

## An Arabian night to remember



Reviewed by: Kara Martin

Aside from a curious entryway comprising wooden bridge, stone work and water feature, Mawal is a tasteful and bustling spot for the city's in-the-know Arab population - and it's particularly popular come the weekend. Those in search of authentic Lebanese food need look no further than the dinner show package - a feast with plenty of likeable extras included in the price.

As with most Lebanese restaurants, things don't liven up at Mawal until after 11pm but it's wise to go with an empty stomach - generous portions and a varied menu make up for such late dining.

A starter of ten mini dishes of cold mezze including Lebanese staples, hummus, babaganoush and tabbouleh quickly threaten to fill stomachs - so much so that it's wiser to sample rather than scoff. But obvious fresh ingredients tease the palate suitably. Mashed chickpeas are scooped successfully (with some schooling) in the folded fresh bread and devoured - full marks for freshness once again.

## **Mawal dinner show**

Wednesday, 05 May 2010 10:16

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Chicken liver in pomegranate sauce (an acquired taste) follow along with faultless mixed pastries stuffed with spinach, spiced feta cheese and meat. The mixed grill of lamb and chicken was simply delectable - so much so that leisurely breathers in between dishes are necessary to ensure the plates leave the table empty

Dessert alone is three wholesome dishes; a nougat-like sesame oil infused treat called holawa, a lovely gelatine milk dish sprinkled with pistachios (kashtaliya) and a mountain of fresh fruit.

Middle Eastern cuisine is by all means a leisurely and social affair. While a seemingly endless array of dishes is brought to the tables, skilled belly dancers show off moves to rival the likes of pop-songstress Shakira, making the evening nothing short of entertaining and enjoyable. Fresh authentic food, a late but lively atmosphere and plenty of entertainment; Mawal offers the full package.

**What?** Mawal dinner show

**Where?** Hilton Abu Dhabi

**Why?** For fresh Lebanese fare in ridiculous abundance, and a belly dancer with the wildest waist ever witnessed

**Why not?** With all that's served, we can't help wondering where all the leftovers go each evening

**We say:** Go on an empty stomach and follow with a calorie-burning boogie at the hotel's club Cinnabar

**Cost:** AED 325 per person excl. extra fees (on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays)

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