



Azur restaurant is royally nestled in the gardens of the Al Raha Beach Resort on the outskirts of Abu Dhabi, serving a very focused and precise menu of Mediterranean delicacies – tidy and simple, friendly and cosy, we found a very pleasant and understated elegance in both the food and the service.

I immediately pounced behind the scenes – show me the Chef, and only then I will truly understand!

The exploration of nouvelle cuisine must be based on classic traditions, explains Executive Sous Chef, Mr. Swapnil Dora – a veteran of the five-star hotel food business, and master of his kitchen. This is a man who has

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dedicated his career to preparing sumptuous dishes, to reaching culinary perfection, and the results are a mouth-watering experience for his guests at Azur.

I sensed a fine sense of humor, and yet a very clear direction of the focus he points laser-like at quality assurance when on the job - but at the same time, his passion, his deep love and commitment, for food and to wow food lovers was evident in his spirit: I genuinely liked the man behind the dinner at Azur, I intuitively knew we were in good hands with Chef Dora.



The setting is lovely - you may dine outside "al fresco" in the gardens, next to fountains and a very tranquil swimming pool, or you may choose a bright and airy indoors, tastefully decorated and feeling much larger than it actually is.





The menu was tight in selection, but it covered all angles - I had the good fortune of dining at Azur with my 15-year-old daughter, my wife of the past 24 years, and my mother who has lived in Italy since 1968, so we certainly presented all angles in our different tastes and preferences!

We started with an Insalata Caprese (tomato and mozzarella cheese), Grilled Shrimp Salad, and Seafood Pot Au Feu (fish, shrimps and mussels in a saffron broth) - and right there we acknowledged the secret of success in Mediterranean cuisine: its apex is not so much measured in the power delivered to the palate, but in the quality of the base ingredients.

For instance, the mozzarella cheese for the Caprese salad... I can only dream of finding such succulent, fresh, superbly awesome mozzarella of buffalo milk (that's the traditional mozzarella!) for my own kitchen.

That's a mozzarella quality that only the top chefs are supplied with straight from Italy! So unless I fly it in myself, carrying it lovingly in my daughter's cold school lunchbox on my lap for the entire flight, the only other place I can find that exquisite taste of original mozzarella is at a top restaurant like Azur.

Not too fancy, just a drizzle of balsamic vinegar and olive oil, bed of fresh arugula lettuce, very ripe yet firm tomato, a sprinkling of oregano, and that simple, rustic classic represents the beating heart of excellent Mediterranean food!



And the theme was set for the rest of the evening: absolutely superb quality base ingredients.

We forged forward with milk fed veal tenderloin, pan fried duck breast, grilled hammour with walnut crumble, and pink tuna fillet with caponata.



Unfortunately, I was driving, and so could not accompany my grilled tenderloin with a glass of the bold Shiraz I would otherwise have chosen; however, Mom usefully reports that the Curious Fruit Carignan Grenache, a fruity, light-to-medium bodied red wine, complemented the duck breast wonderfully.



And for dessert and coffee... oh, just go try for yourself!!! Absolutely scrumptious!



(By the way, in case you're wondering - yes, that's my photo!)

Azur, at Al Raha Beach Resort, is located just outside eastern Abu Dhabi city, and is just a 40-minute drive from Dubai.

View [Al Raha Beach Hotel in Abu Dhabi, UAE](#) in a larger map and download the GPS track coordinates [here](#).



Azur restaurant, and the Al Raha Beach Hotel is managed by Danat Hotels & Resorts, a division of the National Corporation for Tourism & Hotels: PO Box 12333, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

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