



Todd English's Olives for Iftar, at Venetian Village in Abu Dhabi

A masterful menu of favorites with twists of genius, Todd English's Olives restaurant presents a delectable iftar set menu during Ramadan - gourmets in the UAE capital had better not miss this!



Take the above lentil soup, for instance - a staple at iftar tables across the Muslim world; in fact, I'd say the middle East's favorite soup by far... yet in 20 years of living and eating in the UAE I have not tasted one as twisted in delightful flavors as Todd English's.

The secret? Who knows - you think he'd tell me!?

There was cinnamon, I believe; nutmeg, I guess; oh, too complex to go deeper...

World famous Chef Todd English is of course the namesake and the mastermind in creating the menu to get Abu Dhabi's fine-dining tongues excited, but the Chef in the restaurant's engine room - its modern open kitchen - is veteran Chef Jaime Mendoza.



He has his hands in all pots, and commandeers the kitchen crew, belting out dish after dish for an extremely high quality dining experience.



The restaurant itself is very elegantly appointed, both indoors and out by the sea channel.









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And within the sparkle and pleasant aesthetic surroundings, and interesting nooks and crannies,

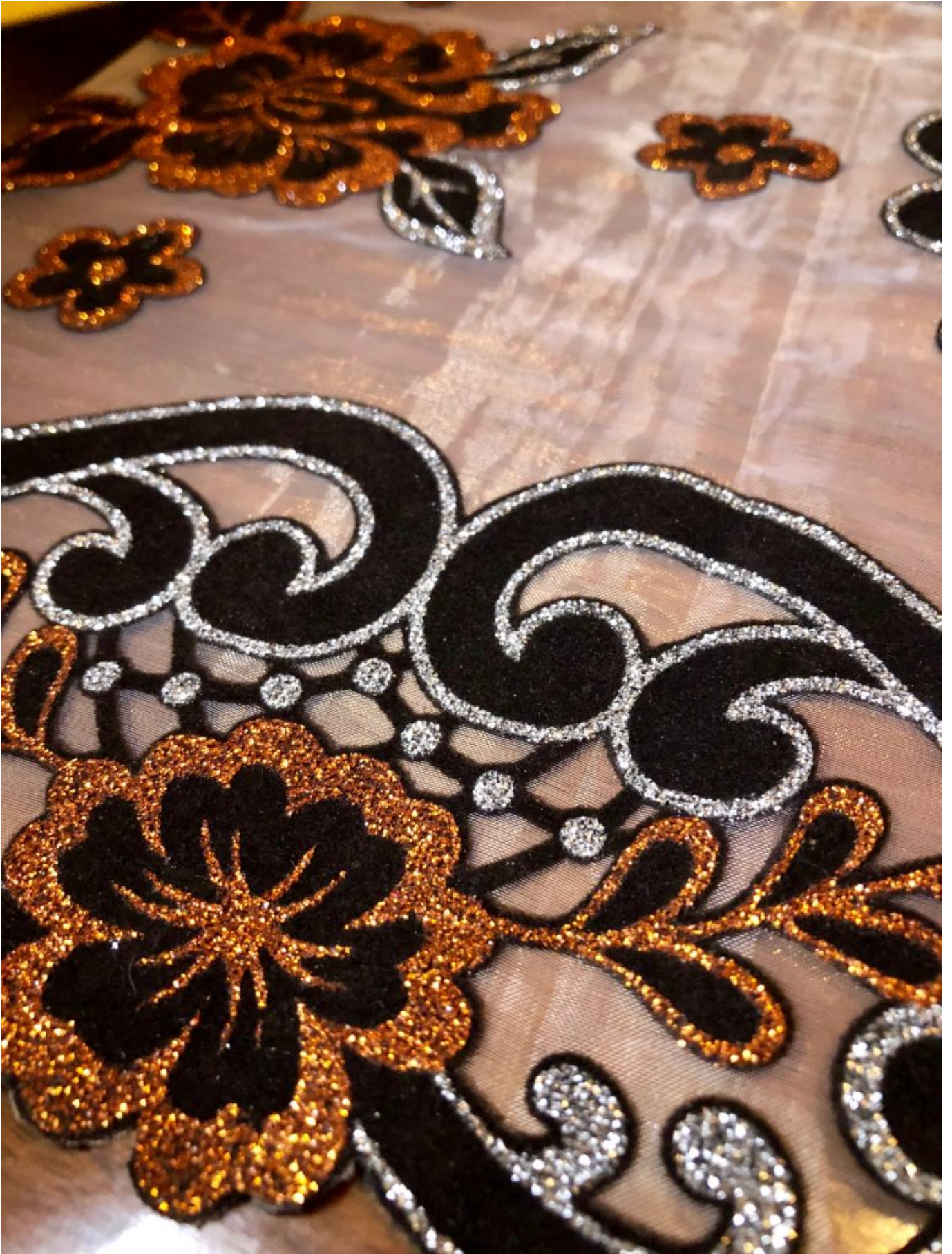




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the elegance in the table setting stands out, as do traditional touches of respect for breaking the fast.









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But let us zoom into the food!

Todd English's Olives brands itself as a Mediterranean restaurant, which is very clever as that gives much leeway in the flexibility that is required to keep innovating, keep experimenting, and keep ahead as a cutting-edge culinary champion - and that's exactly what Todd English does.



The hummus is unique in its tangy flavors, that on the tongue are later undercut with fabulous mature-palate bitters that elevate the humble chickpea and tahina blend to a modern and zesty version.

And the appetizers provide a tasty kick right at the start of the meal, accompanied by both flatbread and fantastic fluffy bread buns as well as Todd English's olive tapenades (and choice olives, of course!)







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You have hardly recovered from the ecstasy brought on by the three starters, that your mains arrive, spectacularly presented at the table.

Top-quality cuts of various meats,





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And see that white sauce? There on the top left, behind the juicy lamb - best garlic mayo ever! Try it and let me know.

But that's not all!





A phenomenal cod, and a more traditional yet succulent chicken kabsa...





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...and a lamb Bolognese flatbread (instantly swapped to a portobello mushroom with truffle oil flatbread the moment our waiter heard one of our party was vegetarian).





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A little maccheroni alla Marinara was tossed in just for fun.



And that leads us to four fabulous desserts, each one again notable inventive creations inspired by instantly-recognizable treats and well-loved by sweet-tooths the world over - yet uniquely twisted into Todd English's style!







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Overall, for a brilliantly different and yet profoundly fine-dining experience, with a selected menu of delicious dishes playfully transformed into genius masterpieces that you will be hard-pressed to sample elsewhere - and I mean on a world scale - Todd English's Olives oddly-named restaurant makes more sense once you've tried it!





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I wonder what other surprises Venetian Village is hiding up its sleeve!





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