

The High Points at Everest!

December 26, 2015



What do you get when you combine exquisite food, thoughtful art and French culture together? You answer is a restaurant named Everest.

I was recently invited for seafood tasting of their fall menu, and had the pleasure of dining there.

From the moment you walk in, you are reminded that this is Chef Joho's vision; with his monogrammed initials and awards placed throughout - Everest is every bit his baby. The artist in me reeled with excitement to find Ivo Soldini sculptures gracing each table and stunning art on the walls that created the most visually appealing atmosphere.

We were seated at what I'd like to believe was the best seat in the house, directly facing the Sears tower & overlooking the beautiful western city sights. But honestly, the view is breathtaking no matter where you sit in this shiny & elegant dining room, on 40th floor of the Chicago Stock Exchange building.

After being greeted by extremely friendly and attentive staff, I was informed that they were going to keep our meal courses a surprise, as Chef had created a special menu for our tasting. I thought that was perfect, since I was already prepared to be blown away.

We had a phenomenal start with variety of amuse-bouches, which included a creamy parsnip puree garnished with a sunchoke chip, peekytoe crab with cauliflower puree, and a delicious artichoke potage that I ate with a fluffy gougere.

The wine list at Everest is vast. Renowned sommelier Jennifer Schmitt personally & meticulously picked out our wine pairings for each course. Her knowledge and passion for matching our food with the right wine, not only made our experience more enjoyable, but also kept it organized. The appetizers came with a light-bodied Klipfel Cremant d'Alsace Rose, which gave our already growing appetite a subtle kick.

The first course was a house-made Smoked Salmon Naturel in an herbed Alsace sauce & a fleischnagga on the side. I had been particularly excited to get a taste of the Alsatian influence in Chef's cooking, which this dish provided. Fleishnagga, an Alsatian specialty, which is typically a meat stuffing rolled in fresh egg pasta (made meatless for me of course), provided the perfect savory bite to go with the salmon. The salmon itself was an amazing balance of the salt and smoke with its texture as silky smooth as you'd want your fish to be. By this point, Everest had far exceeded my expectations, and we were only getting started.

As I was relishing every moment of this lavish dinner experience, out came the dish of the night- the Roasted Maine Lobster in Alsace Gewurztraminer and a ginger butter sauce. I was delighted to try this signature dish that Chef had carefully created years ago. The dish is meant to showcase the Gewurztraminer wine, which it does with full justice. The dish is comprised of tender miniature pieces of fresh lobster cradled in a sweet sauce with hints of ginger that were nicely enhanced by the floral & fruity notes of the Chateau d'Orschwihr Riesling we drank with it. This may be the best thing I have ever eaten. I know it's a risky testimony coming from a food blogger, but it would be unfair to undermine the brilliance of this dish. Everything from the lobster meat to the fragrant Gerwurtzminer, adding its delicate sweetness, made it unforgettable. I hope they never take this off the menu.

Our third course was a loin of sturgeon with a mitonee of Michigan squash in a Pinot Noir jus. If there's anything I took away from my experience at Everest, it is how much a good wine can augment the existing flavors of food, whether consumed or used in cooking. The meaty texture of the sturgeon followed nicely after the flaky salmon and tender lobster. The sturgeon was mildly seasoned with the quality of the fish doing most of the talking. The bold flavors of the jus coupled with the accompanying Emile Beyer Pinot Noir L'Hostellerie enhanced this spectacular dish.

What an extraordinary experience! Every bite reminded me of the genius of Chef Joho, who stays true to his style and original vision. And despite the wonderful food, I must admit that the highlight of my night was an opportunity to meet Chef Joho and exchange pleasantries in French.

I will be thinking about this tasting for quite awhile! I hope you get a chance to experience Everest for yourself, soon.



Everest

Neighborhood: Loop

Address: 440 S. LaSalle, Chicago, IL 60605

Phone: (312) 663-8920

Website: <http://www.everestrestaurant.com>

Hours: Sun –Mon - Closed, Tues –Fri –5:30PM -9:00PM, Sat –5:30PM– 10:00PM

Price: \$120- \$150