

Portal Restaurant & Bar



88 St John Street EC1 ☎ 7253 6950

✕ £43 Wine £15 Champagne £40 Private Room 12

Mon-Sat 12N-3pm 6-10.15pm



Sporting a 'spacious & light' modern look in masculine greys, browns & beiges, with lots of bare brick, glass & industrial ducting, Portal is a very striking restaurant & its classy, understated decor is matched by a promising Mediterranean menu with a strong Portuguese accent. However, judging by reader reports over the past year, it has something of a split personality. While most appreciate the 'excellent ambience', 'lovely staff' & 'stunning' wine list, reports on the food range from 'very, very tasty' to 'plain & overcooked'. We're in the positive camp on this one: our recent meal produced superb slow-braised bisaro (rare-breed Portuguese pork) on a bed of broad bean & chorizo purée, as well as a more complex, though still beautifully balanced, trio of fresh & salt cod, with creamy custard tarts to finish. A thumbs-up too for 'great bite-sized pieces of pork belly & sliced meats' on the 'nice pesticides menu' (Portuguese tapas) served in the bar.

W Wine Notes: Portal majors on Portugal, drawing attention to why this country is currently such an exciting place for the wine drinker. The rest of the list incorporates some excellent bins from across the world. Margins, though, are high.