



# Italian imagination

By John Dearing

For some years, East Finchley was without an Italian restaurant, so when Va' Pensiero was opened in the High Road in August 2004 by Parviz Toserkani, lovers of Italian food were delighted.

Va' Pensiero is the name of a song from the opera "Nabucco" by Verdi. It begins: "Va, pensiero, sull'ali dorate," which translates as: "Fly, thought, on wings of gold," and could be interpreted as "Go with your imagination!" This guided Parviz and his head chef when they set up the menu, with the help of an Italian food consultant.

## From maths to management

Parviz studied at Queen Mary College in the 1980s, gaining a degree in applied maths, and during that time worked at Pizza Express. After finishing his degree, he chose to stay with the company in central London, and once made 425 pizzas in one extraordinarily busy shift!

He worked in the company

management until 1992, and then in restaurants abroad, returning to the UK in 1999. In July 2000, he opened his own restaurant in Radlett, which was quickly so successful that it expanded into the next-door shop. They regularly play host to TV stars working in the studios in Elstree. In 2004, the opportunity to open in East Finchley arose and this year Parviz opened a restaurant in Beaconsfield.

Evenings in Va' Pensiero are candlelit for an intimate atmosphere, and twice a month on Tuesdays there is live jazz with Linda Be Be singing to a guitar accompaniment.

Va' Pensiero is open from 11.30am to 11pm every day and until 11.30pm Fridays and Saturdays. Call 020 8444 7117 for bookings.

## KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

# The end of the line

As summer trundles miserably into autumn and winter you can bet that the misery line would make its own special contribution to the gloom. And, guess what, it did, by shutting down for a week. Another brilliant chapter in the life of the Northern Line, something that makes it less a transport system, more a music hall joke.

Well, I guess it has always had reasons to be miserable, even before it became the Northern Line in 1938. The oldest bit, back then called the City and South London Railway, was opened in 1890 between King William Street in the City and Stockwell. In the first two weeks over 160,000 people used it, but within ten years they'd re-routed the line to Moorgate and poor old King William Street was shut. Then came the Charing Cross, Euston and Hampstead line extending out to somewhere in the middle of nowhere called Golders Green and opened in 1907.

The underground may be littered with closed stations and strange bits of line, but only the Northern Line can boast a real music hall joke. It was a station called North End, or Bull and Bush, after the song, and was between Hampstead and Golders Green. The thing is, they never opened it. The Edwardian NIMBYs objected and that was that. Not a nice start for a poor unsuspecting railway.

After that things could only get worse. The New Works Programme of the late 1930s was meant to turn north London into the Northern Line's domain, but it didn't. No extension beyond Edgware, no line to Ally Pally and no link between Mill Hill East and Edgware. We were lucky to get Archie. We were also lucky to get new trains in 1938. The poor old Northern Line was unlucky in being stuck with the things for 50 years. No wonder it was miserable.

And on the subject of music hall jokes: did you know that all the soil dug out to build the Metropolitan line was dumped just off the Fulham Road at a place called Stamford Bridge and Chelsea built a football stadium on it? Did you know that they once tried to mask the rancid smell of the tube with perfume in 2001, only for the passengers to decide it was worse than the original stink? No wonder the Northern Line is still miserable.

# Nicky Sharp

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## Letters to the editor

Letters without verifiable contact addresses will not be reviewed or printed. Contact details can be withheld, however, at publication.

### Get tougher on graffiti

Dear Editor,

It is always a welcome sight to see graffiti being removed - 'Cracking down on graffiti' (*THE ARCHER*, September 2005). However, photo opportunities for councillors will not be enough to solve Barnet's graffiti problem.

Tackling graffiti requires a proactive, zero-tolerance approach. New graffiti needs to be removed within days to prevent build-up at a particular site. After the long-overdue cleaning of graffiti on East End Road, new graffiti is left to start the cycle again.

Barnet Council's procedures discourage effective removal. Charging private residences for cleaning, and delays in tackling fresh graffiti leave citizens feeling resigned and disempowered.

In contrast, the change in Highgate from being graffiti-blighted to a virtually graffiti-free zone, shows that the problem can be dealt with. What is required is the will.

Yours faithfully,  
Sián Harris  
Durham Road, N2

### The Misery Line

Dear Editor

I want to know if fellow travellers on the beleaguered Northern Line are as annoyed as me with London Transport who treat us like idiots. The line suffered for over a week with terrible delays but not once to my knowledge did they announce the truth. All they did was make announcements such as severe signal problems and stuck trains. Did they seriously think that we

would believe that load of codswallop? Why not tell us the truth?

Only after the drivers took the matter into their own hands and stopped work did London Transport admit the truth about the safety concerns over the signals.

Having used other tube lines to get to the office whilst the Northern Line was closed, I realise how inefficient the Northern Line really is.

Some readers may have seen recent pictures on the television of the crowded trains. I can say that is often normal. It would be against the law to let animals travel in those conditions.

What is London Transport going to do about the Northern Line? They need to spend some serious money to improve it and not divert the money to other lines because of the Olympics 2012. After all, we will still need to get to work during and after the Olympics.

Helen Day  
Leslie Road, N2

### Volunteers needed for Poppy Appeal

Dear Editor

Remembrance Sunday this year is on 13 November and house-to-house-collections will be taking place before that date from the end of October. This annual appeal is one which I am sure the people of the Borough of Barnet will support, not only by giving generously, but also by helping with collections.

The Royal British Legion cares for those ex-service personnel who are sick, disabled and unemployed. Our local organisers, who are vol-

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unteers in the Borough of Barnet, visit ex-servicemen and women who need help and advice for various reasons. Welfare work includes housing, rehabilitation, and residential or convalescent care.

All this is financed mainly by the proceeds from the annual Poppy Appeal. The Poppy is not simply a mark of respect to those who died. For the Legion and the general public it is also a symbol of those whom some of us often fail to remember, those still living who need help as a result of war and conflict.

More collectors are desperately needed in every area to assist hard-pressed volunteers. Anyone over 16 can be a collector; you don't need to have any link with the services. All you have to do is contact your local Royal British Legion branch on 0800 085 5924 and ask for the Poppy Appeal Organiser.

Yours sincerely  
The Worshipful Mayor  
Cllr Andreas Tambourides

### Water good job

Dear Editor

Since you kindly published my letter about pollution on East Finchley Allotments (*THE ARCHER*, October 2005), I must offer a bouquet to Thames Water for a more recent incident. We found a major flood of foul water from an apparently disused drain-pipe flowing across our site one Sunday afternoon. Having called Thames Water, we were impressed and grateful to see their emergency repair crew arrive within a couple of hours and the flood was stopped immediately. Good work!

Richard King  
Chairman, East Finchley Allotment Holders' Association

## Beautiful new business

A new beauty business venture has opened in Leicester Mews, off Leicester Road behind Cootes Pharmacy.

Mette Knudsen, former owner and manager of The BeautyLounge, has taken over the lease of 1a Leicester Mews and has opened the Utopia Health & Beauty Clinic.

Mette is planning to offer a public open day at Christmas to celebrate the launch. Fiona Hurlock, local shiatsu practitioner, and Mary Goulbourn, chiropodist and podiatrist, are working with her in the newly refurbished premises along with several other practitioners.

Services offered include beauty treatments, shiatsu, reflexology, hopi ear candles, kinesiology and massage therapy to name a few.

Mette plans to expand the services to include hair removal and skin rejuvenation by intense pulsed light in the new year. Utopia is open for business seven days a week. Contact 020 8444 4226 for information and bookings or visit the website [www.utopiahealthandbeauty.com](http://www.utopiahealthandbeauty.com).

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