



Lunch at this all-day operation left us beaming: sated with uniformly good food; cheered by skilled, smiling service; and not very much poorer. Franco's succeeds not by putting fireworks on the plate but by getting dozens of small details exactly right: excellent bread and petits fours; rich, buttery but not overpowering stock in an onion and leek soup; an ultra-fresh, sensitively dressed salad of tender leaves, fine beans and pomegranate seeds. Though situated in the heart of affluent St James's and filled with mostly very posh customers, it feels more like a continental café than a smart London restaurant. The set lunch is a bargain but dinner is pricier with grills, simply presented meat and fish, plus enticing pasta dishes vying for attention. Wine is on the expensive side: £30 the real starting point. One word of warning: the small entrance room was quiet even when full, but the larger room on the side, also jam-packed, was uncomfortably noisy. Book in the smaller room if you like to dine without din.