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Mark Hix, famed restaurateur and former chef director of Caprice Holdings, has opened his own relaxed eatery in the middle of trendy Smithfield that oozes laid back coolness.

The Venue

In the middle of a village-style cobbled street sits the newly opened British [restaurant](#). Inside is an open and airy room that's not trying to scream with glamour but is just a modest and simple setting that welcomes hungry foodies who want to experience Hix's new venture. Walking into the restaurant, you're greeted, usually by Mark Hix himself, and then shown to your table. A clean tiled bar to the left hand side and wooden frames acting as partitions give this restaurant an element of British countryside mixed the excitement of City living.

The Atmosphere

The restaurant greets you with bustling and busy sounds. Packed to the brim with people that all seem to know each other, Hix Oyster and Chop [House](#) feels more like a members' club for the food world. Staff, who are as laid back as their boss, are pleasant and helpful. If there's a long wait for your meal, though, you might find the relaxed attitude frustrating and feel obliged to wave to get their attention.

The Food

The menu is nicely planned, with a massive focus on seasonal ingredients. Head chef Stuart Tattersall, formerly at Stanza, creates beautifully simple plates to satisfy all taste buds. Prices range across a wide spectrum, from a few pounds for a starter to over £50 for a Porterhouse steak for two. A wooden chopping board with rustic bread and butter come to the table to get things moving. A range of meaty oysters (£1.95 each) are a treat, served on a bed of seaweed. Also recommended are the crisp and fresh Cornwall asparagus soldiers with a Gladys May duck egg (served on an antique silver tray) to dip into. Other starters include ox tongue with radishes, cured De Beauvoir smoked salmon and rabbit brawn with pea shoot salad.

Mains are difficult to choose from. The mutton chop curry (served on the bone) is mildly balanced with zesty spices and delicate yoghurt, which makes this a meaty and hearty dish. The truly 18th-century style beef pie sparkles with a lovely crumbly pastry and rich filling topped off with a deep fried oyster. A fresh and light side order of spring greens is all you need to match the exceptionally big portions. Main courses also include St George's mushrooms and roast garlic with Welsh onion cake, Wiltshire bacon chop with champ and a ravishing looking roast Wooley Park Farm free range chicken with garlic sauce for two people, which comes with a 45 minute wait.

The dessert menu is perfectly quintessentially English. The whisky and walnut tart is so crumbly it falls off the fork and is perfectly buttery and nutty with a good glug of whisky. Amedei chocolate mousse hits the spot with an extremely rich dark chocolate taste but is extremely light in the mouth.

Sunday lunch at Hix Oyster and Chop House brings a no choice roast beef with all the trimmings. A selection of light starters comes out to share, then a big huge wooden slab is put in the middle of the table with lashings of juicy and tender meat, roast potatoes, Yorkshire puddings, and lots of spring vegetables. A selection of desserts with cheese ends the very reasonably priced (about £30) and delicious Sunday lunch.

The Drink

Hix Oyster and Chop House has a reasonable wine list with the inclusion of British wine, beer and cider - a great choice for customers. Prices start at about £14 for a bottle and go all the way up to several hundred, and there are a few choices by the glass as well for about £5 and up.

The Last Word

Hix Oyster and Chop House is a triumphantly British restaurant. Service needs to be improved, but the food gets a big thumbs up.