

Meal menu mayhem



Reviewed by: Kara Martin

There's one inconspicuous restaurant on the water's edge on the way to Marina Mall. In recent months it's seemingly opened and closed more times than the Salam Street progress gets updated. Spying open doors, Abu Dhabi Week decided to test the waters of the marina-side eatery.

Le Boulanger is a resto-cafe, 'French' bakery and shisha joint with nearly a dozen branches around Abu Dhabi. And despite there being no place to stop or park (seek out the valet man at the nearby traffic lights who takes your car goodness knows where, but returns it safely when you're done), this breakwater branch is much sought after come the weekend. We suspect that'll be down to its panoramic views of the city beyond the sea – simply indescribable, especially if you're fortunate enough to grab a front row seat on a cool night.

It's fair to say that Le Boulanger is perhaps more of a local hangout, with free pre-meal popcorn complimenting Arabic music videos (or football matches) on the big screen and setting a rather casual theme. Their menu however is ambitious and sports everything from filling club sandwiches and Italian pastas and pizzas to interesting takes on the Mexican burrito and 'nachos', on top of the usual local favourites.

Frankly though, food here borders on just sufficient. And the fancy-sounding dish names only confuse rather than impress. For example, 'escalopini pesto' translates as standard fettucini alfredo with fried fresh fish. The lamb chops are straightforward lamb chops, and pretty scrumptious, tender chops at that. But the guessing game continues if ordering 'zanjabil' – or ginger tea with milk – only recommended if you fancy a quick cough-inducing detox. It's an acquired taste. Go for the fresh fruit milkshakes instead.

What? Le Boulanger French Bakery and Resto Cafe

Where? Breakwater Road (the road toward Marina Mall)

Cost: AED 127 for two

Why? For a casual, budget evening out under the stars paired with a priceless view

Why not? Because the menu might not actually say what it means – or mean what it says for that matter

We say: The view alone makes this place worth at least one evening of your time

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