

Cozy Up To Glasgow's Value Hotel

Even if you think you've gotten the wrong address when your cabby delivers you to the Brunswick Merchant City Hotel, located on a dead-end street smack in the middle of Glasgow's trading area, pay the fare and move along. You've just been done a huge favor. You're about to experience one of the Scottish seaport's greatest examples of urban regeneration, not to mention one of the best values in town (rooms £39-£59, approximately US\$63-\$95, double; £100-£250, or about US\$163-\$406, for the three-room penthouse).

If you're jumping off to one of the legendary Scottish golf courses nearby, this delightful 22-room boutique hotel could be just the spot to spend the night.

Brunswick Merchant City Hotel, Brunswick Street, Glasgow, Scotland; 44-141-552-0001.

—Judy DiEdwardo

Expense Account



Encounter at LAX

Atlanta:

Sylvia Woods, the self-proclaimed "Queen of Soul Food," is serving up pecan-crusted shrimp, sweet potato fries and other delicacies in Georgia. Since 1962, her Harlem restaurant has been a hangout for New York celebs and pols, as well as those smitten with her food's rib-sticking reputation. Now, only a few months after the second location opened on the corner of Central and Trinity avenues, within a biscuit's throw of city hall, **Sylvia's Restaurant** of Atlanta is red-hot.



Sit down in her elegant postmodern dining room with its vaulted ceiling and tuck into golden crunchy catfish, moist fried chicken or delicately spiced pork chops.

For dessert, don't even try to choose between the sweet potato pie, carrot cake and peach cobbler. Order 'em all, take what you can't eat home and be glad you did.

Sylvia's, 241 Central Avenue, Atlanta; 404-529-9692.

—David Bailey

L.A.:

Frequent flyers know you don't go to the airport for a good meal. An exception: Los Angeles International (LAX), where intrepid eaters will find a microbrewery, a Wolfgang Puck Express franchise and the new **Encounter** restaurant.

Set in the observation deck of the flying saucer-arachnoid monstrosity that is LAX's iconic former Theme Building, Encounter looks like a cross between "The Jetsons" and a Vegas nightclub. The food, though, is no joke.

Executive Chef Patrick Glennon's menu, modified daily, includes the best ingredients from wherever he can get them, and a menu of cooking styles to match. Thus, Chilean sea bass,

Japanese sashimi and cucumber salad, Santa Fe salmon, Cuban shrimp cocktail, and an all-America cut of filet mignon. It's almost enough to make you wish for a three-hour layover.

Encounter, Los Angeles International Airport; 310-215-5151.

—Michael Konik

Singapore:

I asked to see the doctor as I sat down at the avowedly health-oriented **Imperial Herbal Restaurant** in Singapore. I felt fine, but why not take advantage of the resident herbalist, Li Lian Xing, who recommends what you should have for dinner? "You have a weak pulse," he said, sitting amid drawers and jars of the sticks, leaves and dried God-knows-whats that are the hallmark of a well-stocked Chinese apothecary. "You should eat foods that give you energy."

All menu items contain (or can be supplemented with) herbs, spices and assorted creatures that do something positive for your body; that the fare is delicious is a bonus. Our meal started with North American ginseng, ground and deep-fried, with a small glass of plum wine. Next up: "tung tong chow," a, um, sort of grub that is said to provide energy.

Then it was steamed spinachlike "matrimony vine," followed by cod cooked with two types of ginseng. The celebrated stew "Buddha Jumps

Over the Wall," an energy name for a food if I've heard one, accounted for half the total bill of US\$100, for two. And the energy level? Just fine, thanks.

Imperial Herbal Restaurant, Metropole Hotel, 41 Seah Street, Singapore; 65-337-0491.

—Paul Spencer Sochaczewski

