

*Issue 8  
Autumn 2016*

# CODE

## Quarterly

*The eyes & ears of the hospitality industry*

Le Caprice | Chefs' tattoos | Jikoni | Performance nutrition | Andrew Wong | Tuscany

BY THE INDUSTRY.  
FOR THE INDUSTRY.

*Distributed by hand to the best restaurants, hotels, bars and  
private members' clubs | [codehospitality.co.uk](http://codehospitality.co.uk)*

---

# A walk on the North-East side

---

*Zeren Wilson enthuses about the evolution in dining and drinking options in his 'hood.*

**I**t has happened. After waiting forlornly for a worthy food and drink scene to reach us in this patch of London for many years, something has finally 'popped' in a way that has had me gleefully agog.

The last year or so has seen some particularly encouraging activity, with Leyton, Leytonstone, Walthamstow, Wanstead and Woodford all spawning excellent openings. There's a palpable sense that things have moved up a couple of gears. I've never spent so much time dashing around the area where I grew up. The thrill of being able to walk through most of it, joining up the dots from one spot to the next, feels nothing short of a seismic shift to this local lad.

Woodford, hugging the borders of Essex and North-East London, has seen perhaps the most surprising arrival with The Woodford. Here a talented Pierre Koffmann protégé, Ben Murphy, is shaking out some serious Michelin star aspiring moves in the kitchen. Within walking distance from my old primary school too? Mental.

A twenty minute walk away in Wanstead, in just the last few weeks has seen the excellent Italian grill Bombetta open (exit Snaresbrook tube and practically fall into a seat opposite the grill), as well as a swish new Ginger Pig (a big deal for Wanstead, and a very welcome one for the area). Their sausage roll now within walking distance? Yes please, I'll take two. New fishmonger Wanstead Fish was very much needed, and the High Street is now becoming useful as well as retaining the village feel which it has always had. Early signs of an upturn began with the arrival of French bistro Provender in 2013, run by Max Renzland, a real gourmand and veteran of Michelin starred dining.

The handsome Grade II listed building of the former West Essex Conservative Association, where Sir Winston Churchill was based while MP for Woodford and Wanstead, has been transformed into bar and restaurant The Manor House. The garden at the front is the suntrap of dreams.

Keep walking and leafy Wanstead makes way to London proper and Leytonstone. Recent arrival Mora is a beacon of good eating on an unlikely looking strip of shops, an Italian restaurant that spans all other Italians for many miles outta the park with their fantastic homemade pasta and Sardinian dishes. Never did I think I'd be scarfing pappardelle with wild boar ragù and spaghetti with sea urchin just seconds from Muscle Hut Gym, while gazing across at the Discount Tile Centre. Yeah, the location is exotic. A few doors away Oven East is pumping out good Turkish dishes, the lahmacun

eggs, and serving good coffee from Climpson and Sons. Another café of note is 56 St James, tucked behind Walthamstow Market by St. James Street station. I'm still waiting for a really belting pub to do the business...

It may seem to some that these changes are 'small fry' compared to some parts of town, but after years of looking covetously across the capital to areas like Brixton, Peckham, Clapham and Camberwell, and the wealth of their exciting restaurant options, the ripples from nearby Hackney and Clapton have pushed out a little further as

*‘We’ve never had so many food writers traipsing out of Central line stations...’*

flatbreads and pide of particular note. Panda Dim Sum Café looks no great shakes from the outside (proper shonky looking) but step inside, order Mr Yan Feng Zhou's dumplings, take your own booze – this wonderful little spot is the archetypal 'hidden gem'.

A short hop away, Leyton has been making its own moves with wine bar and shop Yardarm (good wine, great garden), Marmelo Kitchen (a devastating Croque Monsieur) and Deeney's Café with their cracking haggis and cheddar toastie.

Walthamstow has been guilty of being wonderfully stubborn when it comes to offering up decent dining options, despite being "up and coming" for many more years than the areas mentioned, but the tremors have started here too. Clapton's Sodo Pizza Café have opened their new place next to the revamped old EMD Granada cinema (re-opened as Mirth, Marvel and Maud after being shut for years), and Orford Road in the 'village' has been re-energised and given a makeover, now hosting the weekly food market. Bühler and Co. from sisters Meg and Rosie is a new café cooking sparky and imaginative vegetarian dishes, wonderful baked

operators seek to exploit areas ripe for a kick up the derrière.

We've never had so many food writers traipsing out of Central line stations, dabbling the nose bleed that starts at some point after Stratford, and proceeding on to the latest reason to drag them out this far into Zone 4.

What's next? It's Tottenham. No joke. Taking a walk on the North-East Side is no longer a walk of shame.



**Zeren Wilson**  
@bittenwritten

*Zeren Wilson is a food and wine writer, consultant and runs bittenandwritten.com*

*Bitten & Written*