

Reviews

Prego's

Reasonable effort, but not a monumental dining experience

Time Out reviews anonymously and pays for its meals



Prego's is one of the many very respectable restaurants inside the Beach Rotana Hotel. But sadly this particular restaurant looks like it could be serving almost any cuisine. There is little in the way of atmosphere here, at least little for anyone who has a passion for Italian food and its associated culture. And the Italians are very passionate people. Ambience aside, it is nevertheless an extremely comfortable restaurant and the staff were certainly very attentive – it just has no sense of place. Even the music was non-descript.

While we mused over the menu, some complementary rustic loaf was served, with chunks of parmesan cheese and a dish of tapenade and cannelloni bean and garlic paste, which made a pleasing aperitif. To start, we opted for the thinly sliced marinated swordfish with shrimps and avocado salad and the spinach salad with endives, artichokes, goat cheese and vine ripened plum tomatoes.

The swordfish was actually quite delicious and cut so thin that it practically melted in the mouth, and the avocado and sauce complemented it very well. The latter was a refreshing salad, made up mostly of raw baby spinach, lightly sprinkled with chopped endives and trimmed artichokes. For contrast, the tangy taste of goat cheese had been added.

Next came the real test: the main course. We believe the benchmark for any good Italian restaurant is the lasagne. It is not just a mouth-watering blend of mincemeat, herbs, pasta and cheese sauce – it is art. Many have their own interpretation of this divine dish, indeed the recipe changes as one travels through Italy, from the North all the way down to Sicily. Prego's offering was, on the whole, not bad. Not great, but not bad. The flavour was simple, but not outstanding. The

thickness of each layer was reasonable and the béchamel sauce was pleasant. Personally, we prefer more tomato in the ragù alla bolognese and slightly stronger flavours from the marjoram, parsley and thyme.

In addition to the lasagne, we chose the homemade pasta, fresh herbs, cèpe mushrooms, smoked turkey, asparagus and black truffle oil. The combination of cèpe mushrooms and black truffle oil gave a nutty, earthy and meaty flavoured dish. It felt more like a dish you might order on a winter's night.

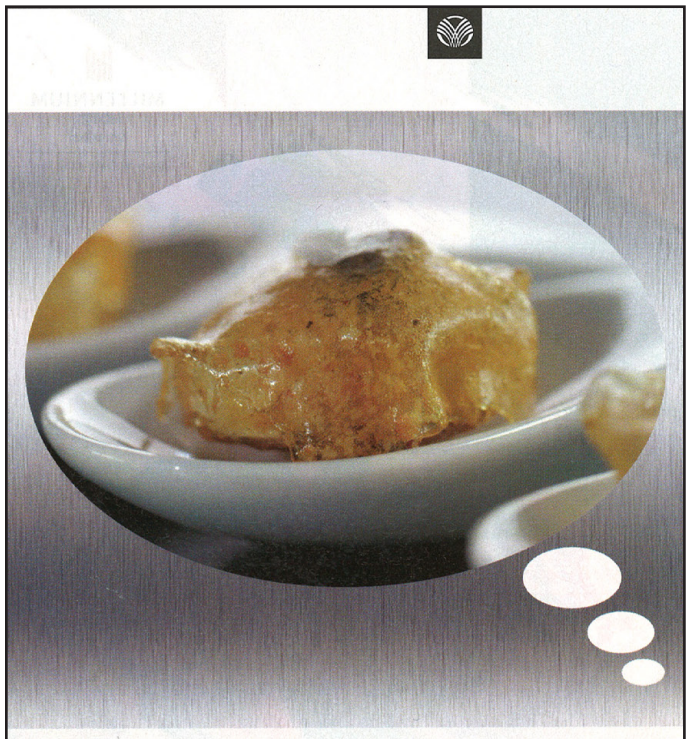
To finish, before the inevitable espresso, we opted for two more so-called signature Italian dishes, the panna cotta with fruit salad and white chocolate sauce, and traditional tiramisu. The former was not as creamy as one would expect, however, the flavouring of vanilla seeds was delicate and not overpowering. It was nicely accompanied with a fruit salad of strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and blue currents.

The latter was a light, frothy textured cream topping that tasted more of egg white than mascarpone or even double cream. There was some evidence of savoiardi biscuits dipped in coffee at the base, but not very much. Tiramisu means 'pick me up' and unfortunately there was nothing in this version that uplifted our spirits.

Open daily noon-11:30pm. Prego's, Beach Rotana, Tourist Club area (02 697 9000).

The bill (for two)

Marinated swordfish	Dhs69
Spinach salad	Dhs53
Lasagne	Dhs69
Pasta with mushrooms	Dhs83
Panna cotta	Dhs36
Tiramisu	Dhs36
Total (excluding service)	Dhs346



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