

METROLIFE

Gig
Ambient soundscapes
from Boom Bip 26
Free gig tickets 31 • Reviews 32-33 • Tonight's television 34-36 • Listings 37-39

Art review
Harrowing sculptures on
myths and legends 26

Television
New version of sci-fi
classic goes live 31



Warming: With gems such as Pudsey's *The Stroom* about, there's no need to venture into the city centre for a good meal

IN TOWN TONIGHT



THEATRE

Elmina's Kitchen

Kwame Kwei-Armah stars in his own dark and humorous play about the effect of gun culture on three generations of a Hackney family

Tonight until Apr 9, Quarry Theatre, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Quarry Hill, Leeds, Mon to Sat 7.30pm, mats Thu 1.30pm and Sat 2pm, £10.50 to £25, concs available. Tel: 0113 213 7700. www.wyp.org.uk

GIG

Ambershades

Deceptively sunny retro-style sounds from the south London band, whose



My Darling single is soaked in San Franciscan sounds

Tonight, The Vine, The Headrow, Leeds, 8pm, £4 adv. Tel: 07789 397825. www.ambershades.com

FILM

15 (18)

Royston Tan's daringly raw 2003 depiction of teenage sex, drugs and violence isn't an easy ride, but it's worth the trip

Tonight and tomorrow, NMPFT, Prince's Way, Bradford, tonight 5.45pm, tomorrow 3.15pm and 8.15pm, £5, £3.30 concs. Tel: 0870 701 0200. www.nmpft.org.uk

BOOKING NOW



Morcheeba

May album *The Antidote*, the downbeat dance outfit's fifth, is their first outing without singer Skye Edwards, who has been replaced by Daisy Martey, and also the first time the band have recorded almost entirely live. Their smoky trip hop first oozed into public consciousness with 1995's *Who Can You Trust*, but their smooth, stylish sounds are now incorporating psychedelia, thanks to Martey's soaring vocals

May 19, LUSU, Lifton Place, Leeds, 7.30pm, £16. Tel: 0113 380 1372. www.morcheeba.net

A suburban marvel

If it weren't for some banal modern shops, the bit of Pudsey where *The Stroom* is found might feature in a retro sitcom about England when it was filtered in black and white.

With its cenotaph and the ornate Victorian frontage of the old Conservative Club building, it's not the first place you'd expect to come across, in food terms, a find. A tea shop selling fondant fancies, maybe,

FOOD & DRINK

The Stroom ★★★★★

but not a gastronomic gem. And that's just what *The Stroom* is. Two years old this spring and boasting a new menu, it's a proper treasure.

Inhabiting the higgledy-piggledy interior of the former Conservative Club, which makes finding the lavatories a rather random exercise,

it's decorated in warmly sunny reds and yellows, which give a mellow, upbeat feel. The staff are so charming and accommodating that even if the food had been cack, it would still have been a pleasure to visit. There were only a few spare tables on the night we visited.

Smokers can sit between the two sections of the restaurant for sneaky inter-course fags. We did, with a bottle of Merlot (£11.50). Despite being so reasonably priced, it was anything but bog-standard, proving that you don't have to be a wine show-off to get a decent drink with your meal.

The main menu, which caters primarily to carnivores with an eye for interesting ways of having their flesh served, is augmented with a daily specials board of lighter fish dishes. Prices are lower than they might be in the city centre, and costs are further reduced as the main course is served with a generous portion of fresh vegetables.

My starter, risotto of blush tomato and asparagus (£5.25), was a creamy, delectable marvel. My friend's offering, tiger prawn salad (£6) enhanced with honey chilli dressing, was beautiful to look at, with carefully arranged red and yellow citrus salad atop baby spinach. The fat pan-seared prawns and tangy salad were delicious, although on points, the risotto was the winner.

The mains don't fall into the error of prioritising quantity over quality, but they're not small, either. My

friend opted for duck leg confit (£11.50), a sturdy, comforting dish comprised of a well-cooked, non-greasy, plump leg of meat served with bubble and squeak and a good pool of juicy, chestnut-brown gravy. The bubble had carrots in it, which is wrong in my book, but it all got eaten. I requested the fish head be removed from my large red snapper with lime and chilli dressing (£13.50) from the specials menu, and the kitchen staff obligingly beheaded it. The succulent meat, cooked perfectly, fell off the bones and into the simple, judiciously oily sauce.

Puddings are classics, done well but not mucked about with. My friend's crème brûlée (£4.50) was served in the old-fashioned way, in a flat dish, so that each mouthful of custard was matched with just the right amount of burnt sugar brittle. My raspberry parfait (£4.50) was a pretty, pink-speckled frozen pyramid; sharp splodges of blackberry coulis added a tart, interesting edge to the sweetness of raspberry, vanilla and meringue.

The Stroom is the kind of place that makes trekking into an urban centre for something nice to eat a waste of time if you don't actually live there. It's not flash, it's not brash; instead, it's a comfortable watering hole that makes you want to book a return visit as soon as possible.

Tina Jackson
9 Chapeltown, Pudsey, Leeds,
Tue to Thu 6.30pm to 9.30pm,
Fri and Sat 6.30pm to 10.30pm.
Tel: 0113 257 0140.
www.thestroom.co.uk

APPETISERS

Food and drink news

■ **Chic wine bar Ruskins** (pictured), housed smack bang in the middle of Sheffield's theatreland, is spicing up its atmosphere, Latino style. Alongside its extensive tapas menu, filled with such dishes as chorizo sausage with garbanzo beans (£4.25) or spicy jalapeño peppers (75p), Latin vocalist Sally Doherty provides the fiery flamenco rhythms tonight.

Tonight, 101 Norfolk Street, Sheffield, 8.30pm, free. Tel: 0114 273 8255. www.ruskins.com

■ **Harvey Nichols' Fourth Floor Café** is hosting an Italian night on April 20. With a three-course menu as yet to be confirmed by head chef Richard Allen and sous chef Louise McCrimmon, wine connoisseur Simon Kershaw from leading merchant Playford Ros in Thirsk will be



hosting a talk on the selection of Italian wines.

Apr 20, 107-111 Briggate, Leeds, 7pm, £40. Tel: 0113 204 8888. www.harveynichols.com

■ **The Dales Festival Of Food And Drink** takes place on April 30 and runs until May 2 at Leyburn, Wensleydale. With more than 75 local food stands and farming craft demonstrations promoting local produce and guest speakers, including patron Richard

Whiteley, the three-day event looks set to be cracking.

Apr 30 to May 2, field opposite Tennants Auction House, Leyburn, Wensleydale, 10am to 5pm, £4 (single days), £6 (three days). Tel: 01969 623069. www.dalesfestivaloffood.org

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