

# a moveable feast



**H**ave you ever been going out for dinner with family or friends and you could not come to a consensus on what or where to eat? The JW Marriott at Mirage City has come up with an excellent solution to satisfy everybody and eat at several restaurants, a moveable feast so to speak.

The JW Marriott, which has 11 food and beverage outlets offering a wide variety of international cuisines has come up with a plan to allow restaurant goers to have a different course at various restaurants. *he* magazine was privileged to be given the opportunity for a test run. Assistant Director of Food and Beverage Stephan Krause mapped out the trip for us and accompanied us to the first stop.

We started with *mezza* at Ahlein, the excellent Lebanese restaurant on the property. Classic and innovative dishes were combined in a presentation that made the table groan with the weight and the eyes boggle. Everything

from a snappy *taboula* to *mana'oech* to a superb creation of cold poached fish with *tahina* were tasted with delight. Then, after enough *mezza* to constitute a full meal, we were escorted to the second stop on our culinary journey, Cucina for the traditional Italian *secondi* course or pastas and risottos. An excellent tasting platter of five dishes arrived accompanied by a board of various pizzas. Kawther Saad, the senior restaurant manager, and her excellent staff went as far as to serenade us with an Italian song as we worked our way through too much of the delightful creations of the chefs.

The next stop, this time for the main course, was at the Mirage Café where the weekend promotion of an Indian buffet was on offer. Letting the belt out a notch or two we attacked a dazzling array of the best Southeast Asia has to offer. A variety of sumptuous curries and their accompanying side dishes made short work of the additional expansion room

belt loosening had provided.

From thence we waddled to JW's Steakhouse for dessert. There, the selection of small but exquisite desserts and tea and coffee rounded off an outstanding meal. Hany Samir, the Marriott's director of restaurants, had accompanied us throughout the odyssey and sat with us at JW's for a debriefing on our movable feast. The only complaint that we had come up with was that we had come equipped with too little capacity for all that wonderful food.

At every venue the service was spot on. The serving staff and chefs were knowledgeable and highly skilled. There was nothing to fault. The idea of moving from venue to venue for each course in a meal is a great one but we have one suggestion to those who will follow in our footsteps: If you start with the *mezza*, *shwia*, *shwia* is the rule. Don't overdose on the *humus*, there is a lot of really good food ahead of you.



# JW'S STEAKHOUSE

## STEAK & SENSIBILITY

A favourite with Cairo's cognoscenti, *JW's Steakhouse* offers much more than melt-in-your-mouth steak. It's a haven of elegance and sophistication far from the maddening crowds.

**L**ocated along the outskirts of Cairo, off the Ring Road in Mirage City, lies a rustic retreat for the most discriminating of palates. Getting to the *JW's Steakhouse* might take a little extra time but it's well worth the journey. One might even find that by adventuring beyond the limits of Cairo, it's easier to relax; especially if you are visiting the luxurious setting of the JW Marriott.

Once we broke free from the frenzied city traffic, it was a relief to find ourselves surrounded by open desert and a night sky unmarred by light pollution. As the towering buildings of the city grew distant in the rear-view mirror, so did my daily stresses. Soon enough my mouth began to water with the anticipation of trying Cairo's best-rated steak restaurant; but nothing could have prepared me for the stately furnishings and truly sumptuous cuisine of *JW's Steakhouse*.

Upon entering the restaurant, I was immediately whisked away to a lost era inhabited by distinguished cattle ranchers and rugged yet refined cowboys. This is not a standard American themed steakhouse littered with tacky, stereotypical memorabilia of cowboy movies. *JW's Steakhouse* perfectly combines sophistication and elegance with the timeless charm of the American Old West. At the door you are greeted by a fully-stocked bar and towards the back is an open-style kitchen which enables patrons to view their food in preparation. Featured at the centre of the restaurant is a private room available only by reservation. Enclosed by ornamental iron gates reminiscent of a colonial Spanish mission and lined with bottles of wine, this room captures the curiosity and envy of any passerby.

As we venture further inside, I notice dramatic black and white photographs of cattle grazing as well as sketches of rodeo scenes, creating a feeling of nostalgia that subtly permeates the entire atmosphere. The rich cherry-tinted wood panelling, soft lighting and supple leather armchairs transport me to a different time and place far removed from the chaos of city life. I felt as though I was being given the rare opportunity to take a glimpse inside a historic American gentlemen's club.

And much to the delight of my dinner guest, *JW's Steakhouse* even has a Havana cigar room with a large selection of fine quality cigars imported from around the world.

While approaching our table, I noticed my name was proudly displayed for everyone to see on a silver, bull-horned stand and blushed accordingly with a mixture of delight and gracious humility. There is no detail too great or small that *JW's Steakhouse* has not thought of to make your dining experience as personal as possible. It is the attention to detail; both in service and presentation that truly sets this establishment apart. From the special wine cork-holders and over-sized wine glasses to the silver bull-horned plates, every single aspect of the diner's experience has been taken into consideration. A chat with the restaurant's manager quickly revealed that they take the opinion of their patrons very seriously and genuinely urge their guests to make comments or recommendations in order to offer them the best service possible.

Not surprisingly, the manager displayed a vast wealth of knowledge about the finer differences between beef imported from Australia and the United States in terms of taste and texture. My dinner guest ordered the *Grilled Rib Eye Steak* medium-rare and it was prepared with just the right amount of tenderness. Since *JW's Steakhouse* also boasts a large assortment of seafood dishes such as *Spicy Lobster Florentine Bisque*, and *BBQ shrimp*, I opted for the marinated *Norwegian Salmon* with lemon, ginger and butter sauce. It was just as delicious as the melt-in-your-mouth steak.

When the meal was finished and it was time to leave, I was slightly saddened by the thought of returning to the commotion of Cairo. However, it had been such a delightful dining experience that I found myself pleasantly refreshed and ready to begin anew with a lightened spirit. Dining at *JW's Steakhouse* is not just about enjoying well-prepared steak; it is about finding a sanctuary in which to rejuvenate all your senses. ■

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