

Seriously special



Reviewed by: Laura Fulton

Open since May 2008, Sardinia defines fine dining. The presentation and service are the sort that give weight to the brace of Michelin stars Sardinia rightfully bears, but this must-visit venue is completely luxurious and completely not pretentious at the same time.

While you can order a la carte off the innovative menu, you'd do well to leave the choices in the qualified hands of the staff who can tailor a range of courses for you; as many or as few as you'd like. The first few stops on the standard 12 course menu is a bit misleading; the tiny skewered ball of baby mozzarella and the solitary shrimp served on a wafer thin strip of tom yum don't seem like enough to fill up anyone, but by the end of the evening, you'll be hard pressed to fit it all in.

In terms of both diners and portion sizes, Sardinia is all about quality rather than quantity, and all about flavour pairing and presentation. When have you ever had turbot arrive at your table still swimming in the bag in which it was boiled and served with scissors, or braised beef cheeks served with a paintbrush – yes, an actual four-inch wide paintbrush – for dabbing on the barbeque sauce?

And it's not just the funky utensils that will charm you. You'd never expect pan-fried foie gras would work so well alongside spicy hot Mexican chocolate paste or that ginger foam would so perfectly complement lobster risotto. Who'd guess lychee could be transformed into gelatine ravioli or that chocolate pop rocks would put the finishing touch on a fishbowl of fresh fruit?

We could go on, but there's only one word we need to describe this exquisite gastronomic experience, from the individual butter pat to the mint spray: perfect.

What? Sardinia

Where? Abu Dhabi Country Club

Cost: Set 12 course menu without paired beverage AED 550 – reasonable, all things considered

Why? Where else have you ever seen a table set with silver and a paintbrush?

Why not? The swimmers and tennis players outside might detract, if you can tear your eyes away from your dish

We say: Drop everything and go

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