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how to spend it
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THE GANNET

plate of the art

The cuisine at these two London restaurants is as inspired as the masterpieces that accompany them - Hirst's on the walls at one, modern masters in the adjoining gallery at the other

Those of us who like our art on the plate, as well as on the wall, have never had it so good. Many London galleries now boast high-quality restaurants, and several – the Tate Modern, the National Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery, to name but three – open late at weekends.

At Pharmacy 2 (pictured), a collaboration between restaurateur Mark Hix and artist Damien Hirst in Hirst's Stirling Prize-winning Newport Street Gallery, the link between art and restaurant is even closer. Like the Notting Hill original, closed in

2003, the dining room features many of Hirst's works: several of his kaleidoscope butterfly paintings, a bar stuffed with surgical paraphernalia and shelves of neatly arranged medicine boxes. Strands of DNA are etched into the windows.

The menu is a steady antidote to the psychedelic surroundings. It strays occasionally from the "local and seasonal" Hix mantra – crisp Tunisian brik pastry, for example, enclosing a soft-cooked duck

egg and a blob of rose harissa, or a fragrant Vietnamese prawn salad, crunchy with cashews and shredded green mango

A Tunisian brik pastry encloses a duck egg and blob of harissa

– but there are also pink, richly flavoured lamb cutlets from Launceston with Jerusalem artichoke purée; trout from the Test in a Niçoise salad; and great hunks of lavishly marbled Glenarm Estate sirloin steak. And there is Hix's signature "Heaven and Earth": soft black pudding wrapped in caul fat, atop a potato and

apple mash, guaranteed to satisfy even the most ravenous of culture vultures. The gallery opens until 10pm on Saturdays; the restaurant is open until midnight.

The Whitechapel Gallery's Refectory, meanwhile, opens "after hours" from 6pm to 11pm on Thursdays (when the gallery is open until 9pm), Fridays and Saturdays. It has a strong pedigree: the operators are Luke Wilson and Cameron Emirali, who opened 10 Greek Street and 8 Hoxton Square together; here, as at their other outlets, the emphasis is on top-notch ingredients simply prepared, bolstered by a stellar wine list.

During the day, the café offers superior salads, sandwiches and cakes; at night, the space becomes a wine bar and Spanish charcuteria and cheeses take centre stage. You might find cabecera curada, a fatty, peppery hybrid of ham and sausage; salchichón, made from Ibérico pork; and cheeses from the splendid Las RRR dairy in Granada, made from mountain goats' milk, or with milk from Granada cattle. English cheeses get a look in as well: Barkham Blue, for instance, made on the Hampshire/Berkshire border with milk from Jersey and Guernsey cows.

There are tastings too: on Friday November 3, for example, try the range of craft ales from the excellent Redchurch Brewery, then purchase a bottle of your favourite tipple to partner some fine fodder in the Refectory. "Art," said Pablo Picasso, "washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life": after a long working week, something delicious to eat and drink is equally welcome. **BILL KNOTT**

PHARMACY 2, NEWPORT STREET GALLERY, NEWPORT ST, LONDON SE11 (020-3141 9333; PHARMACYRESTAURANT.COM). **WHITECHAPEL REFECTORY**, WHITECHAPEL GALLERY, 77-82 WHITECHAPEL HIGH ST, LONDON E1 (020-7522 7888; WHITECHAPEL.GALLERY.ORG).

THE GOBLET

vine design

A magical estate in Chianti is celebrated for its site-specific art as well as its winemaking – and breaks the rules for both

There are lots of wine estates that boast world-class art collections. But there aren't many with a cache quite as exciting as Chianti Classico's Castello di Ama. Dotted all around the grounds of this 18th-century Etruscan villa, site-specific installations by great names wait to be discovered: an Anish Kapoor glows, furnace-like, in a tiny chapel; in the gloom of a stone rainwater basin a grille in the floor affords a haunting glimpse of a marble figure by Louise Bourgeois. You can spy on angels through a telescope, and read the mischievous doodles of Nedko Solakov on the tasting room walls. Every year an artist is invited to create a new work. Yet, amazingly, no money ever changes hands, such is the lure of this magical estate.

Art isn't the only thing that Castello di Ama's owners Lorenza Sebasti and Marco Pallanti do differently. For more than 30 years, this maverick couple have been breaking the rules

of winemaking too. They were the first to plant Merlot in Tuscany, resulting in their now-famous single-vineyard wine L'Apparita, a succulent, 100 per cent Merlot produced only in the best years.

At around 500m above sea level, Castello di Ama's vineyards are higher than Chianti's signature grape, Sangiovese, usually likes. But Pallanti believes that this, in combination with the chalky soil, is key to creating the fresh acidity and soft tannins that distinguish his wines.

"My job is to communicate the sensibility of the region," he says to me, as we settle down to taste beside a crackling fire. "What we do at Castello di Ama is to put the artist in the same condition as the winemakers."

The flagship wine is the San Lorenzo, a Chianti Classico made with fruit from old vines. The ruby-red 2013 still had some way to go, but already billowed with an abundant perfume: leather, fig leaves, violets, truffle. "I always



say: my wines, you drink with the nose," says Pallanti with a broad smile.

Castello di Ama broke with traditional white winemaking too, planting Burgundy clones of Chardonnay to create Al Poggio, a summery white we sipped with shards of toasted bread drizzled with the estate's delicious olive oil.

Later, in the flagstone dining room, we drank tannic Rosato with a mound of cacio e pepe, and a bottle of the 2009 Riserva, a Chianti Classico with an appetising, HP Sauce-like richness that paired

sumptuously with a plate of beef cheek and greens. As conversation skipped from art fairs to table-thumping politics, Pallanti called for a bottle of the acclaimed Vigneto La Casuccia 2007. Opulent and spicy with a luxuriant velvety finish, it reduced us to a state of quiet contemplation. Like the estate from whence they came, these are wines that make you think. **ALICE LASCELLES**

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