Food Review: Bontá Italian Restaurant & Bar at UE Square

July 2, 2010

by Taina Teravainen

Italian Restaurant and Bar Bontá is part of the collection of chic wine and dine places in the River Valley area. The restaurant recently revealed a new look, complete with a new bar area and a second private dining room, in celebration of its 3rd successful year at UE Square. Bontá took a departure from its original orange colour scheme and opted instead for a deep elegant maroon that adds to the cosy, relaxed ambience created by the dimmed lighting.

With a name to live up to (Bontá means delicacy in Italian), executive chef and part owner Luca Pezzera's 10 new menu offerings are created with the goal of capturing the mood and flavours of the Italian region that they originate from.

Executive chef and part owner of Bonta, Luca Pezzera.

Even before the appetisers were served, I was presented with complimentary freshly baked bread topped with walnuts and stuffed with a generous amount of feta, all sitting pretty in a cup. There was no other way to eat the bread than with my hands, which I delighted in, as it sort of expelled the self-imposed 'proper' table etiquette I usually adopt at restaurants with wait staff on hand to change your cutlery and napkin after every course.

I started off with a selection of traditional Italian cold cuts ($24), which were intensely flavourful, and ranged from parma ham, to Bresaola, an air-dried and salted beef, and salame felino, or pork salami, all cured by Chef Luca Pezzera himself.

(Left)

Homemade pappardelle with wild boar ragout and shaved parmesan cheese,
and (right) sauteed Sardinian black mussel.

Pasta is practically synonymous with Italian cuisine and the two that I sampled were definitely the highlights of my meal. The Homemade Black Ink Tagliolini ($26) was covered with fresh crabmeat and benefited from the hint of spice its basil tomato sauce adds. The Pappardelle With Wild Boar Ragout and Shaved Parmesan ($26), a dish which hails from Tuscany, had a really nice texture.

A classic dish from Veneto, the Seabream Fillet With Cartoccio ($36), is cooked together with mussels, clams, tomato capers and basil, all encased in a paper bag, allowing the rich flavours to permeate throughout the dish. I'm not a huge fan of seafood however, which left me more room for the Black Angus Short Ribs ($38), which were served with rosemary parmesan potato and peppercorn sauce. I'm more of a simple meat and potatoes kind of girl.

(Left) Black currant cheese cake and (right) crispy apple
crumble with pistachio ice cream and cinnamon emulsion.

To end such a rich meal, I needed something to perk me up – the Double Espresso Crème Brulee ($12), which was paired surprisingly well with rock melon, did the job well.

I suggest that diners visit Bontá with at least a dining companion or two, so as to be able to sample a pasta, a seafood and a meat dish without entering a food coma, albeit a heavenly one.

Recommendations:
Homemade black ink tagliolini with jumbo crabmeat in spicy basil tomato sauce ($28)
Pappardelle with wild boar ragout and shaved Parmesan cheese ($26)
Black Angus Short Rib served with rosemary parmesan potato and peppercorn sauce ($38)
Crispy apple crumble with pistachio ice cream and cinnamon emulsion ($12)
Double Espresso Crème Brulee ($12)

Bontá Italian Restaurant & Bar
#01-61, UE Square River Wing
6333 8875
Hours: 12 – 2.30pm (Lunch)
6.30 -11pm (Dinner)