

# RESTAURANTreview

If, like some of us, you live in south London, you may be used to popping into your local Portuguese café for a custard pie (pastel de nata) or a sandwich steak (bifana). Well, this month we decided to check out the Portuguese cuisine available in the City of London. A former paint shop and warehouse, Portal is a Portuguese- and French-inspired restaurant that combines the buzzing conviviality of Iberian dining with bold interior design, a specialist wine list and sophisticated cooking. The interior is sleek with modern lines and bright airy spaces, making it a very unconventional but extremely cosy space. After admiring the brilliant architecture, we were given an extensive wine list that included not just Portuguese wines from north to south but also a range of Spanish, Italian and New World wines, alongside some exquisite fine French classics. For starters we had a warm chicken soup and a exotic octopus carpaccio with squid ink and potato foam. For mains we had the traditional bacalhau (salted dried cod) with a coriander crust and spinach, and a pan-fried tornado



wrapped in presunto with serra cheese on top of vegetable canelones and fig sauce. Both looked and tasted divine, leaving us curious to see how the desserts were! We decided against the famous pastel, opting instead for a fruit stew in a berry sauce with vanilla ice cream. At the end we were informed by the friendly waiter that, for parties of 14 or more, a whole roast suckling pig could be acquired for just £420, and you could also book The Adega Room, a private dining room where bottles of fine wine decorate the walls, making for a warm and sophisticated space, perfect for hosting that special dinner. ★★★★★

**Portal Restaurant and Bar**  
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