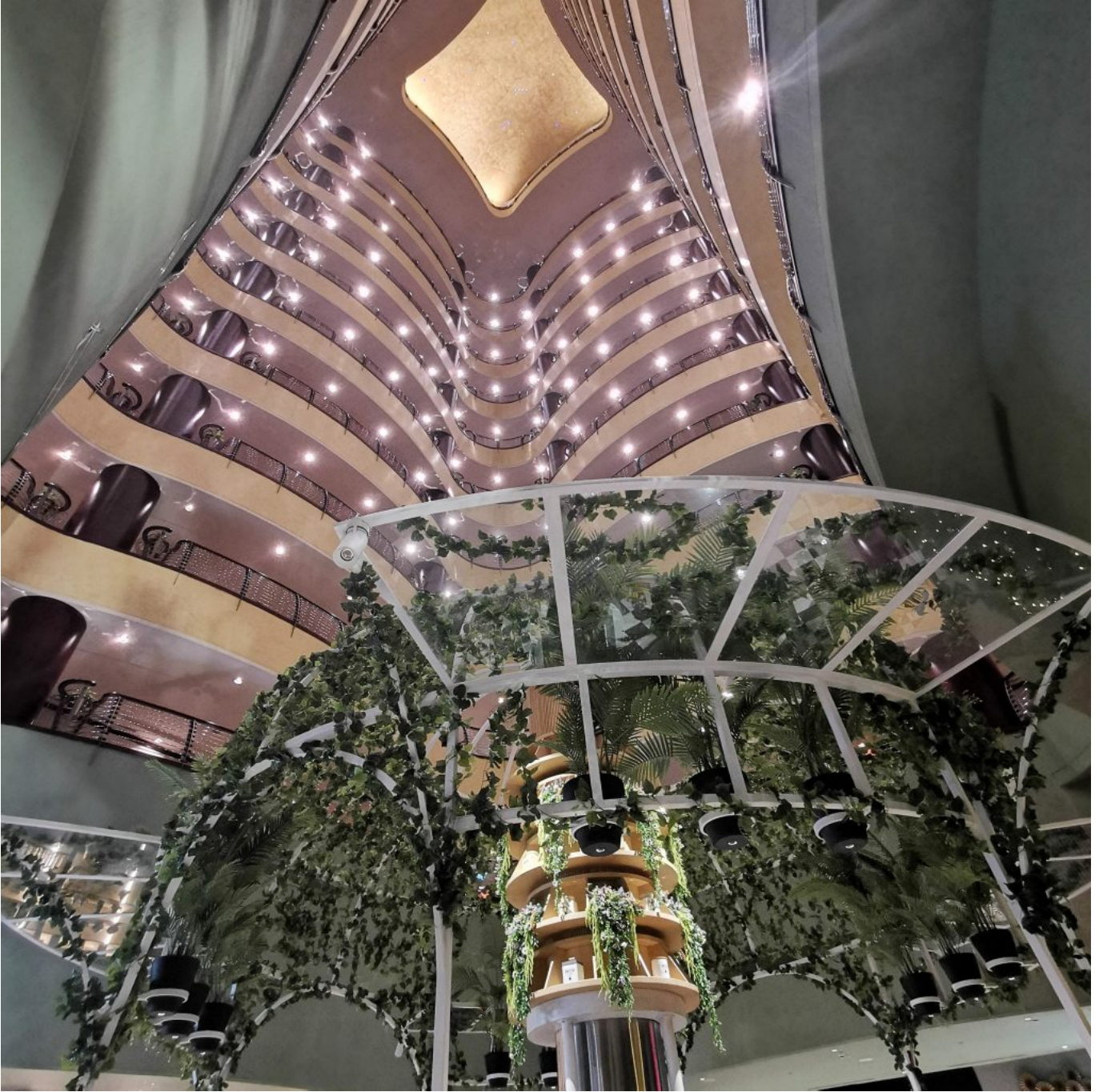


Dining at Benjarong Thai restaurant at the Dusit Thani Dubai is always a special occasion, but none ever better than the festive season - it may be Christmas every day at Benjarong, but somehow they still manage to make real Christmas and New Year's Eve extra special.

Directly across the road from the Burj Khalifa...



and inside here...



you find the elegant re-designed Benjarong.







And while the ambiance has taken on a magical mood, with hypnotic lighting and classy decor; the same mystical approach to total delight is still applied in the kitchens - effortlessly one of the best restaurants in Dubai.

Your drinks





and your appetizers



And your evening is off to a roaring start!

Below, the shrimp version, and equally delicious, yet presenting entirely a different set of flavors, the fish *tod man pla* - morsels that explode with yumminess in your mouth!



A more potent pomelo salad with shrimp, basked with the smokiness of roasted chili and then contrasted by the fresh sharp pomelo, in this version even rare in Thailand, and probably the creation of Benjarong's Chef.



And a classic - everyone's favorite Thai chicken satay, marinated in turmeric and served with a fabulous peanut-based sauce.



The mains are equally exquisite, and the care and attention to detail is obvious with each dish that arrives to the table - Benjarong is the flagship restaurant of the Dusit Thanis of the world, and in Dubai they exceed expectations.



Authentic, and sporting delicate ingredients imported specifically, Benjarong dishes cradle a balance between traditional Thai cuisine and modern innovations and interpretations worthy of a Master Chef's imagination.

It is the little yet powerful trade secrets that elevate a delicious dish to a level worthy of a top professional - and that is the difference between the cuisine prepared at Benjarong and other Thai restaurants in UAE. It's one thing to properly follow a Thai recipe, and a completely different thing to add masterful touches of gastronomic ecstasy.

For instance, observe the spuma in the photo below, an integral part of the tasting sensation on the palate, and you realize that you are dining at the most sophisticated level.



However, the dish that most caught my fancy, heralding from the north of Thailand, once its own kingdom, Lanna - was the Khao Soi, a unique coconut soup with noodles from Chiang Mai, and also rarely served outside of its native region, and not even the first to come to mind as representing Thai food - superbly prepared at Benjarong, and fit for royalty.



Desserts blew me away, not only with their sheer deliciousness, but also by the creative adaptation, or, let's say, evolution of what are ubiquitous sweets - somehow rendered extra-special at Benjarong.

In fact, the Thai mango with Sticky Rice, which I'm sure any Thai restaurant would not dare exclude from their dessert menu - at Benjarong, was a masterpiece.



Again, most home cooks can steam some sticky rice, slather on sweet coconut sauce, and slice a ripe mango - and it's delicious - but we are in another universe of fine-dining when the mango is the famously sweet variety, the rice is infused with pandan leaves during steaming, then topped with very fine egg-yolk sweet noodles, side-slapped with a luscious ball of rich coconut ice-cream, poised on a drizzle of raspberry vanilla cream, and accompanied by a few crunchy roasted peanuts... and that is heavenly!

However, despite the mango sticky rice firmly vying for top Thai dessert ever tried in my life, incredibly, the Coconut Crème Brûlée, served in its own half-coconut, captured my favor.



Just when you thought the meal couldn't get any better.

In fact, let me add another photo, just because this little beauty deserves it!



Overall, a dinner of majestic proportions - if you aren't familiar with Thai cuisine, it will serve as an inimitable introduction starting from the very elite of the culinary tradition; and if you are a connoisseur of Thai food, perhaps having visited Thailand several times, then be prepared for sophistication and an extremely enchanting dining experience.

After all, Benjarong was designed to serve as the Thai culinary ambassador of the Dusit Thani overseas, and representing not only the foods but also the culture - and Benjarong at the Dusit Thani Dubai does that with excellence and a marvelous team dedicated to this purpose - fantastic in all regards.



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