

The hotel restaurants on Yas Island have a problem: they're on Yas Island. Unless there's an event at the circuit or maybe the golf course, you'd need a good reason to go there. So the hotels are investing heavily in their eateries to persuade us that they're *vaut le voyage*.

That's what the Yas Hotel has done with Kazu, its modern Japanese restaurant. It's very stylish without trying too hard, staffed by some of the best front-of-house people in town (many of them actually Japanese!), cleverly arranged around a large central open kitchen so that the ambiance is good even when the place is less than full, with laid-back mood music in the Hotel Costes style and a chef who trained at Nobu.

Nobu isn't a bad reference for the style of the food – definitely Japanese but with an interesting modern twist – but Kazu doesn't have the pretentiousness that sometimes creeps into Nobu's menus. Instead it's just tasty - drool-producingly so. The basics are yummy, even simple appetisers like the edamame with chilli. The sushi and sashimi are conventional enough, but you can really taste the freshness; unusual options here include eel and avocado.

But it's the main courses that would convince anyone who didn't like Japanese food that they've been wrong all their life. These are mostly from the robatayaki grill, which means the cooking itself isn't dramatic or unusual; but the saucing, spicing and marinades most certainly are. The signature offering is probably kohisuji sumibiyaki, one of the least pricey items on offer – a couple of marinated lamb chops that were melt-in-the-mouth tender and came with garlic miso and sweet pickled onion (it works, it works!). Our other plate was tai no shioyaki, salted grilled red snapper: the fish was delicious.

It's not a huge menu, and it's not overcomplicated food. We'll probably be going back for the teppanyaki set menus (includes salad, "market fresh" vegetables, steamed tamaki rice, miso soup and dessert for prices from AED 180 for tofu to AED 300 for lobster or steak) and more sumbiyaki grills. But mostly we'll be returning for the delicacy of taste, the elegance and slight air of ceremony, the attention to detail, and just because we want more of that food ...

**What?** Kazu

**Where?** The Yas Hotel

**Cost:** AED 300 – 400 per head for three courses, excluding drinks

**Why?** Uncomplicated, stylish, tasty

**Kazu**

Wednesday, 06 January 2010 11:24

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**Why not?** Can be pricey (though set menus are a good deal)

**We say:** Worth the trip to Yas

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