

Love is blind



Bord Eau at the Shangri La in Souk Qaryat Al Beri has long been regarded as one of the finest of the capital's fine dining establishments – in our minds at least – so when we heard that the French restaurant's head chef Alexandre had introduced a new blind tasting menu for the month of May, we just had to go and check it out.

Based around the flavours of Provence, chef Alexandre tries to ensure the ingredients on his new menu are as authentic as possible, sourcing what he needs from southern France – with the exception of local olives, which he says are fantastic.

Taking a seat on the secluded terrace, we have a fantastic outlook over the infinity pool below all the way to the Grand Mosque on the far bank. As the experience suggests, we are given no menus or choices, so we just sit back, relax and drink in the glorious views.

We are eased into the evening with shooters of peppery tomato consommé and thin crisps of bread accompanied by capsicum puree – a tiny taste but absolutely delicious and an indicator of things to come. This is quickly followed by a wonderfully cooked scallop floating on a green pea velouté with lashings of truffle cream.

Next up is our favourite dish of the evening – the most beautiful salad Nicoise we've ever seen. Packed full of flavour to back up the visual punch, perfectly seared tuna is accompanied by quail eggs, asparagus, hard-boiled potato and a tasty tapenade.

As we enjoy the laidback atmosphere, we leisurely sip delicious grape beverages that have been expertly paired to complement the chef's imagination – and what an imagination! A fish dish of red mullet with fennel candied in orange, tomato jelly and pine nuts is presented with a real sense of theatre as our server pours a bouillabaisse over the food and it mixes with a clear consommé. Then, an exquisite piece of lamb is brought out alongside a lovely spicy ratatouille and a thyme jus with just a hint of tonka bean.

Surprisingly we find that we still have room for dessert – and it's a good job as there is not just one but two more dishes still to come. Loosening our belts, we tuck into a crumbly lemon tart and then just about manage to finish off a sinful Tropezienne – a delightful bun filled with berries and topped with gold leaf.

All in all, Bord Eau really is the complete package – stylish setting, super service and sensational sustenance. Its reputation is most definitely well deserved.

Jon Muller

What? Provence Gastronomy Blind Tasting menu

Where? Bord Eau at Shangri La

How much? AED 500 per person throughout May

Why? Exquisite, elaborate and exciting – bon appétit!

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