



A New Course of Action

During a visit to Soho stalwart Pied à Terre, **ABY DUNSBY** finds her natural aversion to tasting menus well and truly abandoned as she tucks into seven courses of Michelin-starred dining par excellence

CALL ME SPOILED – snivelling, even – but sometimes I find tasting menus a chore. So many microscopic courses, so much time – and it's difficult to make one bottle of wine last the distance. Yet when a very hungry me arrived at Soho's Michelin-starred Pied à Terre, and the coiffed, smiling waiter suggested the seven-course tasting menu paired with matching mystery wines, my interest was piqued.

Subtle seduction is something that Pied à Terre excels at (and I'm not just talking about the waiters): set on the restaurant-strewn pavement of Charlotte Street, its blink-and-you'll-miss-it exterior leads you to an intimate, sedate, yet sophisticated interior.

But if the décor and atmosphere are both restrained – in the way that so many

fine-dining restaurants are – the food certainly isn't. Flavours are big and bold, but simultaneously balanced and delicate.

Head chef Marcus Eaves' dainty dishes fall into the 'too-pretty-to-eat' category – though that didn't stop me scoffing them all. When menu options include

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rich, buttery mushroom and truffle soup; crispy skinned, flaky mackerel speckled with dollops of fresh, zingy cucumber; or juicy-soft, Lebanese-inspired pork loin with cumin hummus, it's rude not to.

What really sets this restaurant's tasting menu apart from the rest is the wine offering. Sommelier Mathieu Germond has taken great lengths to seek out wines that would surprise even the keenest of oenophiles. A Uruguayan 2011 marselan brought out the moreish richness of our cheese platter, while a montstant from Catalonia balanced perfectly with the earthy Iberico pork loin.

At this rate, I'll be having tasting menus for breakfast, lunch and dinner... although, I'll leave the wine for the latter. Probably. **H** 020 7636 1178; pied-a-terre.co.uk