

## Take a friend for £5

16 Jan 2010 by Nicholas Lander/ FT

Welcome back to Take a Friend for a Fiver, the obviously irresistible restaurant promotion which we initiated last year as a twist on the UK's original restaurant promotion, Lunch for a Fiver, which the *Financial Times* first launched in 1993.

I use the phrase 'obviously irresistible' because the interest in the return of Take a Friend for a Fiver has been hugely enthusiastic from *FT* readers, restaurateurs and chefs alike.

Readers' enthusiasm came to the fore when we studied the reports from those restaurateurs who took part last year and saw that many reported a significant upturn in business as the simple but hugely beneficial principles of the promotion began to be appreciated. And, as in every year, I have been receiving messages for several weeks now from readers wanting to know when the *FT*'s restaurant promotion was going to signal the beginning of another year of eating out well.

The enthusiasm from the restaurateurs is only too obvious from the list of those taking part (see examples below), which will be appearing on [www.ft.com/lunch](http://www.ft.com/lunch) over the coming fortnight.

Thanks to Richard and Peter Harden, who have skilfully adapted the database accumulated for their annual restaurant guide to our specific needs, we have compiled the best list of restaurants that it has ever been my pleasure to enthuse about. And we have tried very, very hard to draw in restaurants from around the UK even if certain areas of the country remains sadly under-represented.

The restaurateurs' enthusiasm is not confined to their appreciation of the *FT* reader as a customer, however. What broke new ground last year and made Take a Friend for a Fiver so compelling was the fact that it proved to be not only such good value, particularly for the friend, but also so easy to operate and to manage.

The beauty of Take a Friend for a Fiver is that it does not require special menus, written to a specific price point, or menus that are to be offered to only a certain section of the restaurant. It applies equally to both the restaurant's main menu and to any fixed price menu on offer at the time, and nobody is committed to a certain number of courses. The host pays the menu price, the guest pays a fiver and the pleasure is shared equally. And there is the added bonus of the more you order, the more you save!

With their enthusiasm comes, however, a particular plea from the restaurateurs: will *FT* readers please stipulate that they are booking for Take a Friend for a Fiver when they make the reservation rather than just when they ask for the bill.

This is not only one of the terms and conditions, as laid out on [www.ft.com/lunch](http://www.ft.com/lunch), but also in every customer's best interests. If the restaurant's staff do not know this from the time they take the booking, it will obviously slow down the preparation and delivery of the bill just at the time when the customers will want to be on their way. So please do adhere to this as it is in your best interests.

As is taking advantage of what will be on offer from the kitchens and wine cellars of those taking part in Take A Friend for A Fiver.

From east to west across London the impressive list of chefs includes:

Herbert Berger at **1 Lombard Street**, EC3  
Francesco Mazzei at **L'Anima**, EC2  
Cyrus Todiwala at **Café Spice Namaste**, E1  
Maria Elia at **The Whitechapel Dining Room**, E1  
Morgan Meunier at **Morgan M** in N7  
Shane Osborne at **Pied à Terre**, W1  
Marcus Eaves at **L'Autre Pied** in Maryelone  
Jean Philippe Patruno at **Quo Vadis** in Soho  
Raymond Patterson at **Patterson's** in Mayfair  
Sally Clarke at Clarke's in **Notting Hill Gate**, W8  
Matthew Harris at the elegant **Bibendum**, SW3  
Bruce Poole, at **Chez Bruce** in Wandsworth, SW17 - invariably voted one of the very best restaurants in London by readers of Harden's Guides - and a partner in **The Glasshouse** close to Kew Gardens, which is also taking part.

Other participants who are especially strong on wine include:

Robert and Robyn Wilson, who have put together an extraordinarily extensive wine list at **The Bleeding Heart** in EC1  
Chef Martin Lam's list at **Ransome's Dock**, SW11, exudes his passion for wine just as the dessert list reflects his wife's delight in all things sweet, while former sommelier Matt Wilkin has taken on a new role as he has transformed the long-established **Princess Victoria** pub in W12 into a most impressive dining room.

These high standards are matched in many parts of the country:

Up the long winding country path that leads to **Gidleigh Park** in Chagford, Devon  
Overlooking the gardens created by William Robinson at **Gravetye Manor**, Sussex  
Or in the wilder surrounds of the **Corse Lawn Hotel** in Gloucester  
**The Old Vicarage**, at Ridgeway, Yorkshire  
**Winteringham Fields** in north Lincolnshire  
**Ramson's** in Ramsbottom, Lancashire  
and **The Pheasant Hotel** at Bassenthwaite in the Lake District.

There are many more. We do hope you enjoy the wide range of restaurants taking part in this year's Take a Friend for a Fiver.

See [here](#) for a complete list of all 175.