

THE BEST RESTAURANT OPENINGS

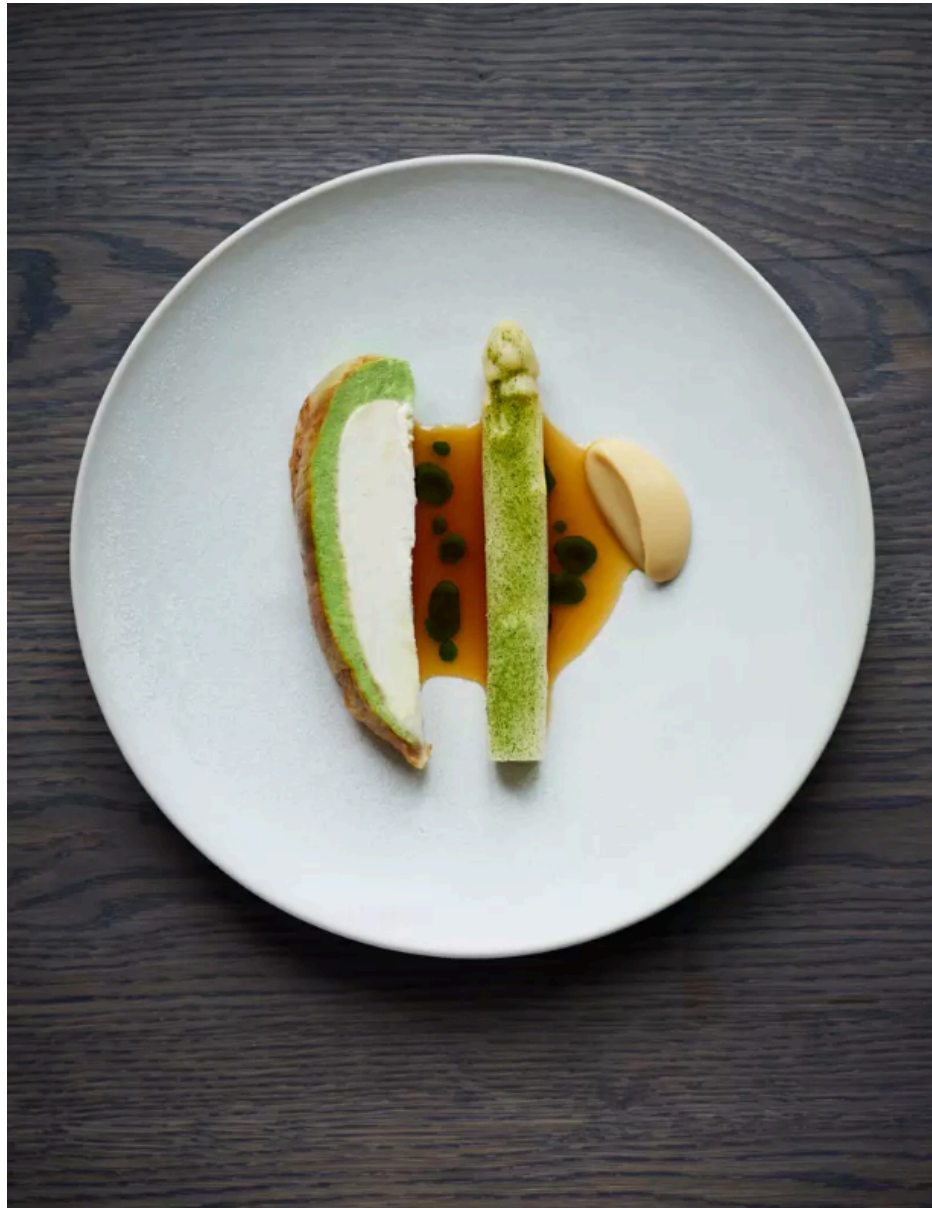
Restaurant of the week: Allegra serves up high-end dining from the former head chef of Chiltern Firehouse

Set on the 7th floor of the Stratford hotel, Allegra is serving up thoughtful dishes that deliver on flavour, presentation and scintillation



Patrick Powell may not be a culinary name that you're familiar with, but it's one you should get used to. After working with Anthony Demetre at the feted Wild Honey, he moved to Chiltern Firehouse where he headed up the kitchen with Nuno Mendes, an accolade that ought to have earned him far more recognition than it did. Now though, he has stepped out on his own and the result is Allegra, a restaurant that deserves all the praise coming its way.

Allegra is on the 7th floor of a jenga-style skyscraper right next to Stratford International Station and Westfield – not perhaps the obvious choice for a restaurant dishing up meticulous, high-end food, but the team behind it have positioned themselves cleverly for the regeneration of the area. The V&A, Design Museum and Central Saint Martins are all opening in coming months, meaning Allegra will be fully established by the time they are. It is a super slick and modern space, as you'd expect from Harry Handelsman, the developer also responsible for Chiltern Firehouse, who previously gave the St Pancras Renaissance Hotel its glorious makeover.



The food sings out from the modern, minimalist space, with a sense of real focus in the cooking. The team source many ingredients from their Sussex farm, including the vivid green sauce—made from whatever herbs look good in the garden that day—that accompanies the wonderfully chewy bread. The first dish—from the snacks section—was a promise of the precision cooking to come, a simple dollop of beetroot marmalade on an oat biscuit with shaved blue cheese: heavenly. There were no dud notes, from the confit chicken wings with parmesan dumplings, via meaty monkfish with a shellfish bisque and plaice swimming in an elegant champagne sauce, to the sensationally sticky treacle cake. The regeneration of Stratford may take some time to bear fruit, but Allegra is already enough of a pull to put it firmly on the map.