

EXCLUSIVE I had dinner in the pitch black restaurant featured in Richard Curtis's About Time - I made a total mess with my food

- MailOnline reporter Madison Burgess dined at the dark in Dans Le Noir ?
- The unique London restaurant features in a popular Richard Curtis rom com
- **READ MORE: I'm 21 and run my own restaurant while studying for my degree**

By [MADISON BURGESS](#)

The idea of sitting down for a three-course meal in a pitch-black restaurant with no idea what is on your plate may feel like a nightmare, rather than a pleasant dining experience.

But if you're a rom com fanatic, you'll recognise the unique dining experience from the 2013 **Richard Curtis** classic About Time, starring **Rachel McAdams** and Domhnall Gleeson.

Near the beginning of the film, the characters meet at Dans Le Noir? in **London** to dine in the dark, which leads to a blossoming romance - and the quirky story became a cult classic that's still a favourite for many film buffs today.

MAIL ONLINE

—
MUU

359 million

—
AVE

£5,488

—
JUNE 2024

—
ONLINE

—
https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-13374359/dinner-darkness-London-restaurant-time.html?ico-author_s_pagination_desktop



So, to see what all the fuss is about, I decided to head there myself courtesy of the restaurant, to understand what it's really like to have dinner with strangers, in complete darkness.

Described as a 'unique, sensory and human experience,' Dans Le Noir ?, which literally translates to 'in the dark,' encourages guests to 're-evaluate their perception of taste while reclaiming their senses'.



Diners are led through the darkness to their table, with everything on the menu being a surprise - you won't know who is sitting around you, what the interior looks like, and more importantly what food you're being served.

Ranking among the 10 most original restaurants in the world, the eatery is located in the Clerkenwell district of London, not far from Farringdon tube station.

The idea is that the perception of flavours, textures, and smells can be completely different in the dark, which makes us realise how sight influences all our senses.

As I made my way to the unique experience, I wasn't really sure what I would be walking into - literally.

From the outside, Dans Le Noir ? looks like any other glamorous London restaurant, with the elusive text 'explore your senses' plastered alongside its name.

You step inside to a welcoming bar area, where you're met by a member of the front-of-house staff, who will seat you and ask if you'd like a drink before making your way into the mysterious 'dark room'.

Me and my friend, who only agreed to accompany me to the mysterious restaurant after much convincing, opted for a cocktail each to be served within the restaurant itself - we didn't need the extra stress of balancing a drink as we stumbled to our table.

We stowed our bags and phones away in lockers as nothing that could produce light is allowed in the room - I didn't realise how nervous I was until we were called up to make our way inside.



We were led to the dark room entrance by our waiter Fabio, who like all of the wait staff at Dans Le Noir ?, is blind. Before we entered, he explained that the route to our table would include a zig-zag and a possible step down.

He instructed me to hold onto his shoulder, with my friend holding mine behind me, as we pushed past a curtain and into complete darkness.

As we walked inside and surrendered our sense of sight, I could hear the buzzing sounds of the restaurant as couples, families, and friends chatted to each other over dinner.

The level of darkness was the most shocking aspect of the entire experience - obviously, I knew it would be dark, but this was next level and I couldn't even see an outline of my hand when I waved it in front of my face.

Fabio kindly led us to our table, which we soon realised we were sharing with other people. Even just pulling out my chair and sitting down proved to be a challenge, but we got there in the end.

Shortly after, we were served our drinks, which I kept losing every time I put it down on the table. We also had the option of a tumbler of water and glasses, but I wasn't feeling brave enough to have two items susceptible to spillage on the go.

The wait staff had to explain everything to us, from where the forks were on the table to where to find our napkins, as we were so used to relying on our sight.

Visitors need to be guided everywhere, including the toilet, for safety reasons - you can't attempt to walk around on your own.

It left me with a strong sense of admiration for visually impaired people and the immense amount of effort and concentration it can take for even the smallest of tasks.

Dans Le Noir? only employs blind or partially sighted waiting staff, who also act as guides.

The restaurant's website explains: 'This unusual dining experience is a moment of positive empathy that breaks our preconceived ideas of disability. Driven by this reversal of roles, the experience allows us to perceive the richness of diversity.'

I admit I felt panicked at first being immersed in total darkness, but I quickly settled in and got somewhat used to the bizarre concept of not being able to see.

In fact, it became fun after a while and we even got into a conversation with the couple seated next to us, who tried to explain what they looked like so we could imagine them.

However, my friend struggled to shake off the anxiety and get to grips with the experience. After some gentle persuasion, she did stay, but didn't enjoy it as much as I did.

Jessica, who has been the general manager of Dans Le Noir? for eight years, explained that claustrophobia can sometimes surprise people and the shortest time someone has lasted in the room is a speedy three seconds.

She recalled: 'You can't explain to people that it's going to be that dark so we sometimes have claustrophobic reactions.'

