

Jing Asia is the all-day diner at the Crowne Plaza on Yas Island. Think that sounds pretty unexciting? Well, think again. In the Abu Dhabi Modern way, Jing Asia is a very clever multi-purpose eatery: for breakfast it's a well-stocked but unremarkable buffet, for lunch (and most of the day) it turns into a mostly-Asian mostly-buffet restaurant, in the evening it becomes a pretty classy buffet with an à la carte menu as well.

In the way of most Yas hotels, it is heavily staffed with cooks and waiters; and it has the Yas ethic of producing very good food at pretty good prices, the kind of recipe that is needed to attract the non-residential clientele when nothing in particular is happening on the circuit or the golf course.

That will change when Yas gets a bit more developed, but for now most of the Yas restaurants are placid and pleasant places to enjoy quality food. We tried a working lunch there, sitting on the sunny terrace outside the main room (lots of space inside arranged in a giant horseshoe around the cooking stations) and looking over the ostrich farm to the high-rises of Reem and the Tourist Club Area.

The self-service options were frankly extensive, with a nod to traditional Arabian cuisine but mainly featuring dishes and tastes from Japan and Thailand. The sushi was perhaps a bit too cool, meaning the flavour had yet to develop, but this is an occupational hazard with fresh raw fish in a hot country.

The freshness is worth noting, however – everything looked and tasted as though it had been prepared especially for us. Even the soba noodles as a cold starters had none of the stickiness that sometimes afflicts this kind of food; the prawns were packed with an unlikely strength of flavour, the dim sum (yes, there's a nod to China as well) was luscious, and the satay was succulent (beef and chicken: obviously we had to try both).

The star of our multiple tastings was a Thai roasted fish with ginger and lemongrass, and a nice light background warmth of chilli. This was inspired cooking, simple and clean flavours which brought out the taste of the central item – the fish – without overpowering it.

The evening menu is equally relaxed but equally tasty – more of a Malaysian/Indonesian tang, perhaps, but otherwise the mix is much as before. It's not grand dining, but it's not grand pricing either. We've enjoyed the nasi goreng, beef rendang and a vegetable red curry without paying more than AED 60 for any of them.

Worth the trip? Definitely – especially if you have an appetite.

What? Jing Asia

Where? Crowne Plaza, Yas Island

Cost: Average AED 115 for starter, main and desert excluding drinks (less for lunch)

Why? Excellent value for money, good all-Asia cooking

Why not? Very quiet if there's nothing happening on Yas

We say: Affordable, tasty, wide choice. Go hungry

Contact: 02 656 3053

Dennis Jarrett