

The Restaurant

Din Tai Fung.

A Taiwanese dim sum debut that's the belle of the bao



East Asia's biggest restaurants are beginning to descend on London and they have been revelatory so far. We've already seen Duddell's, Hong Kong's king of duck, arrive in London Bridge. Bang Bang Oriental Foodhall in Colindale, North London, brings snippets of China to the suburbs. This year we'll even get the world-conquering hotpot house Hai Di Lao. But the hype has been especially high for Din Tai Fung, the Taiwanese dim sum titan known for its xiao long bao.

Xiao long bao, a type of dumpling that contains both broth and filling, are an art form. But nowhere takes them as seriously as Din Tai Fung, where chefs are trained for months in how to make them. You even get a guide on how best to eat your bao.

Unfortunately, when *GQ* visited, the menu seemed incomplete because several crucial ingredients were holed up in customs. Of the ones that remained, the soup was delicious, the filling a delight and the dough delicate. To these taste buds, many of the bao lacked salt and the pork and rice shao mai really leaned into the word "glutinous". But the one absolute sensation here are the pork and prawn wontons: the dough shatters perfectly and the dipping sauce could be poured on just about anything...

If you're in London and desperate to try a definitive xiao long bao, you're queueing (and, oh, you will queue) at the right place. Din Tai Fung is committed to giving you your madeleine moment. If you have regular access to the city's dim sum offerings, however, there are other places where the food is cheaper, the queues shorter and the buns are arguably just as good. David Levesley

● 5-6 Henrietta Street, London WC2. 020 3034 3888. dintaifung-uk.com



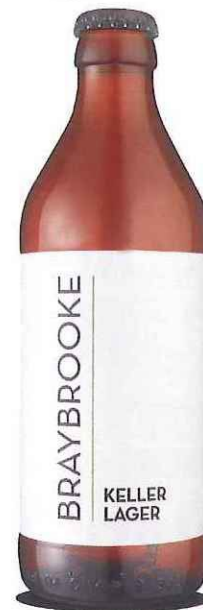
The Bottle

Braybrooke keller lager



This is the year that lager gets its groove back and you need look no further than a small farm just outside Market Harborough, the home of Braybrooke Beer. Here, Luke Wilson and Cameron Emirali, the owners of Soho stalwart 10 Greek Street, are making a crisp Bavarian-style lager. "We're purists," says Wilson. "There's no experimentation or crossover." With no triple-hopping or wacky fruit additions to hide behind, they've ensured the quality of their lager by working with Stephan Michel, the charismatic CEO of Bamberg's Mahrs Bräu. The killer combination of expertise, traditional Munich and Bamberg malts, bottom fermentation, proper maturation and cold storage makes for a flavoursome and full-bodied lager. No packet of crisps required. **Amy Matthews**

● £2.70. At Hop Burns & Black. hopburnsblack.co.uk



The Roundup

+ Square meals

Boxpark Wembley opens its doors (and menus)

Ugly Dumpling

Unit 7, Boxpark Wembley, Olympic Way, HA9 0JT. uglydumpling.co.uk



The setup: The third and biggest Boxpark opened in Wembley in December, providing a new home to London's street-food brands. These include Ping Wong's Ugly Dumpling (also seen on London's Newburgh Street), whose mission is to inject some "global fusion" into the humble dumpling.

Eat this: Dive straight into the specials, including the cheeseburger dumplings (£6.50 for five) or potato curry (£5 for five).

Drink this: The drinks list is short but sweet, including indie sodas such as Dalston's (£2.50), so you'll have to head to the PlayBox bar for something stronger.

Zia Lucia

Unit 11, Boxpark Wembley, Olympic Way, HA9 0JT. zialucia.com



The setup: Zia Lucia began life in London's Islington in 2016, finding Instagram fame thanks to its black charcoal pizzas. An outpost in West London's Brook Green followed in early 2018 and now it's Wembley's turn.

Eat this: As well as serving pizzas made from 48-hour slow-fermented dough (traditional, wholemeal, gluten-free or that famous black vegetable charcoal), the Wembley branch has a burrata bar serving creamy cheese from Puglia with sides such as spicy spianata salami (£6.50). Add a slab of freshly baked focaccia for £3.

Drink this: It has to be a blood orange Sanpellegrino (£2.50).

Cut + Grind

Unit 14, Boxpark Wembley, Olympic Way, HA9 0JT. cutandgrindburgers.com



The setup: Cut + Grind, which also has a branch in King's Cross, has a simple recipe for burger success: fresh beef from butcher Turner & George, ground in-house twice a day.

Eat this: You can choose from Juicy or Skinny (leaner) burgers, but know this: the Juicy Classic (£10), made with marbled cuts of aged beef and topped with British cheddar, homemade pickles and sweet red onion, was voted the Burger Of The Year at the National Burger Awards 2018.

Drink this: A range of milkshakes (£4.50 each), made from organic milk, were introduced in January. **Jennifer Bradly**