

DINING
OUT



Eating for the planet

FROM the lowly man on the street to the highest levels of government, saving the planet has suddenly become one of the hottest topics for debate. Everyone agrees we should recycle more, but most of us are far less keen to give up our foreign holidays to ease the carbon footprints left by our plane journeys.

One area though, where we can make a real difference without having to give up one of life's great

pleasures, is eating out.

Most restaurants leave behind shamefully large carbon shadows. The levels of food waste are horrifying, the use of water is massive, and the vehicles which deliver the ingredients cover thousands and thousands of miles a month.

But set in the heart of smog-filled King's Cross, only yards from Euston Road – officially London's most polluted street – is a restaurant that is turning the industry on its head.

Hailed as London's first truly eco-friendly restaurant, and the most important eaterie to open in the capital for 200 years, Acorn House really is an amazing place.

Every aspect of it, from

design through to delivery, aims to be environmentally aware or sustainable.

The restaurant was built using recycled and organic materials, and 100 per cent of its waste is recycled and composted.

It purifies its water on site to minimise road miles, plastic and glass usage, and never uses airfreight, instead importing all overseas supplies by sea.

It employs bio diesel transport inside London, only uses seasonal produce from small, independent, mainly local suppliers, and buys fair trade where possible.

And it even provides a community service alongside the regeneration of King's Cross, training 10 new eco-restaurateurs each year under the guidance of Jamie-Grainger Smithy, who was instrumental in launching the much-lauded Fifteen Restaurant alongside Jamie Oliver.

All very impressive sounding you might think, but what about the food?

Well, contrary to many stereotypes, it's not vegan, it's not all lentils, and it's certainly not served by dreadlocked university dropouts.

It's not cheap either, but it is exceptionally fresh and amazingly tasty.

For starters we went for the spring beetroot, Jersey Royals, Amalfi olives and chilli (£8.00) and the Mozarella di bufala, artichokes and aged balsamic vinegar (£9.50).



By **ROB BLEANEY**

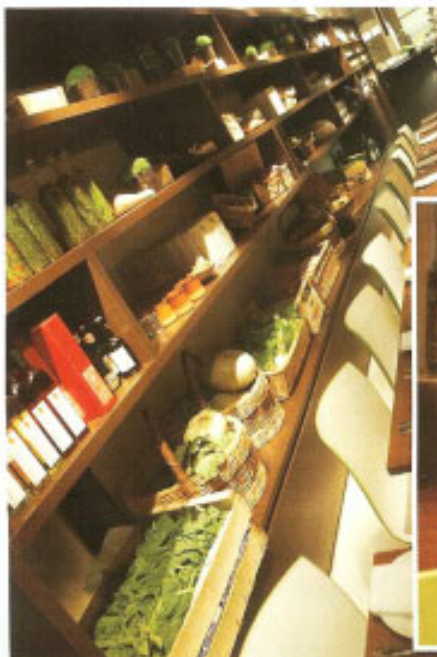
They sounded impressive, and certainly lived up to expectations.

For main I went for the grilled lamb with anchovy and rosemary sauce (£18.50), which was perfectly tender and beautifully flavoured, while my partner was delighted with her dish of aubergine, spinach, goat's cheese and grilled red chilli sauce (£13.50).

The rhubarb sorbet (£4.00) was special, and the restaurant offers everything from pear cider and rhubarb Bellini, to a dazzling array of wines with which to wash down your meal.

Acorn House is an intriguing idea which could have amazing long-term impacts for the environment, but importantly, it seems to work brilliantly.

If this is the future of our restaurant industry, then we are all in for a treat.



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