

Segreto is 'secret' in Italian, and this exquisite Italian restaurant is hidden within an entire private wing of the Madinat Jumeirah complex offering an outstanding dining experience.

Since we're on the topic of secrets, I'll share three secrets for instantly getting a handle on the authenticity of an Italian restaurant - these are three non-negotiable traits that will have Italians walk out if not met with decor.

Firstly, fresh bread on the table.

Segreto gets a check-mark!



Second, the pasta must be cooked al dente. Another full and happy check for Segreto!



And third, the coffee must be extracted just right – and yes, Segreto passes all three tests with flying colors... and now I can proceed to tell you more about the restaurant.





Segreto at Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai

The entrance is reached up and through the rooftop terrace, after passing through the beautiful Arabian-style souq!







And the interior of Segreto is absolutely gorgeous!

The main dining area downstairs is very cleverly arranged to enjoy the natural light and views over the canal waterways.







A hallway through the garden leads to yet another corner, and another dining area – on the terrace.



Besides the elegant premises, Segreto prides itself on its silver service, and truly the team was impeccable in its delivery of a fine-dining experience - a warm welcome, and a friendly and talented young Chef at the top of his game made sure our experience was truly exceptional.



Keep an eye on this young man, Chef Andrea Brugnetti, because I get the feeling he is going places in a grand way – of all the kitchen experts I meet, Andrea demonstrated his culinary training on the plate, without too many words – and that’s a sign of a true professional!

The set three-course menu is simplicity itself and it feels too modest for the very elegant premises, although there are options for everyone – and of course there is the extensive a la carte menu, where Segreto can reach full potential.





The two starters above represent a simple yet profoundly cultural reliance on expert cooking and the use of fresh virgin olive oil at the highest quality, as well as a flair of special with the clever addition of magical basil puffs of flavor!



For the mains, the chicken was masterfully carved and marinated, very tasty and delicious, and a delight on the palate. The bird was spatchcocked and deboned, both a sign of years of training at culinary school, and the marination with fine herbs was delivered with thorough excellence, and I found the aromatics even under the skin, where they can impart the most flavor!

It was a pleasure to see that the chicken was prepared with expertise and an attention to detail of top-most quality.



The pasta dish we tried was a spaghetti with olive oil, garlic, chili pepper, and prawns – and it was superb.

In a dish like this, in which the flavors are simple and the sauce minimal, it is where the *al dente* must be sharp and felt at each bite, to give the proper texture. And Segreto's Chef dropped the spaghetti from the water in good time.

The last course, dessert, presented several choices, all enticing, and elegant.



And again a clever and effective use of handmade balls of flavor, in this case playing the chocolate with notes of salt and olive oil, against the crunchy brioche layers – spectacular on the eye and on the palate.



Overall, the set menu was a light and lovely serenade of Italian dishes, like a business lunch but with flair, and I think it should be best considered in conjunction with the excellent a la carte menu, which brings into play the fine-dining aspect of the restaurant, including fresh live lobster, lamb rump, tenderloin, several fish options, as well as a wide selections of wines and champagnes.

In other words, the lunch menu is set, and it's excellent as it is, but it's not a limit that you have to stay within - I think that if you give Chef Andrea a chance to run, he will take you on a culinary journey unique in Dubai...







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