



Zig Zag Building, 70 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6SQ



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# M VICTORIA

Reviewed by Michael M Sandwick

If you think the construction site at Victoria station is pure hell, don't worry. Heaven is just 2 minutes away!

The entrance to M is a wine shop. Upstairs, the "wine-o-mat" offers pay-as-you-go tastings at the touch of a button. Now on my bucket list! Wining and dining is downstairs. It is SWANK! The amazing design uses a gorgeous array of textures, patterns and colors with shiny copper throughout.

The bar and lounge is total party time. Behind, a secret door leads to a members only lounge. Join and you get a personal locker. For booze! Sure beats smelly trainers. Next to the lounge is the casual raw bar. The formal dining room is secluded from the rest. It is glorious. A split-level oval with copper ceiling, it is plush without ostentation. On the periphery, "snugs" give a birds-eye view of the room while allowing for intimacy. Brilliant.

The service couldn't be better. Director, André Mannini is charm personified and assistant manager

Greg Gergely is meticulous and incredibly well informed while keeping it light and happy. Top marks!

The highlight of the menu here is beef which Executive Chef Michael Reid "curates" from 6 countries! A disciple of Michel Roux and Gordon Ramsay, he sure knows his stuff!

Cobia with chili pickle salsa, black sesame and chives (£12) was beautiful. So meaty, it hardly seems raw. Sashimi to sink your teeth into, compared to yellow fin tuna (£12) which melted in my mouth. Jalapeño and pickled ginger, added just the right bite.

The wine list is exceptional. We sampled too many to mention (or remember) but enjoyed every drop. A standout came with the Smoked Wagyu tartare (£15.50), pictured above. Served under glass with a perfect hen's egg which spread like butter, apples, dry ice for drama and foie gras grated on top, tableside. WOW! In Paradise, fat content doesn't count! A Flor de Campo Pinot Noir, 2012 (£14.50) was a great

match. Deep, dark, lots of fruit, round oak and a touch of pepper.

Galician Sirloin, on the bone, £44 for 400 g was from a 14 year old cow! Very mature, meaty taste with a huge ribbon of fat, this beef is not for sissies! It called for a big wine, which we got with a Freemark Abbey Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, 2010 (£23.50). Yes, for a glass! Worth skipping a few meals!

Blackmore Wagyu grade 9++ inside skirt steak, £35 for 250 g was another animal altogether. Rarely served in the UK, this cut is tender and bursting with flavor. Superb.

Chef Reid shows off his technique with inventive desserts. Dulce mousse with buckwheat, bacon and sweet corn ice cream (£6.50) is a sweet and savory delight and Chocolate aero, black sesame seed ice cream and yuzu (£8) a childhood/yuppie fusion!

Prices at M are high, but they offer tasting glasses of wine and beef cut to order for a more affordable heaven. ★