

Test Driving Allegra - Stratford goes up in the world with this elegant new restaurant

Written by Catherine Hanly Created: 01 October 2019



The corner table nearest the restaurant terrace at Allegra

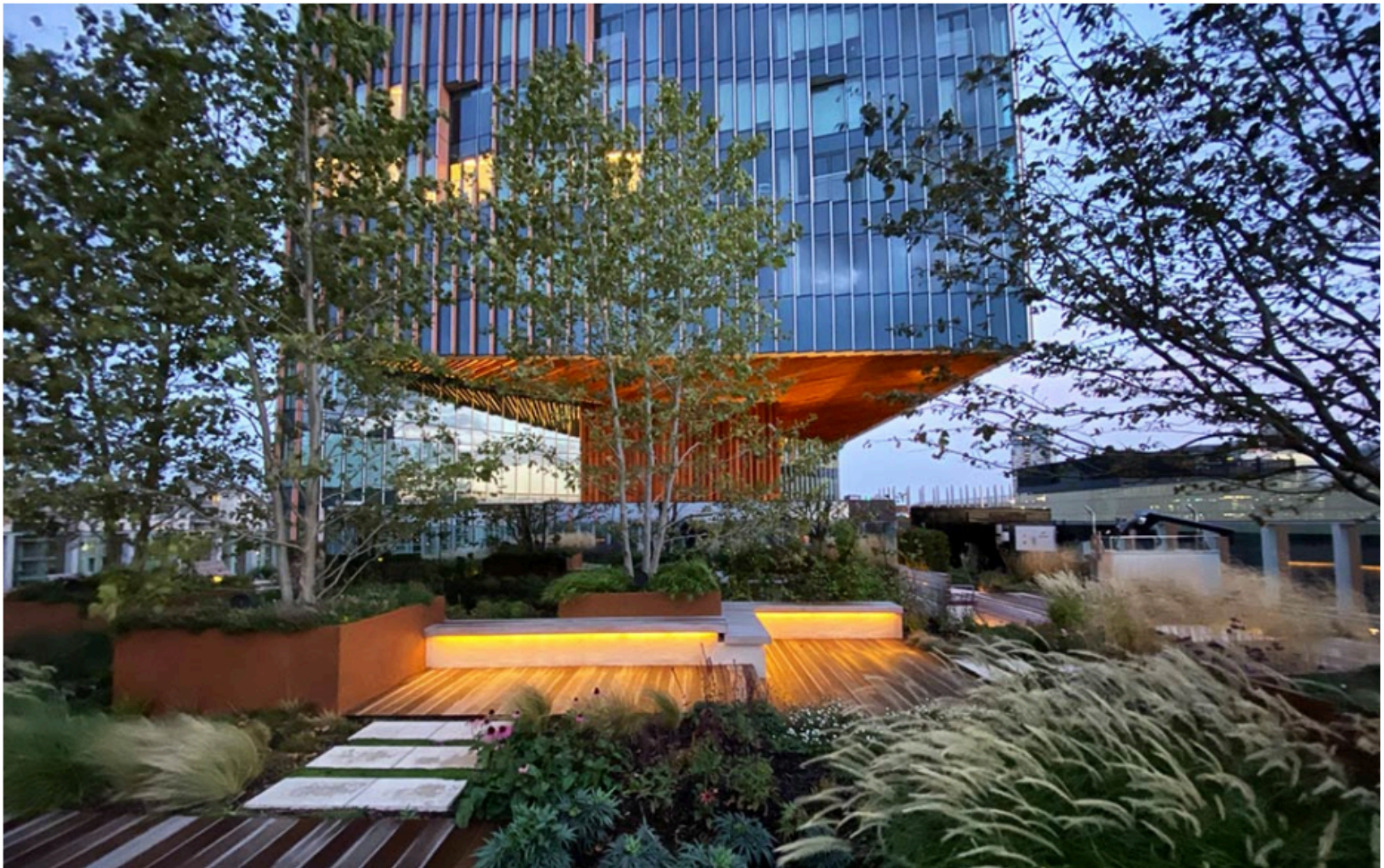
So what do we need to know about Allegra?

This is the much-anticipated, later than expected, new opening from chef Patrick Powell, previously Head Chef at the Chiltern Firehouse.

The high-rise restaurant covers the seventh floor of The Stratford - a new skyscraper jostling for attention in - you guessed it - Stratford. A mixture of designer hotel, rental apartments, restaurants and sky gardens, it's the latest development from Harry Handelsman, the developer who brought London the Chiltern Firehouse and St Pancras Renaissance Hotel. To get to it, you enter on the side of the ground floor Stratford Brasserie to take the lift to the seventh floor.

Where is it?

If you're coming here from central London, the easiest way is to make the eight-minute Javelin train journey from St Pancras to Stratford - the international station exit is right by The Stratford. Otherwise, you'll need to walk through Westfield Stratford shopping centre, from the main overground station.



The view towards the restaurant from out on the bar terrace

Where to meet for drinks first?

Oh, you're definitely going to want to meet at the bar. If the weather's good, the huge wraparound terrace is where you'll want your pre-dinner drink. There's also a large bar area and we happily put back a couple of cocktails up at the bar. Particularly good was the Just To Clarify (£12) made with Jameson, Plantation 3*, toasted corn and clarified condensed milk.

What's the view like?

A lot of effort has gone into the room, but we were surprised that on the evening we ate, all the curtains were shut so you really didn't get the feeling of being high up. Even if the view is of industrial Stratford, we didn't think the room was making the most of its natural asset.

So what sort of food is it?

If you're not keen on scrabbling around with small plates, then this is your kind of restaurant. The menu is split old-school into snacks, starters and mains, with a few larger dishes for sharing. It's also worth noting that if you're working on keeping your food miles down, the restaurant has its own farm, 40 miles away in Essex, producing most of the salad and vegetables being used here.

Here's what we had:



Pistachio choux stuffed with liver parfait and topped with preserved kumquat - from the snacks section these were £3 each. We also really fancied the sound of the Achill Island oysters with lemon ice and pickled seaweed but these weren't available on the day.



Jerusalem artichokes with crab, pear, walnut and draped with cured pig's cheek from their own curing room. (£16)



Confit chicken wing with Parmesan dumplings, Scottish girolles and sorrel (£14). Hands-down the winner of the starters.



Roast suckling pig with Bramley apple glaze and autumn greens - which included pickled cabbage and heavenly deep-fried kale (£34).



Welsh lamb with sweet pepper romesco, pickled walnut and black olive caramel (£28).

Had we been in a larger group, we'd definitely have gone for one of the sharing dishes. The one that particularly caught our eye was the Whole roast cep-stuffed chicken with sweetcorn, pickled jalapeno and tarragon (£65). And you'll probably also want to try their most-pictured dish, the smoked eel pithivier starter (£14).

And for dessert?



Whipped coffee, chocolate and milk with plums (£8)



Honey cake with blackberries and caramelised pastry ice-cream - an inspired flavour and utterly delicious. (£8)

What about vegetarians?

There's plenty to appeal here, from the Sakura tomato and gordal olive tart (£12) or French onion soup with pickled celery and a caramelised onion and cheese custard (£10) to the main of baked celerias in a celeriac 'ramen' broth with egg yolk and black garlic. (£19).

And wine?

Head Sommelier there is Luigi Coco who, like Patrick, also comes here via Chiltern Firehouse. He's put together a list with a very appealing selection by the glass. There's plenty in the £30-£40 bracket and our Assyrtiko from the Greek island of Chios (£50) was particularly good.

Overall thoughts:

After quite a lengthy delay in opening, we were keen to get a proper look at this high rise restaurant and the interiors don't disappoint, being as on-trend as the crowd dining here, although we'd say opening the curtains is a must. The food was lovely as were the staff (we were looked after by Conor Daley, Assistant GM, who you might remember from The Dairy and Sorella) and this is certainly a game-changer for this part of town.

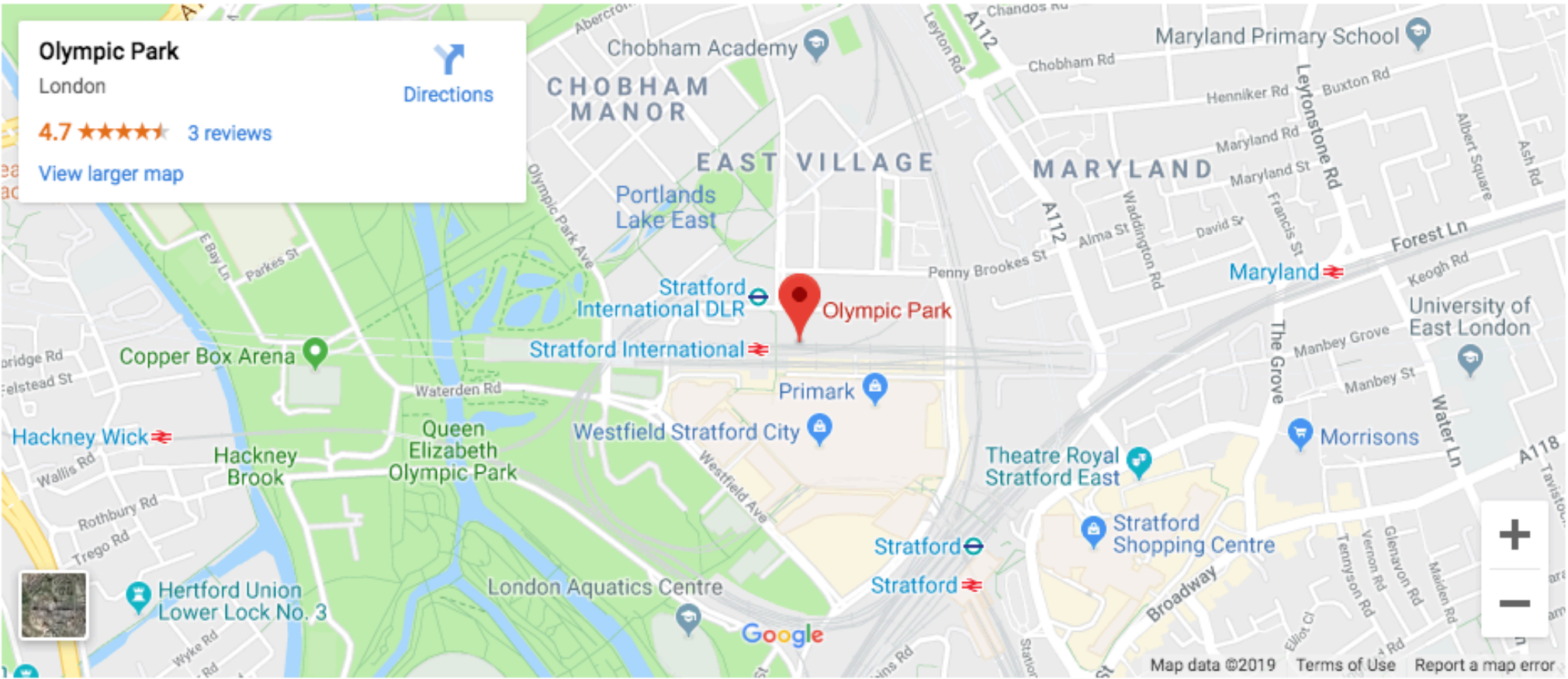
Hot Dinners dined as guests of Allegra

More about Allegra

Where is it? Olympic Park, 20-22 International Way, London E20 1GQ

Find out more: on their **website** or follow them on Instagram **@allegrarestaurant**

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