

Up in the clouds



A staple of the Abu Dhabi eating scene for years, Al Fanar has been giving diners a 360 degree view of the capital for almost two decades. But just because they've been around for ages, don't think they're not keeping it fresh.

We went along to try out their new modern contemporary style menu created by Spanish master chef Victor Arijo – which is a little less snobby than the old offering and a whole lot of tasty.

Overlooking the Corniche, we started with the pan fried scallops, exquisite morsels nestled on a bed of shredded green apple, avocado and pine nut dressing. As we gazed in the direction of Reem Island, we found the rich duck foie gras mi-cuit with poached pear, hazelnut praline and toasted brioche on the side a lot more filling – but somehow we managed to put away every last bite.

Turning towards the mainland, we could really see the international influence in the cep mushroom and artichoke stuffed in raviolis fashioned from delicate wonton wraps and served with parmesan emulsion. We were starting to get full but couldn't miss the pan friend sea bass with garlic panacotta and morel mushroom sauce with a view of downtown.

As we looked down the Corniche, the star of the show was the Australian loin of lamb with almond puree and cauliflower couscous, what Chef Victor calls his signature dish. Lean and delicious, it's inspired by his mother's cooking – certainly works for us, as did Victor's three ways chocolate, a decadent trio of sin we enjoyed with the spectacle of the sea back within our sights.

The perfect way to impress a guest or just enjoy the sights and spectacle of the Abu Dhabi Corniche, Al Fanar is always a winner.

**What?** Al Fanar

**Where:** Le Royal Méridien

**Cost:** Reasonable, all things considered

**We say:** They've lasted so long for a reason – with all the swanky new spots, don't forget this old favourite

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***Laura Fulton***