

FLUID★LONDON

Monday, 21 June 2010

Courtyard at 51 welcomes the summer



By [Christian Rose-Day](#)

Al fresco dining is one of summer's best assets and nearly all of London's many bars, pubs and restaurants get in on the action somehow, no matter what standard of nosh they serve up. The recently opened [Courtyard at 51](#) is very much in the higher echelons of al fresco, not only because of the formidable menu, but also because it is completely surrounded (and run by) 5-star opulence.



[The Courtyard](#), now in its second season, is entirely contained within the 51 Buckingham Gate Taj Suites and Residences complex, where a one bedroom deluxe suite is £645 per night; yeh, they don't mess about round these parts. It has a strong association with the world of tennis so it's not unknown for guests to bump into a few familiar Wimbledon faces in the lifts.

The layout is dripping in luxury with an ostentatious fountain and the imperative import of verdant life both playing an essential part. Oh, and this summer, on four occasions, some opera might break out during dinner at [The Courtyard](#). An ideal setting considering the acoustics and the dramatic Shakespearean fresco that circulates the venue.

Surprisingly, the cocktails are all very reasonably priced at £6.75 and all contain the sponsor for the summer: Grand Marnier (a worthy competitor to Pimms this summer, it seems).

The outdoor kitchen wavers between Lebanese, Moroccan, Turkish, and American depending on what day of the week it is, and on Fridays the chef (Sriram Aylur) of the neighbouring restaurant, [Quilon](#), flexes his Michelin star with a variety of South Indian options (apparently, [Quilon](#) is only the 5th Indian restaurant in London to receive the accolade). All his spices are imported and mostly ground on site in order to maintain an authentic freshness that doesn't require a plane ticket to Bangalore.

On the night that Fluid went along for a press tasting it was [Quilon's](#) turn to show off. We were treated to Mapla chicken, curry leaf and lentil crusted fish with coconut and mango chutney (my personal "Hmmm, gorgeous"), chargrilled prawns with byadgi chillies, and some rather excellent potato and cauliflower florets with fenugreek leaves.

The white wine chosen to accompany all of the above was also a hit, something I was able to ascertain by slurping a good amount of it myself, but also by listening to comments made by the various drink experts who were sat around the table with me.

All in all, a definite candidate for Top 10 Al Fresco Restaurants in London.

Posted by Christian Rose-Day at [16:41](#)

Labels: [Al Fresco](#)