

Pearls & Caviar at the Shangri-La Hotel has long been a must-visit for lovers of seafood, chic surroundings and great service and with new head chef Cyril Calmet in the kitchen, we headed along to see if it is still a beacon of all things tasteful and tasty

We saunter in to the restaurant hoping we're looking as posh as the delicate, muted décor around us and are immediately put at ease by the friendly staff. We take a seat outside thanks to the brilliant weather and take in the magnificent view across the water to the Grand Mosque. The dim lighting on the terrace adds to the air of sophistication and we can hardly wait to begin our meal.

In what seems like a split second our server re-appears with our first course – a startlingly fresh oyster served chilled in the shell, a subtle dressing enhancing the flavours and demonstrating just why Pearls & Caviar has such a solid reputation for seafood. Our attentive server was more than willing to answer our questions regarding the origin of the produce and also made expert suggestions as to which beverages we should pair with each course.

With our appetites thoroughly whetted we got down to business with our next course – a delicate and perfectly cooked prawn salad followed by the most delectable soup we've ever tried, the seafood cappuccino. This made our seafood-loving little hearts soar and was a definite stand out moment of the meal.

On to the main dishes – an amazing lobster pasta dish incorporating divine lemon foam; and a gorgeous lamb dish that was tender and tasty with fresh, well-cooked vegetables to accompany. The menu is unfettered by pretension but full of flavour, artfully presented in keeping with everything else about this Abu Dhabi mainstay.

With full bellies we decided to risk dessert, and boy are we glad we did! A light tiramisu with coffee ice cream was just the thing to top off a lovely evening, with a richly brewed coffee on the side.

Pearls & Caviar definitely retains its crown as one of the best dining hotspots in the capital, with Chef Cyril most definitely adding an extra facet to a restaurant that was already at the top of its

game.

Sarah Widdup

What? Seafood sophistication

When? Pearls & Caviar at the Shangri-La

Cost: Pricey, but worth taking a crowbar to your wallet

We say: Eat, drink and be fabulous dahhhhling!

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