



Written by
Nick Lander
19 May 2018

Somewhere to Hide with bottles



A version of this article is published by the Financial Times. See also [How not to eat out](#).

Hide restaurant has opened on the corner of Clarges Street and Piccadilly, facing Green Park, with one enormous commercial advantage other restaurateurs can only envy. It has been funded by a Russian billionaire.

Having moved to London, in 2012 Yevgeny Chichvarkin opened Hedonism on Davies Street, the wine store where the range and the prices live up to the name he has so carefully chosen. Hide is his first move into restaurants.

The significant amount of capital Chichvarkin has so far invested has been spent extremely well.

In Ollie Dabbous, 37, he has chosen an exciting British chef. In Matthew Mawtus, 32, he has found an energetic, youthful but experienced Scottish general manager. And in putting together

an establishment that spans three floors he has covered everyone's tastes: a bar and several private dining rooms constitute Below; an à la carte menu on the Ground floor where breakfast, lunch and dinner are served; while Above represents a space, with more private rooms (one of them pictured above), in which Dabbous and his team can show off via several tasting menus. (The giant lift to Above will accommodate a bulletproof car whose passengers can be disgorged straight into a private room.)

But it is what is printed on the bottom right hand corner of the wine list that distinguishes this restaurant in my opinion.

Here are listed the names of the director of wine, Piotr Pietras MS (Master Sommelier), closely followed by the names of his head sommelier, his assistant and then the four sommeliers. At last, a restaurateur is being open about the importance of the role of the wine it sells, an area in which half of the total bill can be spent. (See my cri de coeur on this topic, [Sommeliers - why the anonymity?](#))

This honesty seems to have been appreciated, with Hide's income so far being split 48:52 wine to food (a considerably higher spend on wine than in most restaurants where the split is 40:60 at most).

This is largely because of Hide's two wine lists. As well as an extensive printed wine list there is another, on an iPad, that features every bottle in Hedonism up the road at the shop price plus £30, together with a guarantee that, thanks to a small electric car, the bottles can be delivered to the restaurant within 15 minutes. Sales to date have included a couple of bottles of Château Rayas 2005 (£850 each); two magnums of the cult California wine Sine Qua Non (perfectly crazy prizes); and, to a single diner, a bottle of Château Ausone 2008 with his main course followed by a half of Château Margaux 2005, another Bordeaux first growth, with his cheese.

Dabbous's food has to be good to match all this extravagance and generally it is. The Ground floor restaurant is supplied from a kitchen in the basement - the restaurant Above has its own, separate kitchen - with a bakery on the ground floor.

Dinner, given that this was in the restaurant's first week and before the pans had lost their shine, was impressive. There was an abundant selection of home-made breads that made mopping up my first course, a chilled broth made from the prawn bones and poured over diced Sicilian red prawns, even better.

This was followed by a dish that was spoilt, but only by its presentation. The turbot was expertly poached; the lemon verbena sauce was fine; but why was this served in a bowl that meant that I was unable to cut the fish properly? This presentation also meant that my cutlery, when left alone, slid less than gracefully into the bottom of the bowl.

With this and a grilled quail we drank a half bottle of Ridge Geyserville Zinfandel 2015 (£40), enjoyed a dessert of sheep's milk ice cream with meringue, and almost squabbled over who would have the pleasure of the last morsel of canelé, the sweet eggy cylinder that is so closely associated with Bordeaux. Those here were as good as any I have ever eaten.

Breakfast, a meal that no chef can meddle with too much, Dabbous here improves on. A chilled banana smoothie; croissants almost as buttery as the best I have ever enjoyed at [Lune in Melbourne](#); banana bread with smoked maple butter; excellent home-made jams beautifully presented; as well as strong coffee - all contributed to the gradual revival of those around the table.

With this come the minor but vital details that a wealthy owner, used to eating out in the world's top restaurants, can not only insist on but also pay for. There are acoustic panels in the ceiling and cork panelling on the walls. The windows are triple glazed offering diners a varied view on Piccadilly of the buses, the horses and the occasional man in a kilt, and from Above of verdant Green Park. And uniting all three floors is a magnificently sinuous wooden staircase made by GDS of Poland that has already become a stage for Instagrammers.

This emphasis on quality has imposed a further burden on Mawtus's obviously broad shoulders. It is down to him to ensure that the level of service from his front of house team is as knowledgeable and assiduous as it has to be. So far the wine list has provoked the most enthusiasm, with his sommeliers, in his words, like 'kids in a candy store' at the end of a service in which they have opened and served bottles that hitherto they could only have dreamed of.

Hide 85 Piccadilly, London W1J 7NB; tel +44 (0)20 3146 8666