

LONDON HOT SPOT:

St. John Bar and Restaurant

Arriving at St. John for dinner can be a bit disorienting. You enter a weathered London building through an open garage door and walk to the back to find a crowded bar and bakery. You climb half a flight of stairs to the main dining room, which looks like a hospital commissary, all bare, whitewashed walls and simple tables covered with white butcher's paper. The kitchen is open, but this isn't one of those cooking-as-theater dining experiences. The crew at the stoves works like no one's watching, unafraid to openly swig beer and make a mess. You start to wonder: Where exactly am I?

Then you look at the menu and remember: St. John, with the "veddy" British pronunciation of "Sin Jin," is Fergus Henderson's high temple to nose-to-tail eating. When Henderson opened it in 1994, he put offal and forgotten cuts of meat in the spotlight. The old building, a former smokehouse, is in Clerkenwell, just half a block from the stunning, Victorian-era, metal-and-glass Smithfield meat market. Today, the old warehouses and townhouses are full of dot-coms, photo studios and young, hip tenants.

Henderson's food hasn't gentrified, thankfully. Changed daily depending on whatever fresh meat, fowl or fish is available, the dishes are straightforward. Options could include an entire braised baby goat with fennel and aioli, roasted Mallard with radishes, or confit pig's cheek—indulgent chunks of fat, meat and crispy skin—balanced by tart, fresh dandelion leaves. One dish is always on the menu: Henderson's trademark roast bone marrow and parsley salad.

The wine list is unapologetically French, with more than 50 selections directly sourced from vigneron in Bordeaux, the Loire, Burgundy and beyond by co-owner Trevor Gulliver. You can enjoy a low-priced Château de Lascaux Coteaux du Languedoc 2004 or splurge on Domaine de la Romanée-Conti



Fergus Henderson's (left) St. John restaurant in London (above) celebrates nose-to-tail eating, highlighting uncommon cuts of meat.



Richebourg 1992. Too bad the glasses are the trademark small bistro goblets.

The bar downstairs can overflow with the after-work crowd from the nearby financial district, so if you want to avoid that scene, stop at Vinoteca, a

comfortable, smart wine bar across the street that offers more than 200 selections.

—Mitch Frank

St. John Bar and Restaurant

26 St. John St., London Telephone (44) 20-7251-0848 Open Lunch, Monday to Friday; dinner, Monday to Saturday Cost Entrées \$28-\$71

Vinoteca

7 St. John St., London Telephone (44) 20-7253-8786 Open Monday to Saturday Cost By the glass \$6-\$16; by the bottle \$9-\$207

Great Expectorations

Wish you were a professional wine taster? Well, at least now you can look like one. Bottles, check. Stemware, check. Notepad, check. Oenosablier spittoon, check.

This stainless-steel, hourglass-shaped spittoon is the spit bucket of choice for those who work their way through dozens of wines in a single sitting. It comes in 2-liter (www.wallywine.com; \$225) and 4-liter (\$275) sizes, which minimizes trips to the sink to dump the wine out. And its large bowl eliminates the most unpleasant aspect of spitting—the occasional splash back. Visit www.oenosablier.com for more information.



Old School

Why do people cling to outmoded objects like corks and landline telephones? There's a comforting nostalgia and romance, to be sure, but there's

also a beauty to them not found in their replacements.

So why use an old-style corkscrew, besides to remind you of that picnic in Chianti with your wife back when she was your girlfriend? The appeal in this case is obvious: Gershon Jewelers embeds a screw in a real warthog tusk, caps the end in sterling silver and seals the augur with turquoise dimples (www.gershonjewelers.com; \$224). Sure it takes a little elbow grease, but it feels good in your hand and looks beautiful.