

The Taste Test

Town

10/F, Cubus, 1 Hoi Ping Road
Causeway Bay
2568 8708 | townrestauranthk.com

An exciting new addition to Causeway Bay's dining scene, Town occupies the same space as the now-defunct Alba, and is headed up by the same chef – Bryan Nagao, the original creative mind behind the Peninsula's now-iconic Felix. Town opts for a broadly Modern European menu with a few distinctly Asian accents, along with the odd little homage to Chef Nagao's Hawaiian heritage.

The light and airy dining space – remodelled with blonde wood, concrete and steel into streamlined urban chic from its plusher Alba incarnation – offers a comfortable, unpretentious setting, enabling the food to take centre stage.

We started with a ceviche of *sanma* (also known as Pacific saury), prawn and scallop, the fresh textures well accompanied by pickled cucumber and a delicious miso dressing. Next came a serving of gorgeously seasoned and extremely moreish tempura shrimp, with a hint of chilli and mustard in the crisp and lightweight batter offering a nice counterpoint to the prawns' sweetness. Our final starter was an absolutely beautiful red prawn carpaccio, whose visual impact was matched by subtle and indulgent flavours courtesy of the wafer-thin seafood and accompanying black truffle caviar.

A pair of interesting dishes followed; first, Hawaiian heart-of-palm salad. Light and reminiscent of artichoke in texture, the heart of palm is served with ripe figs and crisp endive to add refreshing bitterness. It was followed by black udon with Spanish prawn, scallop and shiso gremolata. This somewhat intimidating-looking dish



Heart-of-palm salad



Strawberry chocolate cake with Yakult ice cream

proved to be an absolutely delicious umami-bomb, and the chewiness of the udon complemented the fresh seafood flavours to a tee.

Onto the mains, and my dining partner and I were both very keen to try the guinea fowl roulade, whose gamey flavour turned out to be mild enough not to overpower the sweeter pistachio and quince notes that accompanied the dish, even if the added fennel wasn't really to my taste.

We also went for the ocean trout, cooked and served in "fata" – a type of cooking paper that resembles cellophane, making for an interesting-looking presentation, and one that locks in all of the fish's natural flavours. The fish was served with more of the heart of palm, *gobo* (burdock root), and some wonderfully earthy *matsutake* mushrooms. We were intrigued by the truffle shaver that was placed on our table with this dish; it turned out to be for slicing the *katsuobushi* – a rock-hard, dried and

fermented variety of tuna that added an extra hint of the sea to the delicate trout.

My favourite part of any meal is dessert, and while I had thoroughly enjoyed the savoury dishes, I was looking forward to sampling some sweets. The mascarpone with little

“One intimidating-looking dish proved to be a delicious umami-bomb”

cubes of tart raspberry gel and granola was creamy and lightweight, though I felt that it might have been more at home on a breakfast buffet. Preferring more of an overt sugar rush, I focused instead on the yuzu soufflé, which packed a refreshingly citrusy punch with sweetness from the

crisp crystallised sugar on the top taking the edge off the sharper fruit flavour. The standout dessert was, for me, the 64 percent chocolate tart, served with 72 percent chocolate sorbet. The bitterness of the cocoa flavours prevented this dish from being cloying, while the crisp and buttery pastry paired well with the smooth chocolate filling to provide an indulgent end to an already excellent meal.

Town brings an innovative dining experience to Causeway Bay, and the introduction of Japanese flavours in these Modern European dishes is a welcome and creative twist. Most items on the menu lend themselves to sharing, making this an ideal date-night venue.

Kate Farr

MUST-TRY DISH:

House-made black udon with Spanish prawn, scallop and shiso gremolata