

New Casa Brindisa is more than welcome

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Iberian food-importing firm Brindisa seems to have embarked on a programme of rapid, counter-intuitive expansion.

Seemingly within seconds of Tierra Brindisa opening, here's another, even more evolved outpost. But this time, owner Monika Linton and chef José Pizarro have moved from the cool of Soho and Borough into the chi-chi territory of South Ken.

What's nice about Brindisa is that each of the now three restaurants has a distinct identity.

This one is warmer and more elaborate, divided into a 'jamoneria' where you can sit at the counter and nibble the excellent Iberian charcuterie or buy it to take away; a few informal tapas tables; a rather hidden and unannounced downstairs deli with a lonely shop assistant and extensive selection of Spanish cheeses; and the restaurant proper with its open kitchen (although it still focuses on mostly small, tapas-sized dishes).

Our waiter is rather unflatteringly agog at the amount we order: 'You like to eat a lot!' he opines unnecessarily; and when we ask for the bill, he says caustically, 'You still have room?'

But portions are bijoux and we could have eaten far more if social embarrassment hadn't got in the way. Ah, what the hell – bring us some crusty, rustic bread smeared with olive oil, garlic and [fresh](#) tomato, too. And a pair of elasticated trousers.

It's all good (of course), especially a vibrant carpaccio of cod with orange, onion and marjoram. But some of the cooked items – heavy, greasy croquetas, a sludge of lentils and sweet Pedro Ximenez sherry with seared foie gras – are not quite as assured as dishes at its Soho sibling.

Embutidos – cured meats – are as good as you'd expect from Brindisa: salchichon vela, for instance, from renowned brand Joselito, a soft, slender and nutty salami, is pungent with paprika and garlic.

It's already bustling with walk-ins – it has distinct street front appeal – and is warm and inviting. Even if it isn't an unmitigated wow, a new Brindisa is always mighty welcome.