



LUCY TRAVERS

Health, fitness and wellbeing made easy for young professionals

HOME

ABOUT

RESTAURANT OF THE WEEK

RECIPES



Ever been to a restaurant and thought you were ordering a healthy dish only to find it comes out slathered in cream, butter, sugar or worse, all of the above? I came across this article (http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/09/dining/hold-the-butter-healthy-food-served-here.html?_r=0) in the *New York Times* a few months ago and it caught my eye.

SPE Certified has launched a program whereby participating restaurants can include a symbol next to certain meal options on the menu that are scientifically deemed healthy. This can mean, for example, that a mushroom soup is cooked without butter or cream, or that a steak is marinated only in a small amount of olive oil and not coated in other nasties. While other programs and initiatives have attempted to do this (like Mayor Bloomberg's mandatory calorie count on all menu items at food chain outlets), the SPE Certification is the first of its kind that is backed by a panel of nutritionists and supported by science. It also means that the chef's individuality and culinary vision is kept in tact, without deriving from the flavour and texture of the meal.

SPE has been refining its certification process for over ten years and unveiled it at Michelin-starred restaurant Rouge Tomate in New York City. From their website, SPE notes:

"A restaurant or foodservice establishment that offers SPE-certified dishes demonstrates that in addition to taste, the chef values health, sustainability and a commitment to a greater good. When "ordering SPE" guests can simply enjoy their meal – confident that the hard

work and care required to craft a delicious, nutritionally balanced meal has been done for them.”

This is an extremely important initiative for the healthy consumer, and will hopefully go a long way to educate the broader diner in what it means to choose a healthy option from a restaurant menu.



Although only available currently in some restaurants, certain university campuses and cruise liners in New York, New Jersey and Michigan, I am hopeful that this program will catch on and more restaurants will participate. This is certainly good news for us all.

For a list of all SPE certified establishments, visit <http://specertified.com/>