



We haven't had much time to explore Al Reem island, but the glimpses we've seen are certainly very promising. As we enter Boutik Mall, the gorgeous surroundings, shining surfaces and relatively light foot traffic make us feel right at home.

A few of our favourite shops have already opened up, but we've got food on the brain and head straight to the recently opened Italian eatery, Italianissimo. The atmosphere is both warm and inviting. Decorated in a muted colour palette of rich cocoa browns, caramelly tans and milky creams, we instinctively like the place – and for good reason.

We head for a cosy booth, lined with enormous bookshelves filled with Italian themed books on display. After a quick look at the menu we settle on the highly recommended tartare ditonno, or tuna tartar. The round of raw tuna is exactly the way we like – lightly seasoned and uber fresh. Next we are brought the fritto estivo, fried vegetables and squid wrapped stylishly in a paper

cone. Served with chilli sauce on the side, this simple but absolutely perfect starter is our favourite meal of the night. The light batter on the vegetable strips and coils of squid are crispy, crunchy and finger-licking good!

On to the mains and our partner orders the linguine al ragù di pesce and costacei, homemade noodles tossed with a tomato seafood sauce. We sneak a bite and absolutely love it! The dish is light, not too fishy and the pops of basil brighten up the entire meal. We've ordered the pansotti di agro con salsa alle noci, or homemade raviolis stuffed with vegetables and a walnut sauce. This meal is a creamy, nutty and all-together decadent. Yummy!

As we've asked for smaller portions, we don't feel too guilty having a look at the dessert menu. We split the enormous tiramisu di giampiero, a reinterpretation of a traditional tiramisu served in a large chocolate shell. Topped with rich mascarpone cream and biscuit chunks we are in absolute heaven.

And if you can manage to shop after all that eating, the restaurant has a small retail section with fine Italian clothing, jewellery and more. If you haven't visited Al Reem island then this is the perfect excuse. We know we'll be back!

Sawaiba Khan

What? Italianissimo

Where? Boutik Mall, Al Reem Island

Cost: Antipasti from AED 50 to AED 70, mains from AED 50 to AED 75 and desserts from AED 40

We Say: Posh nosh minus the expensive price tag!

Contact: 056 782 7454