



Restaurants

Cornish seafood wizard with coolest name ever drops anchor in London? Aye-aye, cap'n, says Jeremy Wayne



OUTLAW'S SEAFOOD & GRILL AT THE CAPITAL

A LA CARTE LUNCH OR DINNER FOR TWO, ABOUT £160

WHAT TO EAT
DOVER SOLE, CHARGRILLED MONKFISH & DUCK

WHAT TO DRINK
LEVIN WINES - CAPITAL HOTEL PROPRIETOR DAVID LEVIN HAS HIS OWN WINERY IN FRANCE

WHO GOES
ROCK-AHOLICS (WHO KNOW NATHAN FROM CORNWALL), TORY MPS, AMERICAN RESIDENTS OF HANS CRESCENT

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Outlaw's Seafood & Grill at the Capital

Modern British

Nathan Outlaw sounds like a character from *Guys and Dolls* and, with his flat-top and wide grin, he looks like one too. Only you won't find him organising illegal craps games. The genial Outlaw is hot from Rock in Cornwall (where he established his own-name restaurant – now with two Michelin stars – 10 years ago) and this is his first London opening, in the legendary dining room of the Capital hotel, where chefs Richard Shepherd and, later, Eric Chavot once held sway.

Decor-wise, there are wood-panelled walls, while a window along the back wall now affords a view of the kitchen. Otherwise, little has changed in this intimate dining room since Nina Campbell did it up a few years back, and that's all to the good. There's a host of familiar

faces among the waiters, who deliver even the humblest dishes with great, celebratory panache.

Credentials established, we move to the food. To start, there are Porthilly Cornish oysters, at once briny and sweet; or chargrilled langoustines with burnt lime and a very subtle roast-garlic mayonnaise; or curried Cornish crab on toast with fennel and apple. To follow, roast cod fillet with a warm tartare sauce, perhaps; or Dover sole on the bone, retro as you like; or Outlaw's mer/terroir signature dish of monkfish and duck – all of them remarkably good. For pudding, the treacle tart comes to life with clotted cream but, if your tooth is less sweet, a plate of British cheeses might be the way to go.

As you leave the Capital, a row of staff line the steps, a departure straight out of *Downton Abbey* and a fitting end to a pukka supper. Call it sad, call it funny, but I'd say you'll get better than even money on Outlaw's Seafood & Grill at the Capital turning out to be a long-running show. □
At 22–24 Basil Street, SW3 (020 7591 1202).

THE BARFLY

Grog matters, and our love affair with rum continues this month at **Artesian** at the Langham Hotel, W1, recent winner of the World's Best Bar award. This place is just glorious, a David Collins 'Chinese Chippendale' feast of mirror and glass, exquisite ornaments and the most comfortable armchairs in plum and lilac leather. As for what to drink, how could anyone resist Pusser's 'single malt' Navy rum, from the



British Virgin Islands, or the almost unctuous 15-year-old Barbancourt Réserve du Domaine from Haiti? Most rums, in my view, have Coke as a soulmate but, for a cocktail, my choice has to be Artesian's Diamond Swizzle – 12-year-old Et Dorado rum from Guyana, turbocharged with Green Chartreuse. A couple of these and you'll be no trouble to anybody – except perhaps yourself, or the beak at Bow Street in the morning.



Side orders

BONNIE GULL SEAFOOD SHACK

21a Foley Street, W1 (020 7436 0921)

'A clarion call to British seafood' says the bumf for Bonnie Gull, a tiny new Fitzrovia restaurant that started life as a pop-up in Hackney. Goodness, we love it here – from the Portland Pearl oysters and Venus clams to the winkles, whelks and plaice in caper beurre noisette, served with what must be the world's chunkiest, crispest chips. But most of all we love the staff: young, witty, wise, informed, intelligent and fun, as well as passionate about British fish.



FISH MARKET

16b New Street, EC2 (020 3503 0790)

Does Fish Market – the new fish restaurant from the clever D&D people – serve London's best fish and chips? It just might. Top marks for the beer-battered cod, along with the triple-cooked chips, all piping-hot and golden – which is not to say you should neglect the lobster cocktail or the fish-packed fish pie. With its bleached wood and sea-spray pastels and (when the fine weather rolls in) a lovely outdoor terrace, this is a terrific new address in the Square Mile.

BENTLEY'S SEA GRILL AT HARRODS

Ground Floor, Harrods, Knightsbridge, SW1 (020 7730 1234)

There can be few lunchtime experiences more delightful than watching a native oyster give the peculiar little quiver that signifies its freshness as you anoint it with a drop of lemon juice, or Vietnamese shallot dressing, seated at the counter of the new Bentley's Sea Grill at Harrods. The great thing about the Bentley's/Harrods marriage, apart from the excellent fish and shellfish, is that it feels *right* – and that's a whole lot more than can be said for many marriages these days.