



William Man and regular customer Tina. Photo by Daphne Chamberlain

By word of mouth

By Daphne Chamberlain

Why was I, a vegetarian, tucking into "aromatic duck"? It was all because of William Man and Tina.

William runs the Mandarin, a Chinese restaurant, which offers veggies a wide and imaginative choice. The only duck on my plate was a decoration carved out of carrot, and was that meal yummy! (I'm told that the meat version is too.)

About one-third of William's customers are non-meat eaters, including two he calls his inspirations. One is Mr Shah, an Indian who suggested using different vegetables, particularly aubergines. ("I love to dabble-dabble in food," Mr Shah told me. "The world is getting smaller, and we are all beginning to share our cultures.")

Old china hand

The other influence is Tina. She has been visiting the Man-

darin since the days when it was run by William's father, when there were just a few veggie dishes.

Now some of the Mandarin's valued customers are vegans. No problem. William will prepare a completely non-animal product meal. Only once has he then served it on a bone china plate. (That's right; read that sentence again.)

Herbivore, carnivore, allergy-sufferer or just plain fussy, Mandarin customers are all treated individually. Because food is freshly cooked on the spot, ingredients can be varied according to taste. So if you want more or less of anything, have a chat with William. He buys most of his vegetables locally, and uses no artificial flavourings, colourings or preservatives, and no groundnut oil.

Many regular customers come from outside East Finchley, including Rabbi Lionel Blue. "People feel comfortable here," said Tina. "The feast system, which means you can keep coming back for more is very good, and if you want and have just three bowls of soup, that's fine."

Is this beginning to sound like a commercial? If so, why not? Let's bang the drum for an excellent local restaurant.

The Mandarin has a separate non-smoking dining room available, and serves alcohol (regular and low), including port and sherry. You can also buy food to take away.

The Mandarin is at 152, High Road. Tel. 8444 0012.

Open Tuesday - Friday, 12 noon-2pm and 5pm-11.30pm, and 5pm-11.30pm Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays.

Amy's arrived

By Martin Earl

It is not possible for many residents in East Finchley to have missed Amy's, the bright new general store at 79 High Road, which opened on 29th January in the new building where the garden centre used to be.

Judging by the problem I had finding time to take a picture of the staff they are doing a roaring trade. "Many people, especially pensioners, have said how they like having a convenient local store like this," volunteered Anna Robertson, one of the sales assistants.

Home range

Amy's is a family firm with 16 shops in North London and is named after the sister of one of the directors, Dean Goodman. There are others close by in North Finchley and Golders Green. "We aim to provide mid to up-market homewares similar to those you might find in John Lewis or Debenhams, but with a more personal service," says Mr Goodman. "We opened our first shop 11 years ago, and we deliberately open new stores near to existing ones so that we are already known to some extent in the new area - hence the choice of East Finchley."

Looking round there certainly is a good selection: from pots and pans, trendy candles, even duvets and, curiously enough, a potato scrubber in the shape of a potato! It can surely only be good for residents and other businesses to have new shops like this in East Finchley.

Locals welcome Amy

"You're just what we've been waiting for."

That's what customers have been telling Amy's staff, and it seems that other businesses are also benefiting.

Amy's told *THE ARCHER* that some of their neighbours have said that trade has increased since their arrival, as people have realised that they don't have to travel to get all they want. In addition, customers are coming in from other areas, like Highgate and Hampstead Garden Suburb.

So it's thumbs up for the new shop on the block.



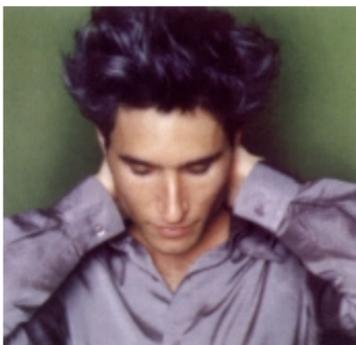
L-R: Hazel Hammond, Sales Assistant, Tracey Ali, Manageress, and Anna Robertson, Sales Assistant, outside Amy's General Store. Photo by Martin Earl.

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