

The truth is, two thirds of the handful of French food options available in the capital are actually more French Lebanese than straight French, so Abu Dhabi Week definitely had to peak into Sheraton Khalidiya's La Veranda restaurant when we heard they declare Wednesday nights as French buffet night.



French cuisine is a tricky one, but La Veranda believes it consists of rich sauce and cream compilations, a couple of cheeses and breads, and lots and lots of seafood.

Starting with some pretty standard French onion soup and rolls, we then left the salad station with piles of fresh shrimp, smoked salmon, and hamour all tossed with various fresh vegetables. For something that is decidedly very French, we expected to find more than two types of cheese – brie and Swiss – but they were excellent nonetheless. On another note, didn't deviled eggs (an honest favourite) originate in Italy?

Country confusion aside, the grilled beef tenderloin with peppercorn was memorable – juicy,

seasoned to perfection and with not an inch of fat – but the seafood once again reigned. The lobster was flawless and the thick and creamy thermidor was packed with a flavourful assortment of fish. Paired with buttered carrots, smooth mashed potatoes, a decent and moist shrimp, crab and broccoli quiche, and a remarkable grilled hamour in butter sauce, the meal left us feeling decidedly more French – and full.

Consequently, we could only pick at a few of the desserts. But we don't think we missed much. They were all generic buffet items like raspberry crème brulee and frothy tiramisu cups, with a few French inserts, namely light and fluffy profiteroles and eclairs.

Authentically French or not, the efforts of La Veranda are admirable and Abu Dhabi Week can rate the evening as 'tres bonne'.

What? French Night at La Veranda

Where? Sheraton Khalidiya

Cost: AED 160 per person

Why? For your fill of fresh seafood (and butter) in a delicate, romantic setting, at a decent price too

Why not? It's sort of French and a lot less 'haute cuisine', but for a theme night rather than full-on Parisian affair, it scores points

We say: More, s'il vous plait

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