



Weekend Dining at Jade restaurant and shisha, Etihad Plaza in Abu Dhabi

It used to be that to enjoy fine-dining food in Abu Dhabi, the international five-star hotels were your best choice - but the culinary landscape in the UAE's capital city has changed; in fact, the cultural scene has exploded with enhanced options, including the gastronomical arts.

This fact was clearly evident upon visiting Jade, a restaurant in Etihad Plaza, serving among other things, fancy and traditional shisha pipes.

The quality of the food was astonishing!

I could hardly believe my taste buds, and I kept looking around to see if I was on some kind of candid camera or TikTok prank!!!

Prepare to be shocked while you check this out...





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Pan-seared foie gras...

And not even any normal kind of foie gras, where you might expect the good folk in the kitchen to open a jar and spread it thinly on some toast - no, incredibly, the professional Chef and kitchen crew at Jade operate at fine-dining standards, starting the food preparation from scratch, with the finest ingredients.

And the plate arrangement and accompaniments were exceptional!



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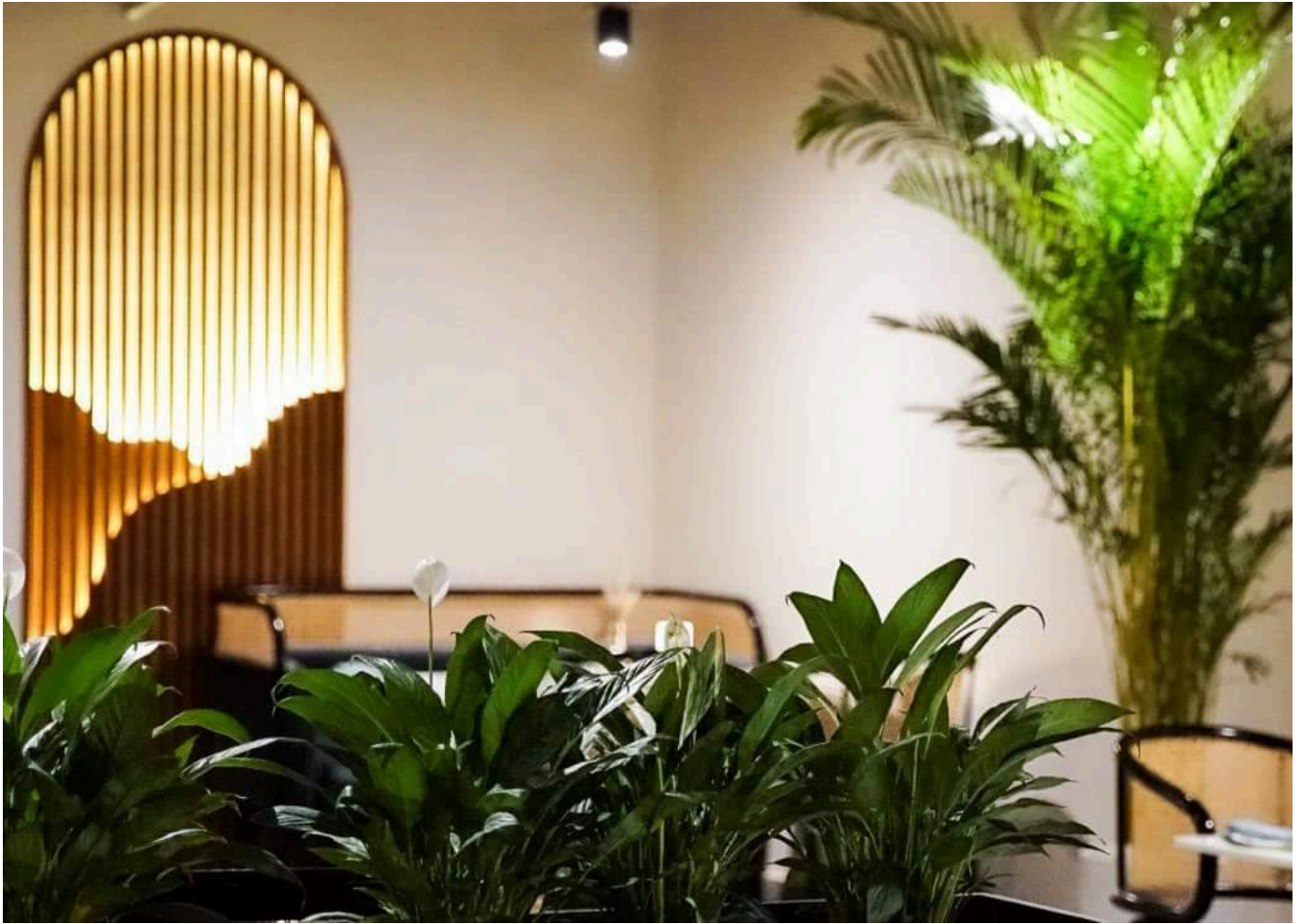
I really could not believe my eyes, and even just a few years ago I would have laughed at the idea of sampling top-dining foie gras at a shisha shop!

To be fair, Jade is not just any old shisha shop - it is a classy restaurant, with clearly divided areas for smoking and non-smoking, including a superb outdoor area.

Think of an elegant restaurant with a large and functional cigar lounge: only it is fine shisha instead of rolled tobacco leaves.







Having somewhat recovered from the surprise, the supremely delicious dishes kept arriving!



The special lunch menu included a soup, starter, and main course - and every serving was special indeed!

If possible, ask for the hickory-smoke infused “pea and bits” soup, and be amazed...



And inquire as to the origin of the ingredients, because each dish is sourced with precision - many of them even proudly displaying the Emirati flag.

As you learn more about the restaurant operations - because I was curious! - you will find that the secret to Jade’s wondrous cuisine is attention to detail - nothing is left to chance, there are no short cuts.

It’s certainly worth adding Jade to your speed dial for when elegant and sophisticated catering is required.

For instance, Jade operates its own full bakery, in order to prepare the best and freshest breads and pastries, as well as desserts!

Below, served at the table upon our arrival, home-baked potato foccacia bread, with saffron-infused butter, offered with a delicious coriander-mint dipping sauce as well as a savoury black olive tapanade...

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By now we were expecting the moon and the stars - and Jade humbly delivered above expectations with a unique interpretation of the beloved Shish Taouq as a starter!





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Consider that these dishes were photographed on location as they were served to the table - as weekenduae always does - so there's no fancy arrangements or embellishments over the regular guest.

And remember these selections are from the special daily menu - basically, the Chef having fun and proposing some bespoke dishes on top of the regular and fully elaborate menu!





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For entrées, a superbly prepared sea bass fillet on carrot purée with asparagus and a sprinkling of magical seasoning, above; and below, a world-class rendition of a shrimp risotto, rice perfectly cooked (slightly al dente, as Italians like it), wonderfully creamy and cheesy, but without overpowering the delicate seafood, and with a touch of lemon to cut the flavors - one would expect a dish of this caliber in the best restaurants in Milano (where saffron infused rice is traditionally prepared in *risotto alla milanese*).





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Having heard that desserts and pastries are also prepared in-house, we braced ourselves for the finale - and Jade did not disappoint!





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The perfect ending to a fantastic dining experience - where a casual restaurant confidently operates in fine-dining territory, humbly just doing their thing, and aiming to delight and surprise their honored guests.

I suppose the lesson here is that sincere dedication to perfection, accompanied by the required good will and hard work behind the scenes, destroys any limits - and in a sense, this is the real spirit of Abu Dhabi, where even the impossible becomes possible.

Five-star hotel restaurants, please take warning - restaurants like Jade are making their dreams come true!





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And so Jade delivers at a level of culinary refinement that is surprising and far above expectations - I can only feel happy but envious of their fortunate clientele, who dine like kings and queens, in Jade's comfortable dining halls at Etihad Plaza, Khalifa City, in Abu Dhabi.

Luckily, I have a car and can be there in a few minutes' drive!

