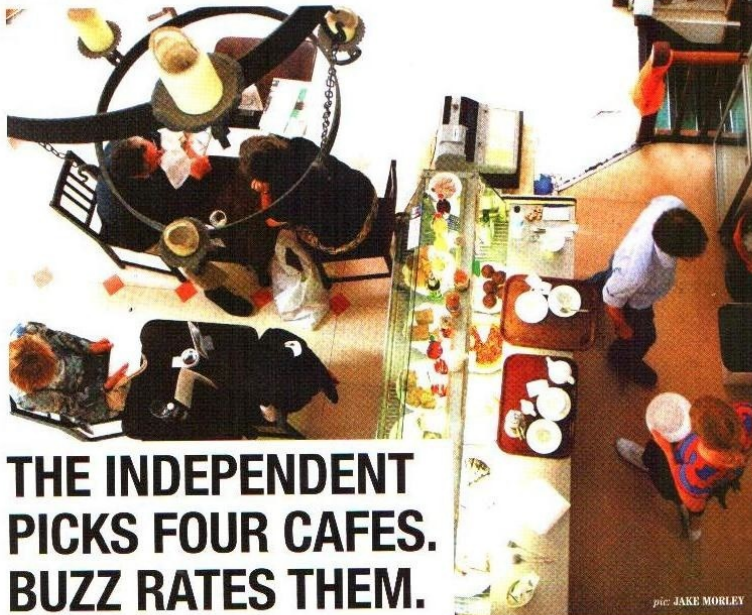


food/drink



THE INDEPENDENT PICKS FOUR CAFES. BUZZ RATES THEM.

Last month the *Independent* newspaper picked out four cafes from South Wales for its Top 50 Coffee Shops in the UK. They should have picked a lot more. This is what we thought of the few they did choose.

Their first pick for Cardiff was the city centre's The Plan Café Bar. It's a chic café that's ideal for those needing a quick lunch and a rest from their retail therapy and, crucially, it's also in a great location for those who want to relax and people watch. Good cafes in Cardiff's city centre are hard to come by, and this is a refreshing change from the chains that dominate. Nice work, *Indy*. **Morgan Arcade, Cardiff. 0845 2008613 / www.foodanddrink-guides.co.uk**

Second choice for the newspaper was Shot In The Dark. The chilled-out café still gets overlooked because of its location, but it's a great place to unwind and socialise with friends after a busy day at work. Situated a short walk from the city centre,

Shot In The Dark, provides a cool atmosphere for those wanting to get away from the hustle and bustle. **City Road, Cardiff. 029 2047 2300 / www.ashotinthedark.eu**

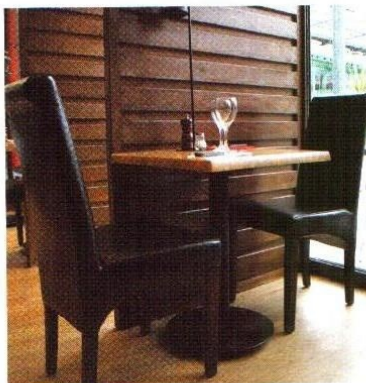
Choice for Swansea is Café Twocann. Situated on the waterfront, the continental café overlooks the Marina, the award-winning Sail Bridge and the Prince of Wales Dock. Customers can expect to be served fresh, local produce as well as being offered a varied selection of wines and coffees. With all those picturesque views, it's the perfect place to relax. **Kings Road, Swansea Waterfront. 01792 458000 / www.cafetwocann.com**

Last but not least is Carmarthen's Café at 4 Queen Street. This quaint café is in the centre of the historic town and offers passers-by the best selection of homemade food. Café 4 at Queen Street also has a reputation for making extremely good coffee, not to mention their exceptionally scrumptious cakes. **Queen Street, Carmarthen. 0870 0424176**

PORTUGUESE-ITALIAN MIA PORTO DUE OPENS

Porto Due has been sitting on St Mary Street for over 20 years, so it's about time they popped out a sprig. Mia Porto Due is their new restaurant, and it's a variation on their tried-and-tested Portuguese-meets-Italian formula, specialising as a steak house and pizzeria located in the Old Brewery Quarter. It's similar in style to Porto Due, right down to their famous kebabs (posh ones on skewers, you brutish oaf, not the sort of thing you get on Caroline Street at 3 o'clock in the morning that looks like it's been made by packing together those little grey sausages of dirt you peel off your palms after a sweaty gym session).

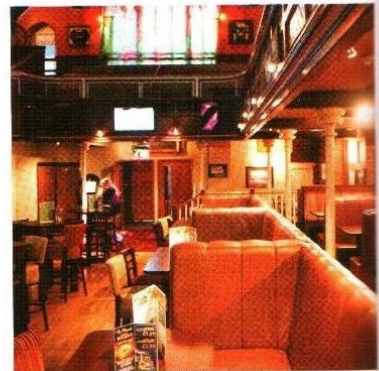
Info: 029 2022 7147 / www.portodue.co.uk



NORTH STAR SHINES AT DESIGN AWARDS

Cardiff bistro pub the North Star has been acknowledged by the prestigious Restaurant & Bar Design Awards. The pub which was designed by Tim Rice made it onto the shortlist of 20 in the category of Best Designed Independent Bars in Britain. The awards enable designers to submit their work online and have their efforts judged by a panel of top journalists who specialise in lifestyle, hospitality and design. Established last year, the awards have become a popular event with many budding designers such as David Collins. The winners of the Restaurant & Bar Design Awards will be revealed at a ceremony in London on Tue 22 June.

Info: www.restaurantandbardesignawards.com



PHOENIX PUB RISES FROM THE ASHES

Former Bridgend Barracuda Bar has had a \$65,000 transformation that is set to bring in lots of new customers. The aptly-titled Phoenix pub has been reborn as a warm and welcoming family-friendly restaurant. The pub is now host to brand new furnishings and mood lighting designed to make customers feel cosy and comfortable. The opening night – Fri 5 Mar – received a great response and Phoenix manager Kate Jones is delighted with the reaction. "The feedback from customers has just been fantastic and the opening night went really well – it was a great start to our first weekend," she said.

Info: 01656 654641 / www.barracadagroup.com