

THE KNOWLEDGE

31.07.04 - 06.08.04 THE WORLD'S GREATEST CITY, CUT DOWN TO SIZE EVERY SATURDAY

FOOD AND DRINK



ABOVE Smollensky's



ABOVE Boisdale

PRICE GUIDE

Prices given are indicative of one two-course à la carte meal, plus half a bottle of wine, coffee, cover charge, service and VAT. The wine price is for a bottle of house wine, or the cheapest available on the wine list.

BELOW The Gaucho Grill



2

TOP STEAK RESTAURANTS

**■ PJ'S BAR & GRILL**

52 Fulham Road, SW3
(020-7581 0025), open Mon-Fri
noon-midnight; Sat-Sun 11am-midnight
Price £39 Wine £12.95

PJ's serves honest food in relaxing surroundings on the busy Fulham Road. Not as American as the setting would suggest, the weekly-changing menus carries influences from both Asia and Europe, but it is also full of reliable staples. Be adventurous and try the Thai beef salad and horissa-roast lamb, or stick with favourites such as beef carpaccio with punchy horseradish and mustard dressing, lobster salad with chervil mayo or T-bone steak with béarnaise sauce. Beware that while the tables near the lively bar may be great for people-watching, they do get very smoky.

■ THE RIB ROOM & OYSTER BAR

The Carlton Tower, Cadogan Place, SW1 (020-7858 7053), open
Mon-Sun 12.30-2.45pm, 7-10.45pm
(Sun -10.15pm)
Price £56 Wine £22

Patrons of this vast hotel dining room

know exactly what they want — a great menu that offers large doses of protein. The Scottish lobster comes with garlic, herb or sweet chilli butter, while the steaks (all Aberdeen Angus, hung to the chef's specifications) are done to a turn. The Aylesbury duck, meanwhile, arrives juicy and tender from the rotisserie with a nice tart touch of apple and rhubarb on the side. More complex dishes are not always successful, but at least the ingredients are always of the highest quality. A far better bet than most venues of its kind.

■ SOPHIE'S STEAKHOUSE

311-313 Fulham Road, SW10
(020-7352 0088) Mon-Fri noon-midnight; Sat 11am-midnight; Sun 11am-11pm

Price £29 Wine £9.95

Sophie's Steakhouse has proved to be a fantastic addition to the Fulham Road, so its no-bookings policy can lead to long waits for a table as the crowds pile in. Then again, the bar isn't an unpleasant place to while away the time, and the fantastic steaks are worth waiting for, particularly as they are served with perfectly crispy fries. Its fans say they "would go every week if possible".

ALSO RECOMMENDED**■ BALLS BROTHERS**

Bucklersbury House, Cannon Street, EC4 (020-7248 7557), open Mon-Fri 11am-10pm

Price £35 Wine £13.50

A prime location opposite Cannon Street station makes this cosy outlet a good meeting place. Expect well-executed classics, such as Scottish fillet steak with glazed horseradish hollandaise.

■ CHEYNE WALK BRASSERIE & SALON

50 Cheyne Walk, SW3
(020-7376 8787), open Mon-Sat noon-midnight (Sat 10am-); Sun 10am-5pm
Price £42 Wine £16

The fantastic grills — half a chicken, rack of lamb or supremely tender beef (served thinly sliced on a slab of wood) — rightly take centre stage here.

■ CHEZ GÉRARD

8 Charlotte Street, W1
(020-7636 4975) Mon-Sat
noon-11.30pm; Sun 12.30-10.30pm
Price £35 Wine £10.95

The stylish surroundings complement perfectly the comfortingly familiar cooking, including the wonderful classic steaks, which are served with crisp fries and a tangy béarnaise sauce.