



*Roast breast of mallard and
confit leg: hearty, seasonal
cooking at Corrigan's Mayfair*

FLIGHT TO QUALITY

The Meatpacking District is out, the Upper East Side is in; Shoreditch is ditched as Mayfair enjoys a return to favour. The latest restaurants to open are stylish classics in upmarket locations – smart, confident and modern.
JENNIFER SHARP salutes a return to good form

CORRIGAN'S MAYFAIR

28 Upper Grosvenor Street, London, +44 (0)20 7499 9943,
www.corrigansmayfair.com. Open for lunch and dinner every day

There were tears of regret when the city's gourmets met at the end of April to say goodbye to Soho's Lindsay House, Irish chef Richard Corrigan's flagship for 12 years. But Corrigan had already moved on – into Mayfair, London's most prosperous and exciting neighbourhood. First there was his revival of Bentley's, the enduring oyster bar and grill, and then in November 2008 he opened Corrigan's Mayfair in a smart street close to Park Lane. This is the restaurant of the year, much applauded, always busy, a reassuring combination of classy chic and memorable food, appealing equally to gourmet and socialite. Designer Martin Brudnizki has brought to life Corrigan's vision of the macho world of field sports and the countryside. An assembly of marble, rich exotic woods, gleaming brass, oak floor and luxurious leather banquettes exudes the stately confidence of a gentlemen's club without sinking into cliché. A hand-carved frieze of stags and game birds runs around the room and the walls are hung with a lavish fish-scale paper. The main restaurant seats 70, there's a long bar with high stools, a lounge area with low, comfortable chairs, and two private rooms that are unashamedly male and clubby.

The food is hearty, seasonal cooking based on first-class produce and skilful simplicity. There are oysters, herring, fish soup, suckling pig sausage with oyster and duck tongue, game broth with livers on toast, wild smoked salmon, a soft-boiled duck egg with brown shrimp. And that's just for starters. The inspiration behind this cooking is British and Irish but it's not confined to narrow tradition. There's octopus carpaccio with clementine and almond, Medjool dates with beetroot and watercress, langoustine with spiced chickpeas, classic poached turbot, steamed sole fillet with ceps, and a butch meat section with game suet pudding and fillet of beef with snails and garlic butter. Couple all this with excellent service and an impressive wine list and you've got a sure-fire winner.

ANNE-SOPHIE PIC

Beau-Rivage Palace, Lausanne, Switzerland, +41 (0)21 613 3317, www.brp.ch.
Open for lunch and dinner Tuesday – Saturday

Lausanne is tiny compared to New York and London, yet it has just become a focus for gourmets worldwide. Anne-Sophie Pic, the only French female chef to

hold three Michelin stars, has opened a new restaurant within the renowned Beau-Rivage Palace hotel. After gaining her third star in 2007, Pic was expected to expand into other major cities but she stayed within the safe bounds of her restaurant and hotel in Valence, Maison Pic. So why Lausanne? And why now? She was tempted by Paris but found the city 'too remote philosophically' and not in keeping with 'the spirit of my house'. It's clear that Pic feels extremely comfortable with Lausanne, where she has family and spent childhood summers, and with the Beau-Rivage. The French general manager, François Dussart, has been a personal friend for some years but also the culture of the hotel reflects her own consistent and durable values. Pic has a background of 120 years and four generations of successful chefs in Valence; her father and grandfather also held the coveted three stars. The Beau-Rivage Palace is nearly 150 years old and is owned by the eminent Sandoz family, known equally for their presence in the pharmaceutical industry and commitment to the arts. It is a very happy fit.

Pic and Dussart worked closely to create a remarkably chic and modern restaurant within the grand temple to luxury that is the hotel. It has its own entrance lined with glass walls of wine storage but can also be reached via the elegant new bar. Once inside, the L-shape room is decorated with rich but subdued textures of suede, marble, horsehair, fine woods, mirror and brass plus dramatic circular chandeliers. Huge windows look onto the awesome spectacle of the lake and the Savoy Alps while at night the mellow lighting is intimate and sexy.

Her style of cooking is astonishing: imaginative, full of flavour and with a delicacy that can only be described as feminine. She has a deep love and understanding of vegetables that is rare in French cooking of this level, and while intrigued by the sheer invention of molecular gastronomy, she doesn't follow that route. Surprisingly, Pic is self-taught, having learned her skills purely in her father's kitchen. She reinterprets her family dishes with a light, modern touch and is constantly inventing new ones. Fresh morilles are served with a crunchy Parmesan mille-feuille and tarragon; frog's legs with a subtle hint of spice are bathed in mushroom cream; gently steamed turbot is matched with lemon butter and melting turnips accented with Arabica coffee. For Lausanne, Pic has devised new dishes using local produce such as Simmental beef for the luxurious tournedos with foie gras, fish from Lac Léman, and the rich fruit and herbs from the countryside. She also has a Pic Collection menu, featuring historic family recipes alongside her own.

*Chic modernity at
Anne-Sophie Pic.
Below: Monkey Bar's
wine list illustration
by political cartoonist
Barry Blitt*



Pic has installed in the kitchen her most trusted lieutenant, Guillaume Raineix, as head chef but regularly spends time in Lausanne which is little more than a two-hour drive from Valence. Still only 39, she is astutely balancing the needs of both her business and her husband and young child. The Beau-Rivage Palace has found a jewel.

THE MONKEY BAR

60 East 54th Street, New York, +1 212 308 2950,
www.monkeybar.com. Open Monday – Saturday from 5pm
(bar) and 5.30pm (restaurant) with plans to open for lunch
later in the year

The best dining news in New York is the rebirth of the Monkey Bar on 54th Street between Park and Madison. This iconic restaurant and bar dating back to 1937 occupies the ground floor adjacent to the Elysée hotel and was once the centre of the publishing world. But the Monkey Bar looked tired in recent years until the arrival of new owners: an irresistible cocktail of Graydon Carter, editor of *Vanity Fair* and proprietor of the oh-so-exclusive Waverly Inn; hotelier Jeff Klein; and the London duo Jeremy King and Chris Corbin. They masterminded the success of the Ivy and Le Caprice (which they sold in 1998) and recently turned the Wolseley into London's most fashionable café. King and Corbin have spent quite some time researching a New York outpost for the Wolseley but so far the right location eludes them. In the meantime, their partnership with the ebullient Carter who has, says King, 'the greatest Rolodex in existence', seems a marriage made in heaven.

Graydon Carter has defined the tone and style of the new Monkey Bar, which opened back in April. He describes it as a 'midtown mid-century classic' harking back to the glory days of the Stork Club, 21 and even referencing the zebra-patterned carpet of El Morocco. The space is divided in two with the main entrance

at street level leading straight into a bar with booths, high stools and part of the old monkey mural which gave the place its name. The bar has a life of its own for eating, drinking and socialising and also acts as a holding area for the main event, the restaurant. You make a grand entrance down a few stairs into a large, square room on two levels with tables on the lower and 10 leather booths on the



mezzanine floor. In the past this upper level was regarded as social Siberia but now it's the place to be with a terrific view over the rest of the action. A flattering golden light suffuses the room and the back wall is dominated by a large mural by Ed Sorel. Carter's brief to the artist was to celebrate the movers 'n' shakers of the 20s and 30s – and here they are, larger than life, legends such as Fred Astaire and Tennessee Williams (who actually died in the Elysée hotel), Herb Ross, F Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, publishing giants like Henry Luce and Condé Nast, Dorothy Parker and Edna Ferber.

Meanwhile, King and Corbin make it work. The large menu features American and European classics such as oysters Rockefeller, herb-crusted clams Casino, chicken Kiev, lobster Newburg, kedgeree, soft-boiled eggs with foie gras soldiers and Nora's meatloaf, in honour of writer Nora Ephron.

The maitre d' is Sebastian Fogg, previously at the Ivy and latterly at St Alban, the Wolseley's smart sibling in London. Jeremy King will spend two weeks each month in New York but this is very much an American restaurant with American service and Graydon Carter as the undisputed figurehead. The Monkey Bar may not have the shameless elitism of the Waverly Inn – it actually publishes a phone number – but there's no doubt that the best way to get a reservation is via Carter's office at *Vanity Fair*. Insiders even have a private email address so the likes of Martha Stewart, Ron Perelman, Hugh Grant, Carolina Herrera and Salman Rushdie can bypass the waiting list.