what if you are pushing the boat out?

A. I particularly like the Albarino, and the Riesling is excellent. We're fortunate here to have access to Annabel's cellar and we work closely with Richard Rotti, our Group Wine Buyer, so we have a selection of older vintages at their old prices.

Q. What's the enduring appeal of The Ivy?

A. We work hard to give every customer a great experience – no sitting on laurels here. Service is not about sycophancy and we prefer to address customers by name not 'sir' to develop a relationship. Also our prices are right – neither too cheap nor too expensive – and the atmosphere we create is key: a subtle combination of cool and comfort, lighting and layout, space and service.

Q. Assuming bribery and/or flattery is out, what are your tips for getting a table?

A. Just try walking in, especially after 9.30pm. Look cool, be confident but courteous, smile, have a martini at the bar and a chat with the barman. If you act the part, it pays off. It's also worth noting that restaurant regulars get tables ahead of Club members...

The Ivy

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