



Davies and Brook Claridge's

LONDON

Acclaimed Swiss chef Daniel Humm makes his return to the Mayfair hotel where his career began, serving up dishes that celebrate the very best of British seasonality.

Words: Heleri Rande • Photography: Courtesy of Maybourne Hotel Group

As this article goes to print, chefs Daniel Humm and Dmitri Magi and their teams on both sides of the Atlantic are feeding staff on the frontline, diligently preparing and packaging thousands of meals, each topped with a handwritten note of encouragement, to send to the healthcare workers fighting the virus that has brought the world to a standstill. “Living through this will help me understand what the world – when we come out of this – will look like and help guide what this means to fine-dining and our restaurants,” writes Humm in an emotional Instagram post, leaving a note of concern in the air.

Following years of planning, Humm’s new restaurant had been open a matter of weeks before the global pandemic forced its closure. But rather than put their feet up, the London team – led by Head Chef Dmitri Magi – stayed in the kitchen to cook for those in need. “I feel an immense sense of pride and accomplishment,” Magi explains. “We are hospitality people and we live to make others feel better,



Celebrating British seasonality, dishes include poached lobster served with swede and pear

so when you take that sense of purpose and you put it at service for the most noble cause, well, that is pretty much the best thing that can happen.”

It's this spirit, fostered by Humm's company Make It Nice, that will no doubt serve the company well when business does return. Along with a stellar reputation of course. Located within London's Claridge's, Davies and Brook is a sibling to Eleven Madison Park in New York – widely regarded as one of the best restaurants in the world having gained the maximum number of Michelin stars as well as six James Beard awards, amongst other accolades.

Humm appears to be one of those chefs who will never stop improving; his charisma and drive to make the world better, one dish at a time, is both captivating and endearing. But this latest venture is one that's particularly close to his heart, having peeled potatoes in the kitchens of Claridge's some thirty years ago. “This is my first time opening a restaurant in Europe, a place I left so many years ago to forge a career in

America,” explains Humm. “What most people don't know is that I worked at Claridge's when I was 15-years-old and it left an indelible mark; it has always been a place I've felt connected to, so being able to come full circle is really emotional and exciting – it feels like coming home.”

Bringing a vision to life in a building that demands so much, both in terms of architecture and gastronomy, is no mean feat, so Humm assembled a trusted team of associates. As with the renovation of Eleven Madison Park in 2017, he once again collaborated with Brad Cloepfil of Allied Works to design the interiors. A home crafted exactly as the chef envisioned, the ceiling has been re-modelled after the original coffered ones, and stoneware plates are custom-made by special order from Jars, a French ceramics company. Photography by Humm's friend, American artist Roni Horn, depicting Icelandic landscapes adorn the grey walls, whilst colonnades wrapped in Irish cast crystal add a certain level of Claridge's-like ethos to the ensemble. The bar, which





has changed significantly since the Fera days, sits by the restaurant entrance, where guests can indulge in one of Head Bartender Pietro Collina's creations and get a taste of CFC, Claridge's buttermilk fried chicken, before being shown to their table.

The kitchen is being overseen by Estonian-born Magi, the former chef de cuisine of Eleven Madison Park, who has also held positions at esteemed establishments including Noma in Copenhagen and Gramercy Tavern in New York. While sharing some influences with its sibling across the pond, the menu at Davies and Brook is designed to celebrate British seasonality – with a few surprises along the way. Alongside signature dishes such as duck glazed with honey and lavender, there are new arrivals including char ceviche with avocado and cucumber, and poached turbot served with shiitake mushrooms and garlic.

There's plenty of vegetable dishes too; the carrot salad with sunflower seeds, horseradish and pickled quail egg and the aubergine with coriander and roasted garlic, are as delightful in colour as they are in taste.

On the dessert list, Humm has brought his signature apple cider doughnuts and milk and honey soft serve over from New York, which will no doubt be a hit with diners.

While the 83-seat dining room is currently devoid of buzz, anxiously awaiting to be reopened, Humm is proud of what he and his team have created. "Having the opportunity to bring cuisine and hospitality to the most storied hotel in the world is really a remarkable feeling and a dream come true," he notes. There's a palpable desire to return to what he's best at; being able to surprise and delight guests with his cuisine. The world needs to be made nice again. And it will.



IN A BITE

Covers: 83

Owner: Make It Nice

Operator: Maybourne Hotel Group, Make It Nice

Interior Design: Allied Works

Chef Patron: Daniel Humm

Head Chef: Dmitri Magi

Head Bartender: Pietro Collina

F&B Manager: Billy Peelle

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