

InterContinental Opens Vietnam's First High-End Italian Ristorante

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InterContinental Hanoi Westlake has made another grand debut in Vietnam, this time with the country's first upscale Italian restaurant.

Milan opened its doors to external guests June 4, notching yet another milestone in the InterContinental's standing as the capital's most distinctive new hotel and in Vietnam's culinary scene.

'How a city as vibrant and compelling as Hanoi made it this far into 21st Century without an upscale Italian restaurant, I'll never know,' said Paolo Zambrano, executive chef at Milan. 'Italian cuisine is an imperative option in any culinary landscape. That you can now indulge the taste of Italy on the shores of Tay Ho (West Lake) is both a surprise and a remarkable convergence.'

At Milan, Zambrano's main courses explore a wealth of Italian classics, from spaghettis, linguinis, penne and lasagna to Pappardelle Al Ragu D' Anatra and Gnocchi di Patate.

'Paolo was called out of the kitchen by a diner recently,' said Christian Pirodon, general manager of the InterContinental Hanoi Westlake, 'to talk about the pasta he'd just had. The guest had been persuaded that it was impossible to get pasta as good as ours outside Italy. Now he's persuaded it's impossible to get pasta this good outside of Hanoi!'

From the Italian grill, the Milan serves a muscular assortment of entrees, from hearty beef tenderloins and rib eyes to lamb chops, king prawns and whole lobster. The restaurant also fires up an assortment of pizzas, of course, from the Margherita, to the Frutti di mare.

Milan trades on its waterborne situation with expansive views of Hanoi's fabled West Lake, once the playground of Vietnam's royalty, now a welcome respite from the bustling density of the capital.

If diners tire of the lakefront panorama, there are the more limited panoramas of two show kitchens and glass-walled wine shelves. The restaurant's wine list proposes 200 vintages from 10 countries, including Italy, France and the best of the New World wines.

Milan occupies the entire mezzanine level of the hotel. The décor is a blend of modern European and rustic Asian.

'Hanoi is justly renown for its dining venues,' said Pirodon. 'And rightly so. Now, with Paolo and Milan, we're building on that renown with a surprisingly memorable dining experience - for hotel guests, and external guests as well.'

About InterContinental Hanoi Westlake

The 359-unit InterContinental Hanoi Westlake opened in Dec. 2007 and immediately established itself as a singular Hanoi option. Located 10 minutes from the heart of Hanoi, the waterfront hotel evokes a resort-like ambiance with its torch-lit Venetian promenades and hard-to-find airiness in Vietnam's bustling capital. Conde Nast Traveler recognized the hotel on its 2008 Hot List, the 12th annual compendium of the most compelling new hotels in the world.

At a 43-square-meter minimum, the InterContinental's guest rooms rank as the most spacious in the city. The hotel's F&B options range from Milan-Saigon to Café du Lac, a classic brasserie, and Sunset Bar, a stand-alone overwater pavilion with expansive views of the lake.

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