



A little bit of fairy dust at Sainsbury's

Sainsbury's have hit on a good idea with its World Flavours sandwich range, which takes simple, genuine inspiration from different countries. It's a welcome alternative to the Mexican wave of flavours that's happening at the moment, says Nellie Nichols, Pret's ex-head of food, now a consultant

I shouldn't be but I'm a bit bored. I would like to be inspired and overwhelmed by deliciousness when I go to buy a sandwich, but there appears to be a bit of a Mexican wave of flavours happening at the moment, not to mention a worrying overuse of beans.

There are Borlotti beans, Kidney Beans, Pinto Beans and Cannelloni to name but a few. (But what happened to that Baked Bean bread that was the same colour as Baked Beans and really tasted of the sauce?)

They all seem to get covered in lashings of tomato 'salsa' in wraps of one type or another under the pretext of different countries' culinary influences, often South American but invariably married off to (but actually just running off with) far too much Chilli. Then there are the names that get used just because the recipes contain varying amounts of either cheese or

chilli but invariably both: the Nachos, the Fajitas, the Chipotles and the Quesadillas...

Often the simplest works the best. All it takes to deliver a well rounded and delicious product is to use one or two of the well known and traditional ingredients from which ever part of the world you want to ... and this is exactly what Sainsbury's have done. Their range of World Flavours cleverly and intelligently takes simple genuine inspiration from different countries and then delivers a good product. Simple, I wonder why everyone doesn't try it.

Their French Inspired Brie, Apple and Grape on Malted Bread is 474 calories, 24.3g fat and costs £1.95. It's simple, well filled, crunchy and fresh. You can see exactly what you're getting and it's very good. Their American Inspired New York Style Club on Onion Bread is packed with Smoked Ham,



'Some call it the Wow Factor and struggle to get it right, I tend to call it just a little bit of Fairy Dust to be delicious in a can't-quite-put-your-finger-on-it kind of way. Just enough to make you realise how much you thoroughly enjoyed it'

layers of 'sweet-as-a-nut' good quality Emmental cheese and beautifully thinly sliced salami. The mistake is often made to slice this too thickly, resulting in the whole slice flying out of the sandwich with the first bite - I hate that. 611 calories, 33.7g of fat and £2.10.

You can argue that's a lot of calories and fat, but no one buys a big Club sandwich with a roll call of those ingredients expecting not to pay for it one way or the other. So share one with a friend if you feel that guilty. But don't miss out because it is delicious. I did feel very short changed with the two miniscule leaves of baby spinach though, a tad underweight I would have thought.

Moving to Morocco for the Moroccan Inspired Chicken and Mango Salsa in a flatbread. Interesting packaging with the flatbread cut in half and one portion placed behind the other. This is all well and good provided the fit isn't as snug as it was - the half at the back gasping for space and consequently the flatbread had taken on a lot of moisture. I would have expected a little mint in here too though. But a generous and tasty eat, though at £2.10 with 251 calories and a rock bottom 2.5g of fat.

The Thai Inspired Green Thai Chicken in a Chilli Pepper Tortilla is perfectly balanced and

delicious. Just the right blend of heat, coconut and lemongrass, it has crisp nuggets of red and green peppers which lend it an overall traffic light brightness. This one puts most of the other Green Thai products on the market in the shade. 464 calories and 19.7g of fat, it's yours for a very reasonable £2.10. In addition its Thunderbirds silver stand up or lie down packaging is fab, modern and understated compared to a lot of the me-too wrap packs around.

While I'm here I'll buy and try some of the other really interesting offers. The New Sandwich of the Month is Tomato and Parmesan on a Tomato Bloomer. Nicely wrapped, this is sadly shut tight as a dodgy mussel and quite poorly filled. A bit of a non-event. As tomato is the hero I would have enjoyed a specific variety and cut the slices extravagantly thickly. Using some crunchy leaves for another texture would have been a benefit too. It's £2.00, 369 calories and 13.7g of fat.

Honey Roast Salmon on rustic wholemeal bread is a new addition to their Rustic range in lovely brown paper packaging - £2.20, with 469 calories and 19.3g of fat. The salmon itself is very tasty but I was disappointed to discover that this sandwich was made without the addition of any spread at all. It did get a write



'I'm a bit of a traditionalist when it comes to Pastrami, expecting cracked pepper on the outside, and far more meat too, perhaps spilling out of the front and looking far more inviting'

up on the label though. The bread, which has been given a nice little marketing story all of its own, was therefore, sadly, exceptionally dry and let down.

I bought the New York Club in a sub roll because I couldn't believe it (this one was exactly 1 ft long, 711 calories, 36.5g of fat and £2.10). I think a Club deserves more than two main ingredients or it isn't a Club. This only contains a meagre 13.5% of Pastrami, unfortunately covered in red paprika on it and everywhere else. I'm a bit of a traditionalist when it comes to Pastrami, expecting cracked pepper on the outside, and far more meat too, perhaps spilling out of the front and looking far more inviting. After all, there wasn't anything else in there except a small amount of cheese so you'd need to really want to eat a lot of sub roll to buy this one.

Last but not least, three from the Taste the Difference Range. Yellow fin Tuna and Aegean Tomato (?) on Sweet Pepper Bread is pretty to look at but difficult to eat. The unbound tuna is on the loose and flakes drop out everywhere. The tomatoes are good but, well, I think just roasted with herbs with a bit of a grand name. This is £2.20, 461 calories and 20.9g fat.

Honey Roast Ham Salad on Poppy Seed Bread is £2.40, with 409 calories and 19.2g fat. The bread has good crunchy texture from the poppy seeds, the ham is flavoursome but, oh how I wish that sliced cucumber in sandwiches was crunchy. If it can't be don't put it there, but still so many do. This perfectly good ham salad was totally let down by it. I think this repetitive issue is down to how far in advance the cucumber is sliced before going into the sandwich, and the fact that only at this point does its sandwich shelf life commence.

Salt Beef and Gherkin with Mustard Mayo on Rye Bread. Well, a blokey sandwich this

might be, but boy does it taste great. What soft firm bread - just the right amount of caraway seeds, not bitter or overpowering as it can sometimes be.

Good old fashioned salt beef with feisty mayo and just a sprinkling of chopped vine ripened sweet tomatoes. I would have made it with sliced gherkins instead of little shrapnel pieces but that aside, wonderful. £2.50, 484 calories and 23.2g.

Did I complete my mission? Some call it the Wow Factor and struggle to get it right, I tend to call it just a little bit of Fairy Dust to be delicious in a can't-quite-put-your-finger-on-it kind of way. Just enough to make you realise how much you thoroughly enjoyed it and, well, yes you're definitely going back there soon for another one. I think I might have finally tasted some of the difference.

The selection:

French Inspired Brie Apple & Grape	£1.95
American Inspired New York	
Style Club	£2.10
Moroccan Inspired Chicken & Mango	£2.10
Thai Inspired Green Thai Chicken	£2.10
Tomato & Parmesan	£2.00
Honey Roast Salmon	£2.20
New York Club Sub	£2.10
TTD Tuna and Aegean Tomato	£2.20
TTD Honey Roast Ham	£2.40
TTD Salt Beef and Gherkin	£2.50



NELLIE NICHOLS IS A FOOD CONSULTANT CONTACTABLE ON NELLIENICHOLSNPD@BTINTERNET.COM

This review is based on Nellie Nichols' own independent views