

# FLUID★LONDON

*“So there I was, in bed with Louis Theroux, Monica Lewinsky, Charlie Brooker, Matt Horne and Boy George floating aloft on a cloud of magic mushrooms. And then Tom Cruise set fire to the bar.”*

Of course, this didn't actually happen at [Moti Mahal's](#) 5th birthday party celebrations last week, but it was a comment made by one of the parties present at the time. Why? Maybe we were chatting about dreams and the new Christopher Nolan spend-fest, Inception. Maybe we were commenting on our former brushes with fame. Maybe we were just consumed by the moment and the Bellini cocktails being proffered that night.

So, 5 years is a mammoth mountain to climb. Earlier the same day a chap told me that 75% of all small businesses fail within the first 5 years. I believed him because he looked like he was speaking from experience. Perhaps [Moti Mahal](#) doesn't regard itself as a 'small business', though, and it's this that has reduced the idea of failure to nothing but a footnote in the *Guide To Building A Successful Restaurant In & Around The Covent Garden Area*, if such a thing exists.

But Moti wasn't only showing off about its 'wood' anniversary that night. The second reason to whoop and holler was the initiation of a very intriguing MM Select Members Club, a privilege card offering a wealth of advantages and a definite must-have for those who are keen on repeat visits to the nearby Theatreland and Royal Opera House: 30% off food bills, complimentary glass of Champagne on arrival for up to 6 guests, a personalised bottle of whiskey, and two tickets to the MM Select Card annual ball. Not bad for a meagre £80, a fee that would surely pay for itself after just one sitting.

So, as mentioned, there were Bellinis - passionfruit, and ginger, both refreshing in the summer heat, both a little sweet for this seasoned beer drinker; fetch me a Cobra any day, and they did, thanks [Moti Mahal](#) - and there was magic. Actual magic. Fork bending, card choosing, scene-stealing magic practiced by a chap carrying a large briefcase of tricks, and wearing a sparkling tie that spelled out the word 'magic'. What more proof was needed?

So if that's where the 'magic' filtered into our conversation, the 'mushrooms' arrived in the form of canapes, grilled and flavoured in the rural Indian way and shadowed by chargrilled prawn, mussels, mini samosas, and a perfumed iced lolly that was part banana, part pot pourri. I think.

Simon, the new bar supervisor at [Moti Mahal](#), was playing the part of Tom Cruise from the movie Cocktail. Simon says "Welcome to [Moti Mahal](#). I'm here to show you that [Moti Mahal](#) isn't only about a passion for Tandoor. I'm going to show you a little flair." He then launched into a routine that involved spinning and throwing and bottles and canisters and ice and liquid and a gathered crowd looking generally impressed.

My eyes were fixed on the back bar, though, where the usual suspects were in attendance, bolstered by the addition of a large bottle of Hendrick's. Suddenly [Moti Mahal](#) went from quite cool to super frosty.

Unfortunately, Simon was at the will of science as he attempted to ignite the counter (there's Tom Cruise setting fire to the bar), to reveal the words MM Select in glorious blue flame. Only, science didn't want to play this game and only small sections of the lettering ignited. Damn you science for not fulfilling our moment with Simon!

Simon promised that science had behaved in practice earlier, then salvaged the moment by simultaneously pouring a triple cocktail. That's three separate silver canisters poured at the same time, all containing different drinks. To find out how that works, and to get



to grips with the new MM Select card, you'll have to get down to [Moti Mahal](#) and ask Simon in person.



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