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Food & Drink



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FOOD & DRINK

FERNANDEZ AND WELLS DELI, LONDON

Despite an unremarkable frontispiece you'd be hard-pushed to walk past this delicatessen in central London without a gawp or a drool. The performance that is the window display is more arresting than anything you'll see in local Soho. A bevy of staff chop and carve in pristine chef's whites, wrestling with Iberian hams and giant salad bowls, while a jostling queue runs out of the door and up Lexington Street.

Fernandez and Wells opened at the beginning of the year and word spread fast around epicurian ears. 'It's not easy when you charge up to £5 for a sandwich but when the customers see the products and taste them they don't mind paying,' says Columbian shop manager John Aguilar.

For owners, Jorge Fernandez and Rick Wells, the concept was simple: bring a small slice of Borough Market to one of the busiest parts of town, stocking only a small range of products sourced almost entirely from the continent. Simplicity of both choice and ingredients are key. It's an ethos that's carried through into the daily menu of hot and cold meals, which include Spanish lentil and chorizo stew or basque salami and 'comte bocadillos' (like baguettes).

A second shop serving coffee and cake has just opened, a mark of how successful the initial venture has been in such a short space of time. It was decided at the last minute that an espresso machine didn't sit well inside a deli - a clash of aromas perhaps - but they were intent on serving coffee. Fortunately a site, just a stone's throw away on Beak Street, came up and within a matter of months the empire was born.

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