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When in GALVIN CITY

Check out Windows on Hilton's 28th Floor

By Monica Kapila

Superlatives don't do justice to the elegant, 1930s-inspired, sleek but sensuous eating space.

Walking into Galvin at Windows restaurant was like taking a step back into what I imagine Jay Gatsby's dining room would have looked like if he were alive in 2014. Superlatives don't do justice to the elegant, 1930s-inspired, sleek but sensuous eating space that we spent a couple of hours literally breathing in. This is a genuinely wonderful room that screams attention to detail,

modern luxury but with a gorgeously feminine feel. Be prepared to be dazzled in Galvin city.

The Location

Windows Restaurant and Bar is located on the 28th floor of the Hilton Hotel in London's prestigious and now iconic Park Lane in W1. We walked from the Bateel date shop on Bond Street and it took us a good 20 minutes as the Hilton is at the end of Park Lane that is not near Marble Arch tube, but with the unusually warm weather for London, this was no hardship and it was a good thing as we built up an appetite for our lunch. The lobby of this London Hilton is not nearly as impressive as some Middle Eastern counterparts but don't be put off, go straight to the 28th floor and walk into an elegant world that I haven't as yet encountered in Dubai, at least.

The Food

There are two menus from which to choose your food, a very reasonably priced Menu Fixe for either 26 or 30 pounds (around Dhs 200) that offers an appetizing selection of French cuisine, or you can push the boat out and opt for the Menu Prestige at 70 pounds for three courses (Dhs 420) We opted for the latter and it was worth every penny. I took our waitress' suggestion of the Signature Salmon starter constructed by Michelin-starred Chef Joo Won, then I followed her main course suggestion of the Norwegian halibut fillet which came with a perfect blend of prawns and mussels in a veloute type comforting yet sophisticated sauce. The suggested accompaniments of broccoli with almonds and sesame and the humble mashed potato (pomme puree) were superb, and it isn't

easy to elevate a dish like mashed potato to such a lofty height, but the views and the food were in the stratosphere for us.

Similarly my well travelled and discerning friend thought her lamb was tender and perfectly cooked. She was impressed with the Laguiole knife on our table and felt that that level of attention to detail spoke volumes about the quality of the food and restaurant. Apparently inspired by a shepherd's tool, the knife was originally designed in the nineteenth century in the French village of Laguiole and the brand is now a gold standard as far as serious knives are concerned.

The Service

The Middle East in general sometimes suffers from waiting staff who know little about the food and beverages they are serving to guests, nothing

could be further from the truth at Galvin at Windows. I've concluded that knowledgeable and helpful waiting staff adds to you relishing your meal. I took our waitress's suggestions and couldn't have chosen better myself. Again we took her choice of accompanying beverage options and it is so refreshing that waiting staff is able to recommend based on what they themselves like to eat and drink so we are taking genuine suggestions. The restaurant manager Fred is again an elegant but accessible man who in good French fashion ensured from afar that our every need was met effortlessly and efficiently. It was no surprise then that this restaurant was very busy with a range of people thoroughly enjoying their experience, and I would say many were regular diners.

The Pear in the Tarte Tatin was new to us as previously we had only tasted apple, but the pear

and Tahitian ice cream combination worked brilliantly and I would say was the better of our two desserts, the black pepper ice cream that came with my black figs and ricotta mousse dessert was maybe too sophisticated for my palate?

Galvin at Windows is a hard place to leave and I for one am glad to have discovered this special bit of London. We are always asked about places to go to for an occasion meal and I have no hesitation in recommending this restaurant as fitting the bill perfectly. Don't think, just book beforehand and prepare to savour a lot more than the food. This was easily my best meal of 2014. Go and experience Galvin City in London's Park Lane Hilton. Try lunch if you want fabulously long, fresh views over much of London, or dinner if you prefer your views to sparkle in the night.

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