

06 *Eat*

Vinothec Compass

London, England

Restaurants in novel locations often fail to deliver on the food, instead relying on the view to distract the diner. Happily, that's not the case at the glass-fronted Vinothec Compass, which overlooks a Greenwich driving range with the Thames and the city beyond. So while it's well worth arriving early to whack a bucketful of golf balls, the stars of the show are the ambitious menu and the equally accomplished wine list. Started by Arnaud Compas, founder of Bedales wine bar, and wine consultant Keith Lyon, Vinothec Compass serves modern European food with Spanish leanings (thanks to head chef Jordi Rovira Segovia), paired with wines from around the globe. A seriously flavoursome smoked trout salad comes dotted with orange spheres of salmon roe is served with a 2014 Moroccan Volubilia Gris rose; while a main of suckling pig works beautifully with a lightly chilled Couvent des Jacobins 2005 red. Don't get us wrong – the views of the sun setting across the river are spectacular. But the dishes inside are just as impressive.

BOOK IT: vinotheccompass.com



I Carracci

Bologna, Italy

What do Clark Gable, Frank Sinatra, the Dalai Lama, Princess Di and Sir Paul McCartney have in common? They've all enjoyed the opulence and privacy of the five-star Grand Hotel Majestic, hidden away from prying eyes between two shops. If they liked the hotel (you'd be hard pushed to find someone who doesn't) they must have loved I Carracci, a "restaurant museum" with a menu as impressive as its dazzling artwork. An elaborate 16th-century fresco painted by the Carracci brothers (the baroque artists after whom it was named) dominates the space, but the paintings adorning the walls and the intricate metallic candelabras are equally splendid. With all this beauty you may find it hard to keep your eyes on your plate, but the chefs have done their utmost to make sure the food lives up to the furnishings. Standout dishes such as the turbot roll steamed in Matcha tea served with sweet-and-sour onion, pine nuts, raisins and crispy black squid ink, and rack of lamb with Jerusalem artichoke, cubed kiwi and caramelised salted hazelnuts, will delight the eyes as much as the tastebuds.

BOOK IT: grandhotelmajestic.duetorrihotels.com



Sea Containers

London, England

Returning buildings to their original purposes is usually the stuff of TV design shows. But what about restoring them to something that never actually was? Situated on London's Southbank next to Blackfriars Bridge, Sea Containers House was built in 1978 and intended to be a luxury hotel, but the tough economic climate meant it was used as office space, albeit with some of the best views in London. Happily, though, the building (named after its longest-standing tenants, a shipping container company) has recently been given a multimillion-pound makeover by the Mondrian hotel group. The ground floor is now a modern restaurant fusing worldwide cuisines into bold flavours and beautifully presented dishes – think charred aubergine with mint labneh and dates, and seared duck breast with wild mushrooms, dried cherries and rainbow chard. The only thing better than the food? Watching people scuttle along the riverside in winter coats while you're sitting inside, cosy and well fed. **16**

BOOK IT: mondrianlondon.com/sea-containers