

A hot spot for fusion on the Square



Hot – Asia Meets Europe

Hotel Jalta, Wenceslas Square 45
Prague 1 – New Town

Open daily 6:30 a.m.–2 a.m.
All major credit cards accepted
222 247 240
www.hotrestaurant.cz

Hot is a sure bet for a delicious meal, pleasant and fast service, and a relaxing atmosphere. Situated in Hotel Jalta in the middle of Wenceslas Square, the restaurant actually provides some quiet cozy corners to escape from the city's noise and bustle.

We went for lunch, making reservations in advance to be sure to have a table. Hot is ideal for either a quick coffee or a proper lunch or dinner, when one wants to treat a business partner or a friend. The front of the restaurant is designed more like a café where people tend to have just a small snack with a cup of tea or coffee.

Strangely, that part of the restaurant was packed at lunchtime, while the back of the room, which looks much more like a restaurant with large tables laid with white linen, was half empty. So the reservation was a bit unnecessary as we opted for the back of the restaurant.

We welcomed the freedom to choose a table as well as the opportunity to have an undisturbed conversation away from the busy front room.

evaluation

Commendable: Helpful service, high-quality food
Needs improvement: Nothing

Decorated mostly in white with shades of warm red, the interior feels very light and positive. Dim lights and chill-out music gave the back room the feeling that one can breathe and enjoy an undisturbed respite.

The service was perfect. The staff managed to attend to us without making their presence too disruptive and without interrupting our fairly lively conversation.

For starters, we chose cream of spinach soup with smoked salmon and egg (Kč 175) and carpaccio with basil-flavored oil, Parmigiano reggiano and rocket (Kč 265), more commonly known as arugula in local markets. Both dishes were fresh, tasty and served in generous portions. To accompany the starters the waitress offered a selection of different types of bread.

For the main course we ordered salmon grilled with a crust of basil and black horseradish (Kč 365), a fusion of Asian and European cuisines, and halibut grilled with sea salt and served with a red wine sauce (Kč 385). But instead of the red wine sauce my guest opted for the black horseradish to go with his halibut. The waitress brought both meals shortly after the starters. Both were well-prepared and tasty.

We ordered a glass of Italian Canaleto pinot grigio Garganega del Veneto (Kč 225 per glass), which was dry and smooth. For dessert, we tried cheesecake with berries and chocolate (Kč 195) and an espresso (Kč 65). The cheesecake portion looked quite small but was so rich and filling we could hardly finish it.

We tried hard, but we just couldn't find anything to criticize Hot for. The food was delicious, the service friendly and helpful, the atmosphere relaxing and the prices on par with the quality. My guest, who has visited the owner's other restaurants, ranked Hot's service as the best.

owner's insight

Tommy Sjöö, 52, moved here from Sweden 15 years ago. With the experience of running 16 restaurants in Sweden, Spain and the Czech Republic,



he knows how to please gourmets. "If I like the place it's a good place," he said. Apart from Hot, Sjöö's **Bacchus Group** also owns Pravda and Barock on Prague's upscale Pařížská Street, and Mercedes Forum in Prague 4. Sjöö says he first visited here during communism and is very keen to see the country grow. "I love [this] country – it provides a fantastic opportunity to develop," he said. Sjöö sold all his restaurants abroad and is fully dedicated to his Czech venture. As for future plans, he's planning something "exciting" on the restaurant scene in the next couple of years but wouldn't specify.

the reviewer

Marek Dospiva, 36, is a partner at private equity company **Penta Investments**.



Penta has made headlines this year with several major deals involving the government: the expropriation of land it owns adjacent to Ruzyně Airport and the privatizations of **Severočeské doly** coal mines and **Vítkovice Steel**. Penta bid for both and, despite offering the highest price, was rejected. Penta is now challenging one of the tenders with the European Commission. "Neither privatization is a done deal for the state," Dospiva warned. His goal is to make the group the strongest private equity investor in Central Europe. But he's also looking further west and east. Being fluent in Chinese, Russian and English, Dospiva could help Penta move farther afield. When he's not working on Penta's expansion plans, Dospiva enjoys sports ranging from water skiing and swimming to participating in triathlons.