

EAT & DRINK

The freshest news from London's buzzing bar and restaurant scene compiled by JENNY STALLARD

BBQ HEAVEN ON EARTH

FORMER Dragons' Den contestant Texas Joe has launched his slow-smoked meats restaurant in Bermondsey, offering dishes such as beef brisket and pork shoulder smoked slowly over English oak. Sides will include brisket chilli and mac and cheese, so turn up hungry. Wash it all down with bourbon in the Honky Tonk bar.



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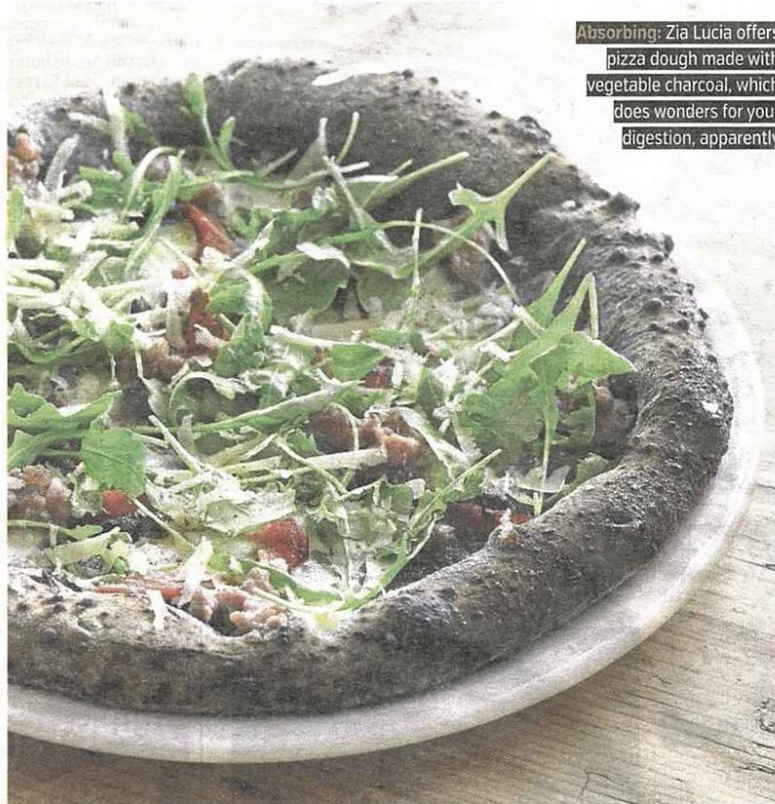


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Absorbing: Zia Lucia offers pizza dough made with vegetable charcoal, which does wonders for your digestion, apparently

ZIA LUCIA Highbury & Islington ★★★★★

I'm staring in awe at what looks like a pizza that's been left in the oven too long. It has a jet-black, charred-looking base, offset by the vibrantly coloured veggies on top. Is it actually edible? Apparently so. New pizzeria Zia Lucia on Holloway Road offers dough made with vegetable charcoal, which is fermented for 48 hours and has 'digestive, gas-absorbing capacities', as it hilariously says on the menu. The locals certainly seem to enjoy it - when my boyfriend and I

arrive, the place is packed, even though it's been open just a week.

This is the kind of neighbourhood joint you dream of: warm, friendly staff, a warm, friendly pizza oven (they've nicknamed theirs 'Dante'), a buzzy atmosphere, and food made with top-quality ingredients.

Zia Lucia offers four types of dough, including gluten-free and wholemeal, and after sharing the Tagliere (£12) - a platter of ham, salami and cheeses (including a deliciously melty Gorgonzola)

- I brave the sooty Ortolana (£9.50), topped with courgettes, aubergines and peppers. Thankfully, it doesn't taste burnt at all but it does have an intriguing depth of flavour, which contrasts nicely with the fresh veg.

The boyf tucks into a 'nduja (£8.90) on wholemeal, which he pronounces 'filling and really nice', though the spicy sausage nearly takes the roof of his mouth off. The dessert pizza (£6) has a Nutella-stuffed crust (yum!) with sliced fruit on top, and drinks include beers from nearby Hammerton Brewery, as well as some damn fine Prosecco. Magnifico! **LAURA MILLAR**
zialucia.com



CHIN CHIN!

PARIS meets Provence on the Angler Terrace of Farringdon's fashionable South Place Hotel, where they've just launched a St-Germain pop-up (until September 4). Sip a refreshing, elderflower-flavoured cocktail as the summer sun (ahem) sinks in the sky. southplacehotl.com



TASTING NOTES

AWARD-WINNING chocolate producers Jaz & Jul's are selling gourmet ice lollies at their new Chocolate House in Islington. Dairy-free, innovative flavour combinations (such as strawberry & basil and watermelon & lime) will be dipped in organic, single-origin dark chocolate and served with your choice of topping. jazandjuls.co.uk



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