



A LITTLE BIRD

AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO LONDON



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We had one of the best meals in a long time this week at Bloomsbury's **Café Deco** where ex-River Café chef, Anna Tobias and the 40 Maltby Street team are doing wonderful things. Having opened during lockdown they were forced to focus on a take away menu that included haddock fritter sandwiches and jars of soup and stew. The idea is to take homely, classic dishes and make them exceptional. When we visited the entire menu was appealing – starting with a perfect plate of crunchy, peppery radish and spiced Liptó butter. Artichoke with vinaigrette followed, and a mussel and tomato salad with basil and olive oil with flavours so intense that it truly tasted like you were in Italy. Then quiche – one of their specialities with varying seasonal fillings – and a new season garlic and white bean soup. The ingredients must be expertly sourced, but somehow there's an air of modesty here, with the guests left to simply enjoy a glass of natural wine at the few tables on the pavement outside in the sunshine, and just a few more inside. The only regret is not having space to try the puddings which included rhubarb galette with crème fraîche and almond and amaretti ice cream. We'll be back.



Onwards to **Spring's farm shop** that's newly-opened on Ledbury Road and has to be one of the most visually appealing shops in London. As soon as you walk in you see a table piled high with fresh produce that makes you want to whip out your iPhone and take your own version of a Dutch Still Life. Wraps of sweet peas by Kitten Grayson fill the flower buckets in the corner and freezers show off tubs of ice cream in flavours like melon and elderflower. All this as well as jams, pastries, house-made cocktails and affogato to go...It's a farm shop that only Skye Gyngell could have dreamt up.



The wonderful 1950's-style ice cream parlour, **Reenie's** opened in January. It was started by stage actor Sirine Saba who, with theatres closed, found herself unable to work. Now one of Primrose Hill's most popular addresses it's the perfect spot for a summer treat. Lie back in the new new deck chairs out front and enjoy cones piled with retro flavours like strawberry buttermilk and raspberry ripple with sauces and sprinkles to top things off.



And a new (old) pub in that **The Surprise** has reopened. Tucked away on one of Chelsea's prettiest residential streets it's under the new ownership of Jack Greenall, also of **The Pheasant** in Hungerford. Pink and white striped awnings flutter outside inviting you into a rosy-hued bar area where English sparkling wine and summer spritzes are as free-flowing as beer. Settle in for lunch or dinner where the menu features burrata salads and langoustine risotto as well as classics like fish and chips.

