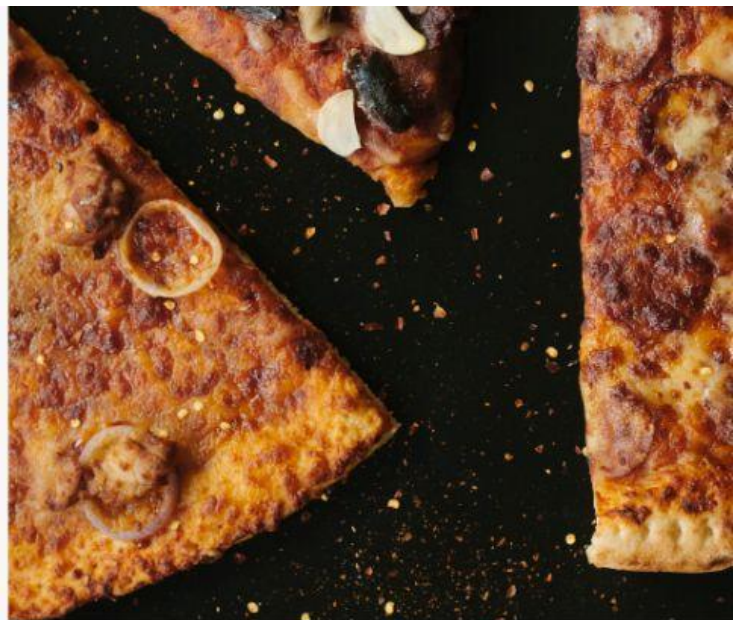


RESTAURANT REVIEW: LA CLARA, KENSINGTON



I've taken (1) not booking a table in my real name for these restaurant reviews, as there's always the fear that I'll receive special attention if they know I'm a food critic. For Adam Carter's new restaurant, La Clara, on Kensington High Street, I took this one stage further by not booking a table at all. Earlier in the evening, some friends had come (2) for a chat and mentioned La Clara. We decided just to drop (3) to see if there was a free table. There wasn't – always a risk if you (4) up without booking, of course – but we decided to wait. And wait we did. Having arrived at about 9.30, it was getting (5) for eleven before we were finally seated. Incidentally, while we were having a drink at the bar, we ran (6) the food critic of a rival newspaper. She said this was one of her favourite restaurants at the moment. I'd like to be able to report that I now agree, but unfortunately our meal turned (7) to be far from wonderful. I ordered mushroom troubadour as a starter. The sauce tasted like the cream had (8) off. It was practically inedible. My friend Jane ordered salmon sentinale. Fifteen minutes after my mushrooms had arrived, the waiter came over to say that they had (9) out of salmon. He went (10) to say that they would be closing at midnight. It was already 11.30. The head chef of La Clara likes to try (11) one new dish every day. This is called the Chef's Special. I decided to have this – a not-particularly-exciting pasta dish – for the main course. It wasn't bad, but the waiter kept (12) coming over to see if we had finished. We hadn't. I'll leave (13) a description of the dessert. We had to eat it so quickly I can't even remember what it tasted like. I don't want to (14) anyone off trying La Clara – all new restaurants have problems at the start – but I for one shan't be going back any time soon