

What's On RESTAURANT OF THE WEEK

A fine afternoon tea without a cucumber sandwich in sight

Cake Boy

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ERIC Lanlard has been described as a baking God and I can vouch for that after indulging in the master patissier's splendidly indulgent afternoon tea at his smart and stylish cafe on the banks of the Thames.

Lanlard has twice won the prestigious Continental Patissier of the Year at the British Baking Awards and is often mentioned in dispatches as the man responsible for changing the face of British patisserie.

He has an impressive background. Before becoming a celebrity chef he was head pastry chef for the Roux brothers for a number of years. His face has become instantly recognisable from his TV series *Glamour Puds* and more recently *Baking Mad*, on Channel 4, and he regularly bakes for the rich and famous.

I was expecting something special from Cake Boy, situated in a smart boulevard by the Thames in Battersea Reach, close to Wandsworth Bridge, but nothing quite prepared me for the decadent hand-crafted sweet and savoury treats which form his afternoon tea.

Afternoon tea has long been a great British tradition and has recently enjoyed something of a renaissance, partly due to the jubilee and the success of the BBC's *Great British Bake Off*. But at Cake Boy there are no twee cucumber sandwiches with crusts neatly removed, or slices of Victoria sandwich and cupcakes – Lanlard's range of skills are in evidence with a spread heavily influenced by Parisians' love for the kind of mouth-watering delights he serves up.

It was like being given the keys to one of the many fine patisseries in Paris, whose delights I have often admired through their windows on my visits there, and being told to help yourself to anything you wanted.

While Lanlard busied himself in the background we settled into one of the brightly coloured low leather chairs in the warm and relaxing cafe area. The tea got off to a good start with a refreshing glass of champagne and then our eyes lit up as we were presented with two 'mini tables' – one bearing a selection of filled petit pains and croissants (six in total) and the other a majestic range of gourmet fine mini pastries (I did not have enough fingers to count them all).

This is not a tea for the faint hearted, in terms of quantity, but we tucked in with relish to the fresh and flavoursome petit pains and croissants with delicious fillings of chicken caesar, scrumptious thick smoked



■ **RELAXED:** The Cake Boy cafe; (below) delicate macaroons

Contributed

salmon and cream cheese and my favourite combination of Parma ham, roast vegetables and mozzarella.

Then it was on to the pastries – with which we enjoyed a latte – which included delicate French macaroons, fruit tarts, gourmet shots with luxurious caviar fruits sprinkled on top (which Fiona raved about), mini eclairs, delicate cones of fresh passion fruit and coconut and mini creme brulee of rich, deep chocolate with fresh tangy raspberries on top.

With Fiona flagging there were still two more delights to savour and they did not disappoint as the sugar rush kept coming in the form of delicious dark and white chocolate tear drops. Stunning in appearance, they were heavenly on the outside and divine on the inside, with rich mousse fillings accompanied by cherries and apricot respectively. Like

everything else we enjoyed they were lovingly made and at £40 per person this afternoon tea is a treat in every sense of the word, and one which more than exceeded my expectations.

Booking is essential and the afternoon tea is served Monday to Saturday between 1pm and 5pm. The cafe, open six days a week, also serves and sells many other examples of Lanlard's craftsmanship.

He has also created an I Love Paris afternoon tea menu for the Jumeriah Carlton Tower, in Knightsbridge.

by Adrian Seal



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