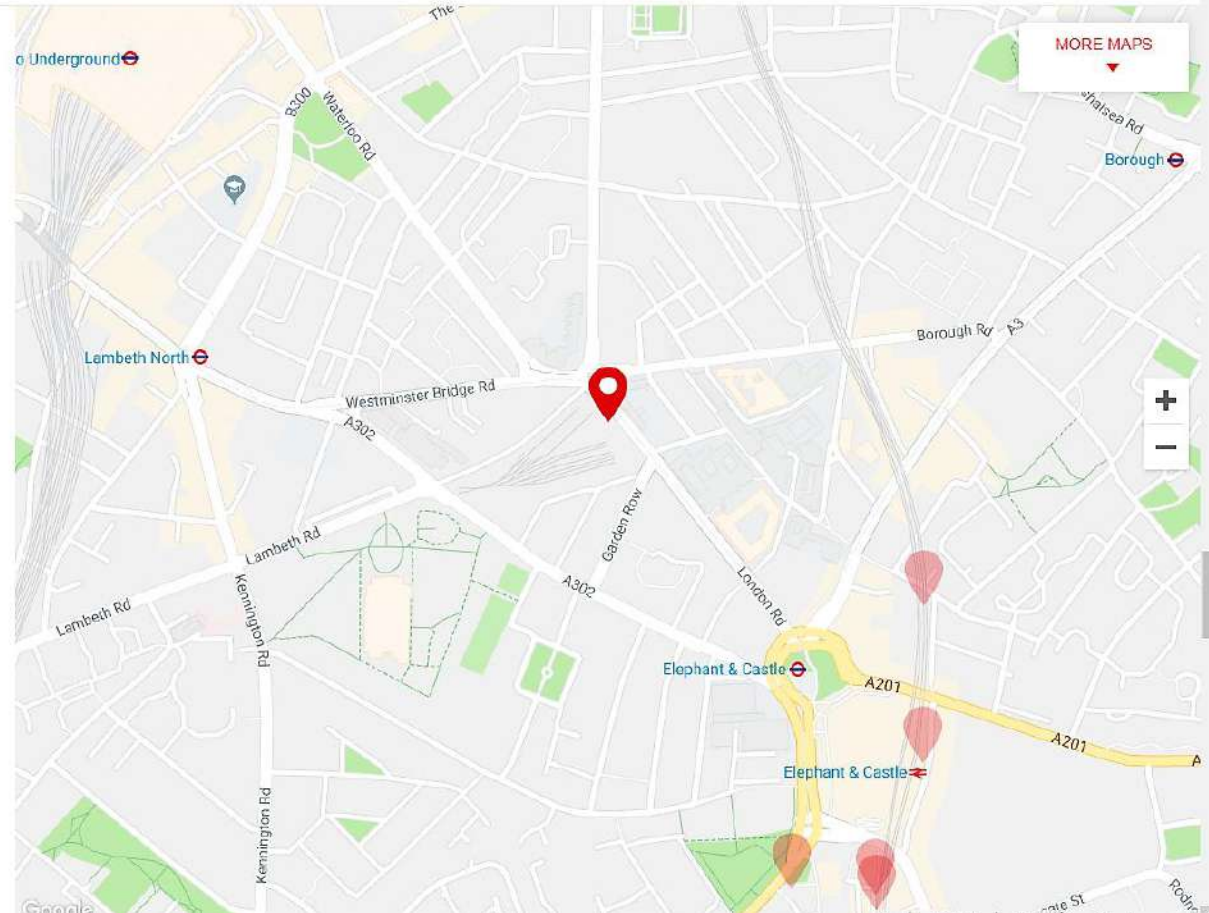


6. Paladar

4-5 London Rd
London SE1 6JZ, UK

020 7186 5555
[Visit Website](#)

Paladar stands apart from all the other restaurants on this list. For one, it's the only restaurant in the area with a pan-Latin American menu, designed and cooked by Colombian chef Jose Rubio-Guevara. It's also the only restaurant making any effort to attract a new type of diner. The food here is assured and creative — the prawn tostadas have clean flavours and the Mexican carnitas is given a Cuban twist with the use of mojo-marinated pork, giving the meat an acidity which pairs well with fiery habanero salsa. The churros made with blue corn are both visually striking and deeply sweet-savoury and should be washed down with a pisco, mezcal or something from the strong South American wine list.



fino latino

London's Paladar offers up a carnival of South American flavours – not to mention some finely seasoned ants



Why Not Eat Insects? asks the title of Vincent Holt's distinctly avant-garde 1885 cookbook. His magnum opus includes a recipe for fried cockchafers with wireworm sauce: given current food trends, it may be a dish of the future as well as the past.

José Rubio-Guevara, the Colombian head chef of the splendid Paladar restaurant in Elephant and Castle, clearly shares Holt's sentiments: a *bonne bouche* of salsa with plantain crisps is topped with a brace of fat, black *hormigas culonas* (big-bottomed ants, literally), a speciality of Santander, the Andean region north of Bogotá. I found them pleasantly crunchy and savoury, which may have been as much to do with the cooking and seasoning as their innate flavour.

A tian of tuna made me resolve never to eat quinoa anywhere else

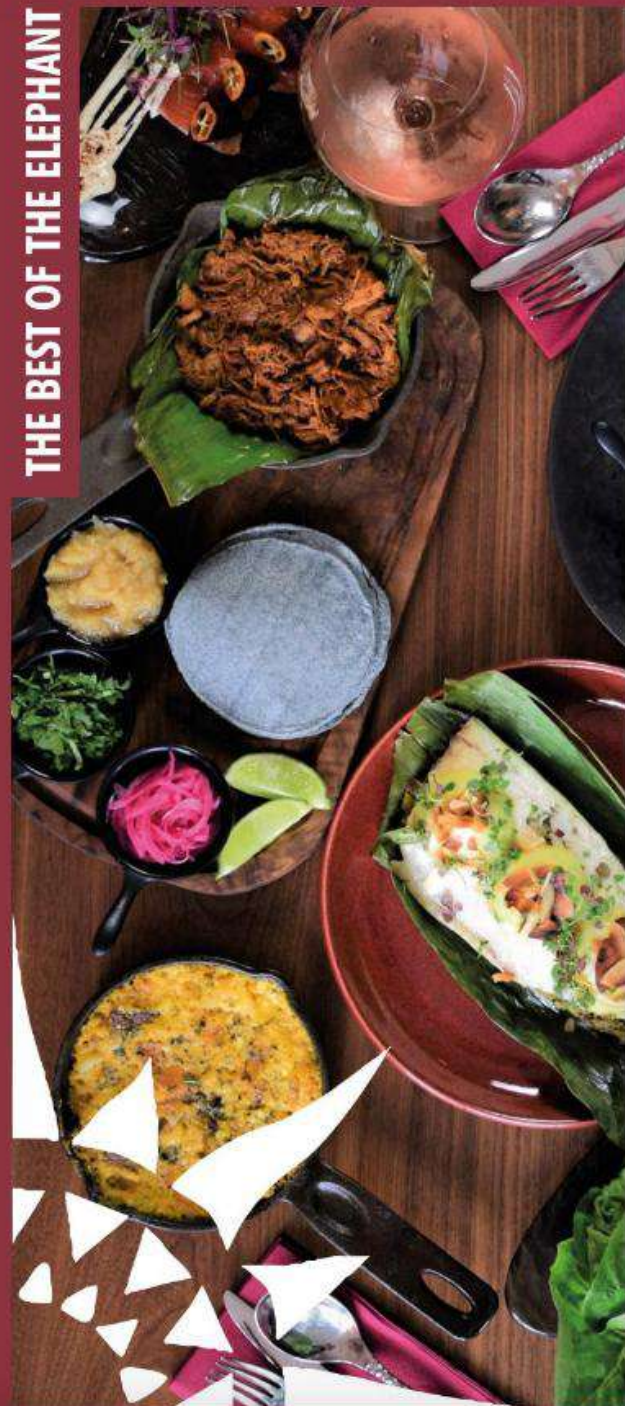
Those who prefer more conventional forms of protein may rest assured that Paladar's wide-ranging Latin American menu esteems meat and fish even more highly than our six-footed friends. There are crisply chewy lardons of pork belly, for example, tossed with herbs, charred corn kernels and chilli sauce; empanadas stuffed with *ropa vieja* ("old washing"): slow-cooked brisket with a terrifically tangy hot-sour sauce; and *ajiaco* – the famous Colombian chicken, potato and corn soup – reworked as croquetas and topped with capers.

There are various ceviches, too, all based on seabass: one with passionfruit and lemongrass, which sings with acidity; one with the earthy note of beetroot in the dressing; and one made with lulo (a pleasingly astringent, citrusy Colombian fruit) and the gentle punch of jalapeños. There's also a tian of tuna tartare, white quinoa and guacamole, served on a smoky chipotle mayonnaise (pictured) enhanced with the nuttiness of toasted quinoa. It is a splendid dish, and one that made me resolve never to eat quinoa again unless it has been cooked by Señor Rubio-Guevara.

He is also partial to an excursion to Mexico: self-assembly carnitas of hauntingly smoky, slow-cooked pork arrive with a stack of soft, fragrant blue-corn tortillas and a pineapple salsa. I can report that the carnitas go very well with Intipalka, a Peruvian Syrah, one of the oddball gems on Paladar's excellent wine list, also available at retail prices in the restaurant's smart bodega next door.

I have enjoyed many memorable meals in London's South American restaurants – at various branches of Ceviche, Martin Morales' top-notch Peruvian joints, and at Arepa & Co on Paradise Row in Bethnal Green, where the eponymous Venezuelan flatbreads arrive warm and fluffy, stuffed with shredded beef, black beans and cheese. But Paladar has a quality all its own: a very civilised, friendly, laidback space in which Latin rhythms mingle with the sweet aroma of roasting corn. Should you fancy dining alfresco this summer there is a lovely hidden terrace too. **BILL KNOTT**

Paladar, 4-5 London Road, London SE1
(020-7186 5555; paladarlondon.com).



A fusion featuring the best of Latin American cooking is on the menu at Paladar.

When people walk through the door at Paladar, I want them to feel like they're stepping into another world, one where they can have a holiday without leaving Elephant and Castle" enthuses general manager, Charles Tyler.

Charles opened his vibrant and stylish Latin American restaurant on London Road just over two years ago, along with Colombian head chef, Jose Rubio-Guevara, Ecuadorian sommelier, Rafael Cabezas-Castro, Cuban front of house manager, Yalain Pita-Salomon, and French bar and operations manager, Cedric Gaultier.

"Latin America is known for its variety of flavours, distinctive spices and fresh ingredients and we've brought all these together to create something very special" says Charles.

"We're very much a neighbourhood restaurant and lots of our guests live and work in the area. There are Latino families who come here for birthdays, as well as tourists and theatre-goers, so it's always an interesting and diverse mix."

Since opening in 2017, Paladar has received rave reviews from everyone: from Trip Advisor to the Financial Times.

"We were pleasantly surprised when we got the number one spot on Trip Advisor just seven months after opening. Now we regularly get five star reviews across the board" says Charles.

Last August, food writer, Bill Knott wrote about Paladar's 'sensational Latin American cuisine' for the Financial Times.

"Bill originally contacted Jose, our chef, as he was writing about ajíaco, which is a traditional Colombian potato and chicken soup. But when he came to visit, he was so impressed by what he saw and tasted that he did a lovely write up on the restaurant too" says Charles.

"We were also delighted to win the Best New Business Award in the 2018 Southwark Business Excellence Awards."

As well as being vegetarian and vegan friendly – their roast aubergine with fried beans and their cassava fritters

with guava sauce are particularly popular – the restaurant is also 100 per cent gluten free.

"We had a lot of people asking about gluten free options and we realised, that with a few simple tweaks, our entire menu could actually be gluten free – as it's mainly based on corn rather than wheat" Charles explains.

"We're featured a lot on gluten free blogs and social media as somewhere people can come and eat anything without having to worry. The Instagrammers love the fact that it's not only gluten free and delicious but that it looks great too!"

66

Instagrammers love the fact that it looks great too

69

Charles fell in love with Latin American food and culture after travelling extensively all around the continent in 2013.

He was born in south east London and has lived here for much of his life. He's also no stranger to the restaurant business, having previously run Asian restaurant, Champor-Champor (near London Bridge) which he eventually sold after 11 years.

"I wasn't planning to open another restaurant but when I got back from my travels I was fired up by all the things I'd seen and tasted there and my Latin American friends persuaded me to do something together."

But opening Paladar wasn't without its challenges. Charles discovered the former La Dolce Vita Italian restaurant was up for sale when cycling past on his bike one day. But the Grade II listed building needed a lot of work.

"La Dolce Vita had been open for 26 years and it was a bit of an 80s time

warp" he recalls. "We pretty much had to change everything. At one point a structural wall and part of the ceiling almost collapsed but luckily the builders put a prop in place and rescued the situation."

Paladar has a small bodega (shop) which sells the Latin American wines and spirits served in the restaurant.

"Most people know about Chilean wine and Argentinian wine but Brazil now produces some delicious sparkling wines and we've made some great finds from Uruguay, Peru and Mexico too" says Charles.

The bodega has a chef's table (with a view into the kitchen) which can be hired for groups. In the summer, guests can eat in their walled garden too.

"Our hidden gem" says Charles.

The restaurant also hosts a regular programme of exhibitions by Latin American artists and photographers.

"We've just had an exhibition by Cuban artist, Daniel Diaz, which explored his vision of the English countryside and included a country cottage in every painting. Our new show is curated by a local councillor, Maria Linforth-Hall, who's from Ecuador" says Charles.

The team at Paladar also makes a point of celebrating all the Latin American holidays and festivals.

"Mexico's Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead) is always a big thing for us and we celebrated the 500th anniversary of Havana last November too. This February, we're marking Peru's Día Del Pisco Sour and Chile's Día de la Pisco with special offers on piscos. Any excuse for a party!" smiles Charles.

Paladar

4-5 London Road SE1 6JZ

020 7186 5555

Open Monday-Friday 12pm-3pm
and 5pm-10pm

Saturday 1pm-10.30pm

www.paladarlondon.com

FOOD & DRINK

By Michael Holland

Paladar

4-5 London Rd,
London SE1 6JZ
0207 186 5555

www.paladarlondon.com

Monday-Friday:
11.30am to 11.00pm
Saturday: 5.30pm to midnight



Paladar is a palace of pleasure

Arriba, Arriba! Andale, Andale! I came over all Speedy Gonzalez after dining at Paladar, the restaurant that fuses all the best from Latin America: the music, the wines, the decor, and - most importantly - the cuisines.

I suppose my knowledge of this type of food came from two weeks holidaying in Oaxaca, Mexico, and eating at Argentinian restaurants in London on the odd occasion. But not being a big fan of cheesy fried beans or huge steaks I was not buzzing with enthusiasm before Nina and I visited this new place in SE1. That quickly changed soon after we arrived and were greeted by Yalain, the Cuban FOH; then enticed into some excellent starters and wines by Ecuadorian sommelier Rafael, who told us about the Colombian chef who does great things in the kitchen; and then we chatted with the director Charles who told us he lives 'by the Tesco in the Old Kent Road! What? It turned out that this Englishman is the glue to this union of foodies. Anyway, by now I was well and truly converted and ready to samba and rumba, and even cha-cha-cha for some of the lovely food I was being told about.

I say told because there was nothing on the menu that I could recognise. It was only when Rafael talked us through his suggestions that I could build up a picture of what was involved. We decided to go truly native and try dishes we had never



had before, so first up was Cassava Fritters and Empanadas filled with slow-cooked beef brisket. Both came with dips that made you go Hmm! The fritters had a tamarind sauce, the empanadas paired with a coriander-chili concoction that had a lot of bite.

Those dishes were a good sign of what was to come, as were our opening drinks: Moradito - a tequila-based cocktail that was so easy on the palate it should've come with a danger warning, and Syrah - a full-bodied Mexican red. All proposed by Rafael.

The plates then kept coming. The Tuna Tartare was not just a beautiful thing to look at but was a festival of flavours, a triumph of textures, and as many superlatives as you want to add yourself. If it had kissed me I would not wash for a week. The tuna

was my favourite dish of the night, just beating the Grilled Octopus, which must have been the understudy for Monster of the Deep, with its big, sturdy tentacles that looked like they could grab you and drag you down to murky depths.

For side orders we had Palm Hearts with Jalapeño Pickle, that were amazing, and Roast Aubergine with Black Sauce that did not look appetising. How wrong was I? And while the plates kept coming so did Rafael, suggesting wines from Peru and Chile and Argentina, and it was hard to refuse if you didn't know how to say no in Ecuadorian...

Finally, after about two hours, food and drink stopped arriving. The dessert menu came instead. I Googled how to say, 'I'm from Bournemouth, get me out of here!' in

Portuguese, but before an answer came Nina ordered a dessert that I can only describe as nachos with cottage cheese - but with the most wonderful poached fruit and physalis jam, plus a bread pudding made with sweet potato and coconut. Her rash action confirmed to me that she was loco. Especially when she also called on sweet wines to accompany those desserts.

Eventually it all came to a satisfying end, chatting to Charles and checking out the bodega next door where you can buy Latin American wines, coffee and chocolate, or reserve the large table with the view into the open kitchen.

Unbelievably, the Paladar menu is completely gluten-free, which some equate with free of taste, but I can assure you that your palate will think it is headlining at the Rio Carnival. In fact, Paladar translates as Palace.

Where else can you have cassava crisps, tempura breadfruit or sourclop mousse, paired with some fantastic wines from the region? This team have united to bring their passion and experience to London and we are very lucky to have them in Southwark.

Yes, it does seem like a lot of money for dinner but I blame Rafael for wanting to show off the best that Latin America has to offer. Conversely, you can sit at the bar with a Brazilian beer and a couple of snacks and listen to samba for much less. Plus, there is a set lunch menu (Two Courses with a glass of wine: £15.50; Three

courses with a glass of wine: £18.50). Paladar is a place that needs to be experienced.

THE DAMAGE

Syrah	£7.00
Moradito	£9.00
Empanadas	£6.50
Cassava Fritters	£6.00
Tuna Tartare	£10.50
Grilled Octopus	£18.00
Roast Aubergine	£9.00
Palm Hearts	£7.50
Sauvignon Blanc	£9.20
Semillon	£9.10
Poached Guava	£7.00
Bread Pudding	£6.70
Zuccardi Tardio	£4.30
Valdivieso Semillon	£5.80

TOTAL £115.60

FOOD (4-5)	★★★★★
AMBIENCE (4-5)	★★★★★
VALUE (4-5)	★★★★★
DISABLED ACCESS	YES
DISABLED TOILET	YES
BOOKING	YES



CUBAN REVOLUTION

A new cuisine is hot on the heels of its Latin American counterparts

Cuba has been renowned for many things over the years (cigars, mojitos, bright colours), but not its culinary offerings. However, food on the tropical island has been undergoing something of a renaissance lately, with the arrival of new *paladares* (private restaurants in people's homes), farmers' markets and street food stalls. Imogene Tondre, co-author of new book, *Cuba: The Cookbook* (published by Phaidon), says, 'There's a huge increase in restaurants and paladares, and they're innovating with creative takes on traditional dishes using local ingredients'. Dishes from her book include green peanut sauce, tarot root gnocchi with Cuban sauce, and yucca flan (all pictured above). The interest in new Cuban cuisine extends beyond the country, too. Chef Luis Pous, who left Cuba frustrated by the lack of

ingredients, went on to set up Miami restaurant Asia de Cuba, and there are now branches in New York, London and Dubai. 'Cuban cuisine is eclectic,' says Pous. 'We've been influenced by the French, Spanish, Chinese, Africans and more, so I added ingredients that are hard to find in Cuba to our traditional dishes to create new offerings, such as scallops with black fried rice, foie gras croquetas, and lobster sofrito.' Miami chef Eileen Andrade, the granddaughter of first generation Cuban immigrants and restaurateurs, has taken the cuisine even further by fusing it with Korean at her acclaimed restaurant Finka Table & Tap. And at Paladar, a new London restaurant that bills itself as Latin American, you'll even find a Habanero, a spicy version of the classic mojito, which features a chilli syrup. We'll drink to that.

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restaurant

May 2019 | £4.99

ANNA HAUGH

The Dublin-born chef on her debut Chelsea venture

CLAUDE BOSI AT BIBENDUM

Behind the brigade at the two-Michelin starred restaurant

IT'S A NO-SHOW

Finding a solution to the problem of disappearing diners

QUIQUE DACOSTA

The three-star chef is shaking up Spanish food in the capital

William Reed
INFORMING BUSINESS GROWTH

Ajiaco

Created by José Rubio-Guevara, Paladar

Chef José Rubio-Guevara is a proud Colombian and an evangelist for his country's cuisine, spreading the word from his south London restaurant, Paladar, where his menu blends modern gastronomic techniques with the best Colombian produce he can find in London. He is not about to run out of ideas - Colombia is nearly five times the size of the UK.

"It's very diverse - there's the Caribbean coast, the Pacific coast, the mountainous interior, and the ranchlands to the east, towards the border with Venezuela - and that diversity is strongly reflected in the cuisine," he says. "There are influences from African immigrants, the Spanish colonisers and Arab traders, as well as from our indigenous people. We even have a version of tabbouleh, introduced by Syrian and Lebanese immigrants to the Caribbean, although Colombia is not generally a paradise for vegetarians: our diet, especially inland, includes a lot of meat."

Bandeja Paisa - bandeja means 'platter', and Paisa is a region in the mountainous northwest of the country - is a case in point. A huge mound of

Words/Bill Knott

grilled steak, chicharrón (puffed-up pork crackling), chorizo, morcilla (black pudding), beans cooked with pork, rice and fried egg, it has recently been touted as Colombia's national dish, even though no records of it exist in its current form and presentation before 1950.

There are alternatives to the meat feast, however. "On the coast, there is a good variety of seafood, often

prepared in coconut-based sauces, and an overwhelming selection of fruits, many of them unfamiliar in the West: lulo, zapote, guama and mamoncillo, to name just a few. And there is the chontaduro, the fruit of a tree called a peach palm in English.

It has firm, slightly fibrous orange flesh, tart and kind of sweet, and it's very popular as a street food, served with local honey and a sprinkling of salt." In the restaurant, Rubio-Guevara serves a purée of chontaduro and coconut milk with pan-fried tilapia fillets, alongside shredded green mango.

Each region has its own specialties, but, says Rubio-Guevara, there is a particular "like mom used to make it" dish with which all Colombians identify,

although it's especially popular in and around Bogotá, the capital city: a hearty chicken, corn and potato soup called ajiaco (pronounced a-hee-ack-oh).

Potatoes and corn are both indigenous to the Americas, and they are the soul of the dish, more so than the chicken which arrived with the Spanish in the 16th century. Rubio-Guevara uses three varieties of potato in his ajiaco, including papas criollas (native potatoes, literally).

"These are delicious baby potatoes, sweet and earthy, that we cook in many different ways. Fried papas are a really popular snack food: you buy them in paper bags from street vendors, but they can also be roasted. In the UK, you can buy them frozen." (try www.solandinomarket.co.uk).

The corn is choclo maize, an ancient variety of (usually) white corn with giant kernels: it is starchier and not as sweet as the corn more commonly found in the UK, but you can use sweetcorn instead.

The other thoroughly Andean flavour is the herb guascas. "It's very popular in Colombia, even though it is considered a weed in most other parts of the world. It was brought from Colombia to Kew Gardens in 1796 and escaped to the wild here." A member of the daisy family, its

With its combination of the indigenous and the introduced, ajiaco is Colombia in a bowl

Ajiaco (serves 4)

Ingredients

First stage

2 chicken breasts, skinned and boneless
2 ears of choclo maize (or yellow corn)
2l water
4 cloves of garlic, sliced
Half a white onion, diced
One yellow bell pepper, diced

500g medium-sized potatoes (red and/or white), peeled and cut into pieces
2 spring onions, chopped
6 sprigs of coriander, chopped

Second stage

300g small yellow potatoes (papas criollas) cut in half
8g dried guascas (see text), powdered
Salt and pepper

To serve

100ml double cream
Capers, drained, to taste
1 avocado, peeled, pitted and cut in small squares
Chopped coriander

Method

1. Put all the first stage ingredients into a medium size pot and bring to the boil. Cover with a lid and

simmer for about 45 minutes on a gentle heat. Take out the corn and chicken, put them on a plate and cover. Blend the remaining ingredients in the pot with a stick blender until you have a creamy consistency.

2. Add the second stage ingredients to the pot and cook on a medium heat for around 12

Latin name - *Galinsoga parviflora* - comes from Ignacio Mariano Martinez de Galinsoga, an 18th-century Spanish botanist. His surname, corrupted to 'gallant soldiers', is one of its English names, although it is also known, less charmingly, as 'potato weed'. It can be bought dried in packets, and gives a unique grassy flavour to ajiaco.

The recipe itself is simple. The chicken and corn are simmered together with potatoes, garlic, onions, yellow pepper and coriander, then removed. The soup is puréed, then used to cook the *papas criollas*. Finally, the chicken is shredded, the corn sliced, and everything is reassembled at the table, with additional bowls of ingredients allowing diners to customise their ajiaco to the way they like it.

Typical accompaniments include capers (introduced to Colombia from the Mediterranean by the Spanish), chopped avocado, cream and coriander.

With its combination of the indigenous (corn, potatoes, avocado) and the introduced (chicken, capers, coriander), ajiaco is termed a *mestizo* (mixed, in Spanish) dish: as much as is possible for a country with such a varied cuisine, ajiaco is Colombia in a bowl. 🇨🇴

minutes, or until the *papas criollas* are tender but not falling apart. In the meantime, shred the chicken breasts with your hands into pieces and slice each ear of corn into six.

3. To serve, divide the soup, corn and chicken between four bowls. Put all the other ingredients into small bowls on the side, to be added to taste by each diner.



Hearty bowl: ajiaco is chicken, corn and potato soup



Paladar - Southwark's electrifying Latin American restaurant



By Susan Isaacs
Arts and restaurant critic

It started with an ant. A Colombian ant to be precise. The hors d'oeuvre lay beautifully on the table before us, purple crisps, beige chickpea humus and a small black ant. And as soon as we dipped the delicious purple crisps into the humus, we knew we were in for a treat.



Were we in a restaurant somewhere in the middle of Latin America?

No. Just slip off the rather bleak London Road leading from Elephant and Castle tube, into a world of colour and a blaze of tastes. The venue is Paladar, and as we enter, a red bull on the wall confronts us, surrounded by vibrant blues, while next to it a cock with a red crest flaunts its multicoloured feathers. There is a wonderful ever changing art gallery on the walls to showcase the best of everything from Latin America, and as Charles Tyler, head honcho, and restaurateur extraordinaire explains, once the word got around, a sensational assortment of artists started coming out of the woodwork.



The head chef is Colombian, the sommelier is Ecuadorian, the front of house manager is Cuban, and the paintings on the walls come from Mexico and Argentina. But Charles has the diction and bearing of an aristocratic Englishman, and a photograph on the website shows him alert and adventurous on a horse somewhere on the Latin American continent. He decided to set up the restaurant, inspired by the tastes and colours after a trip there in 2013.

He chose Elephant and Castle as he lives just ten minutes away, a crucial factor when you regularly finish work in the small hours.

There is a Latin American community who live in the area, but the punters are often City slickers, or food gourmets looking for a special, and unusual treat. The restaurant has featured in the rankings as one of the most highly rated in London, and that is facing competition from more than 19,000 competitors.

The nibbles were incredible. Delicious empanadas were filled with slow cooked beef brisket, and a criander -chilli sauce for dipping. As for the green plantain crisps, with a side of tquero guacamole, it took a real effort of will to put them down, they were so more-ish. The cassava fritters were golden and crispy on the outside, with a wonderful mora compote and tamarind sauce.

There was a tartare and quinoa tian, with taro crisp, and chipotle mayonnaise, where the tuna was superb, and the colours were vibrant. Another excellent dish was the palm heart tiradito with aguachile, sweetcorn and jalapeño pickle.

We finished the meal with a delicious liqueur called Black Fire, a combination of Tequila, coffee and chilli. The restaurant does what it says, for Paladar means palate in Spanish. Your palate will be tickled, shocked, and delighted, as you sample electrifying dishes from across Latin America.



Southwark BUSINESS TODAY

Issue 34: June 2021



THE ECLECTIC ENTREPRENEUR

Charles Tyler of Paladar Restaurant Page 18



- **Skills**
London South Bank University (LSBU) supporting the local business community. Page 10



- **Economy**
Job market remains resilient. Page 20



- **Remembering when...**
Dr Alfred Salter and his wife Ada settled in poverty stricken Bermondsey. Page 24





The eclectic entrepreneur

To say that Charles Tyler's career has been colourfully diverse would perhaps be an understatement.

A skilled entrepreneur who currently runs Paladar restaurant near Waterloo in London, he has an eclectic background in photography, publishing, travel, aviation and hospitality, and worked in places as far flung as Malaysia and Latin America. It's the latter influence that colours his current venture, Paladar, which serves creative Latin American cuisine to customers who come from all over the world.

"Pre-Covid, about 25% of our business during the summer months was from international visitors," says Charles. "Our restaurant is experiential. When we were forced to close our doors last year due to COVID, we operated a takeaway service but it didn't really work. At Paladar we want to showcase the best of Latin America - from the food, wines, cocktails, art, music and hospitality. It is a total dining experience, that you can't really replicate with a takeaway service."

As with most hospitality businesses, COVID hit Charles and Paladar hard. Fortunately, he was able to access government support in the form of grants and the furlough scheme - a lifeline that has enabled the business to continue trading today. Outdoor seating in the garden has also been a blessing.

Charles says: "We've had to do things a little differently as a result of the pandemic. We've put social distancing measures in place and upgraded our reservations and EPOS technology and also gone cashless."

"Moving forward, we have to be prepared for the unexpected and be flexible enough

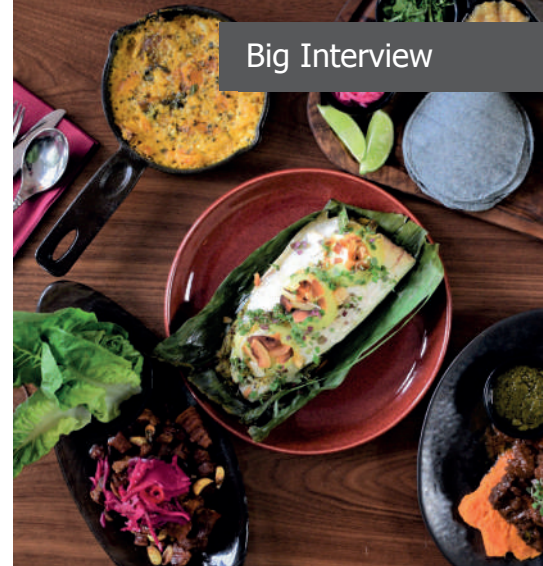
to deal with it. We're fortunate in that we're in a great location with good transport links in a vibrant area of London. I'm pretty optimistic about the future."

Charles has always displayed a positive attitude throughout an eclectic career which started when he branched into publishing after completing a master's degree in psychology and philosophy at Oxford University. With a keen interest in the aviation industry, he became editor of Airlines International and Airport World magazines. He carved a niche in travel, tourism and aviation industry journalism, supported by his skills in photography, and spent several years working in Malaysia. While there, he opened a restaurant with a friend, which "became very popular", and he used this experience to eventually open Champor-Champor restaurant near London Bridge station.

"I sold it 11 years later and embarked on a Latin American travel venture with a friend, which took off well and from which I discovered amazing experiences, wines and the diversity the region. Sadly, we found we couldn't really work together so we decided to split and my friend bought me out."

Charles then saw a gap in the market for a Latin American restaurant in London and established Paladar four years ago. As with most ventures that Charles has undertaken, it has been a success.

He says: "Our mission is to showcase the best of Latin American culture and cuisine in the heart of London. I think that we do it well and the customers have responded. Hopefully we're now through the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic and we can get back to some sort of normality."



"Moving forward, we have to be prepared for the unexpected and be flexible enough to deal with it. We're fortunate in that we're in a great location with good transport links in a vibrant area of London. I'm pretty optimistic about the future."

The Inside Story: Charles Tyler



◆ Favourite food?

I'm a great fan of creative, non-traditional cuisine. I'm not necessarily talking about fine-dining molecular gastronomy, but anything that presents food in a new light, with interesting or unexpected combinations.

◆ Favourite tipple?

I'm very much into my wine, rather than spirits and cocktails. I like to be surprised - so rather than overpriced French Claret or Burgundy, I prefer to seek out less well-known regions and grape varieties.

◆ Favourite holiday?

Probably the most memorable ten days of my life was my trip to the Galapagos Islands. The wildlife is just extraordinary; the animals just pose for you - a photographer's dream! My other really fun trip was two weeks in Cuba with nine other friends.

◆ Describe your family life?

Family life takes a bit of a back seat at the moment. I have seen very little of my family due to COVID restrictions, but hopefully that will change this summer!

◆ How do you spend your downtime?

I'm generally quite a go-go sort of person and probably don't give myself enough downtime. This last year, of course, has forced me to slow down a bit and reflect on life and what I really want to achieve in the next few years.

◆ What are your key strengths as a manager?

I like to take a very inclusive and democratic approach to management. I think it's important to be a leader rather than a manager (a term I never really liked very much) and lead by example rather than sitting behind a desk giving instructions.

◆ And your limitations?

I can be too soft and not take decisive action when action needs to be taken.

◆ Best thing about doing business in the borough?

I've been living in Southwark for about 20 years now - and this is my second restaurant in the borough. It's a large and diverse borough, which I find fascinating: from the hip-and-happening areas around London Bridge and Bermondsey, to the sometimes troubled, but up-and-coming zones around Peckham and the leafy lands of Dulwich - there's something for everyone.

◆ Famous person you'd most like to spend dinner with?

I'd love to have dinner with Sir David Attenborough. At heart I've always been very environmentally conscious and have been concerned about the fragility of the planet. It might be interesting to invite Greta Thunberg to join us for coffee afterwards.

◆ Most interesting fact about yourself?

I have a degree in psychology and philosophy, which many people find slightly bizarre!