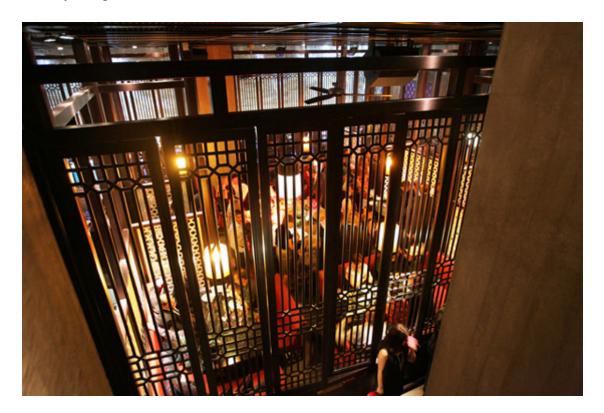Culinary delights

Reviewed by: Charlie Kennedy

First impressions count for a lot against the choice in Abu Dhabi eateries and with the help of some Feng Shui know-how, Hakkasan ticks all the right boxes. The Michelin-star Chinese restaurant follows through with the food too.

Hakassan is famed for its modern Cantonese cooking, and there are even a few tailor-made additions to the menu, specifically catering to the UAE market.

Traditional favourites aren't to be ignored. The Hakka steamed dim sum platter is considered a signature dish and it's easy to see why. The filling bite-size pieces are perfect for sharing. The crab salad with peanut dressing – beautifully presented – is a lighter alternative, bursting with flavour.

Ostrich toban in beancurd chilli sauce proves a challenge on the chopsticks (it's not easy cutting meat with chopsticks, believe us) – but certainly no challenge on the taste buds. The tender meat is wonderfully moreish. Keep it simple with Edamame egg rice and you're on to a winner.

Desserts are a little less inspiring; the double boiled apple treasure consommé is perhaps an acquired taste.

Hakassan offers a truly unique dining experience; staff are friendly and there's no air of pretention; in fact, the dark wood 'cages' – open panel structures that surround each dining area – allow the atmosphere to seep through the whole restaurant without taking away from a private, exclusive feel.

Abu Dhabi certainly isn't shy of top class eateries, but we've never quite experienced anything like Hakkasan. From the Bindi candle scent wafting through the restaurant to the wonderfully fresh food; this has award-winning written all over it.

What? Hakkasan
Where? Emirates Palace, East Wing
Cost: Approximately AED 450 per person, excluding drinks
Why? A one-of-a-kind dining experience
Why not? It's always nice to be told first what isn't available before ordering – we went without our first choices twice
We say: There's a new star on the culinary scene
Contact: 02 690 7999