

The Alphabet Review

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Tableau at the Loden

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Tableau at the Loden



This was not what I was expecting from a bar-slash-bistro belonging to Vancouver's boutique Loden Hotel in swishy Coal Harbour. Based on my experiences with fancy hotel restaurants, I was anticipating overpriced but enjoyable dishes composed of crowd-pleasing ingredients such as sirloin, linguini, and chicken breast. Tableau does not resemble the hotel restaurant archetype in my mind, and the menu was refreshingly diverse. As with many of the meals I have out, I dined at Tableau with a group of friends, and this allowed me to see and sample the majority of the menu. Due to the fact that Executive Chef Marc-Andre Choquette is from Quebec and worked with Rob Feenie at Lumiere, the menu offers French classics such as onion soup and duck confit but also contains uncommon dishes such as pork garganelli and veal cheeks. I was very happy with the items I selected.

I had the rabbit terrine to start, which was meaty and piquant. Most terrines are forcemeat loaves formed from liver, and I am not the biggest fan of the textures created through processed organs. This terrine was not at all gelatinous, and the delicate flavour of the rabbit was accented with shallot and pepper. I really enjoy rabbit, and whenever I eat it I wonder why it isn't more common. Farmers spend thousands of dollars and use hundreds of acres to raise pigs and cattle while rabbits consume very little, don't require much space, and reproduce like...rabbits! I reluctantly ordered the duck l'orange as my main (it was super tough for me to resist the confit, but I had never tried l'orange) and was impressed with the way in which the duck was cooked. It was braised to crisp the skin, and then finished in the oven to medium rare. The shredded, translucent red cabbage that came as a side had been braised in the duck fat generated from the breast and was the perfect accompaniment.

Other standouts from the table included the moules frites and the beef bourguignon, which was the special for that night. Like Vancouver's La Brasserie, Tableau offers a set special for every day of the week, and most of them are \$20. I highly recommend Tableau, and I'd like to go back for the lamb shank and risotto, which is the special every Thursday. Any takers?

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