

The Gate

For a little while, London's grande dame of quality vegetarian cuisine lost its balance, but we're pleased to report the Gate is back to its best. The elevated, airy attic above a picturesque courtyard is a joy in daylight, and the atmosphere transforms to cosiness when staff come round with gem-coloured candles for each table. All our food was brimming with interesting textures, tastes and touches. A courgette flower stuffed with sweet potato and pine nuts had been coated in a fragile, crispy beer batter and was complemented by a silky lemon aioli. Sweet, crunchy, thai salad was a riot of green mango, paw-paw, mouli, baby corn and crushed peanuts. Root vegetable rotolo featured a variety of seasonal veg, each retaining its distinctiveness. The show-stealer, however, was an artfully presented aubergine balanced vertically and stuffed with okra soldiers; it came with a guacamole and chipotle salsa that didn't scrimp on the heat or garlic. To follow, hazelnut crème brûlée was too cloying, and more praline than crème. Staff are attentive. The smart-casual customers, from silver foxes to young sophisticates, filled the Gate to near capacity – not bad for a Monday night.

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