

Evening Standard

ES

magazine

18 February 2005

WILLIAM SITWELL IS THE



Food Spy

Restaurant bites

Explosive scenes at last week's prestigious OFM Food Awards. Douglas Rodriguez, chef of Sloane Avenue's **Gaucha Grill**, marched up to restaurant critic Jay Rayner, who recently described one of the chef's starters as an 'exercise in gastronomic illiteracy'. 'What do you know about making ceviche?' he growled, grabbing Rayner's arm. 'Come outside with me.' Luckily for Rayner, the chef's coterie of blonde PRs were on hand to usher him away.



spokesman, 'but hopefully no one will notice.' Nutty!

At the brilliant new Indian restaurant **Amaya** on Halkin Arcade (left), many of the wines come

with screwcaps. 'While we know that it's the way forward, not all our customers appreciate the lack of corks,' a manager tells Food Spy. 'So now we will only employ staff who, when they open the wine, can make convincing popping noises.'

Fans of theatreland Asian restaurant **East@West** are in mourning at its sudden closure. 'Apparently it's our fault,' moans a frequent visitor. 'There was too much drinking in the bar, not enough eating and the sums didn't add up.' A spokesman for **Image Restaurants** confirms that money was the issue. 'To be honest, we got a big fat offer for the building, so we sold.'

New Covent Garden restaurant **Fire & Stone**,

due to open in April, promises pizzas with 'exciting and contemporary toppings', according to the press blurb. Included in this is 'rocket pesto and Macedonia nut' – not a nut known to Food Spy, or indeed any of its Macedonian contacts. 'Er, I think we meant macadamia nut,' stutters a restaurant

The next big thing...

Karen Knowler, of The Fresh Network (www.fresh-network.com) and consultant for The Little Earth Café, predicts...

'For the health-conscious, organic is one thing, but raw and living food is definitely another. It's the way things are heading, and rightly so. For optimum health and wellbeing it's vital that as much of what we eat is fresh and not cooked or processed. This is the year for the raw food boom – and you'd be amazed at how delicious and beautiful it can be!'



William Sitwell is editor of Waitrose Food Illustrated (e-mail: foodspy@jbcpc.co.uk)



Engelbert Humperdinck's sofa supper

Sixty-eight-year-old balladeer Engelbert Humperdinck was born Arnold George (Gerry) Dorsey in Madras, the son of a British army officer. He changed his name to the inspired Engelbert Humperdinck (after the German composer) in 1966. He lives in Los Angeles and his home town, Leicester.

Who's on the sofa? Me and my wife, Pat.
What's on the menu? Ideally I'd start with a salad, then steak and chips – although I should really miss out on the chips!
Pudding? I've never had a sweet tooth; I prefer a glass of red wine to wash down a meal.
And to drink? A bottle of

good Australian red wine.
What's on the box? I don't get a lot of time to watch TV, but I really got into *The X Factor* – I think Sharon Osbourne is great!
Engelbert's new album, Let There Be Love, is out now and he plays the London Palladium on 21 February



Barfly what's new on the party circuit

At the launch party for Victoria Wood's **Acorn Antiques – the Musical**, guests, including comedian Graham Norton (left), went potty for the Cornish pasties and melt-in-the-mouth macaroons – not to mention the free-flowing champagne. The nibbles were so good, it took the beat of the bossa nova to stop the gobbling and get everyone on to the dancefloor. That soon blew away the cobwebs.

SALSA DIP	TASTE	TEXTURE	APPEARANCE
Desert Pepper Salsa at Harrods £2.75 for 230ml (020 7225 5804)	★ ★	★	★ ★
Kettle Dips £1.99 for 220g (01003 744 788)	★ ★ ★	★	★ ★ ★
Somerfield Salsa 77p for 300g (www.somerfield.co.uk)	★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★	★ ★

'I purée doughnuts and milk and then suck it through a straw'

Minnie Driver makes her own milkshakes

