

Created by: Debra C. Argen

Restaurant Baltschug

Executive Chef Rainer Sigg reigns supreme at the **Restaurant Baltschug** at the [Hotel Baltschug Kempinski](#).

Edward F. Nesta and I were seated at an intimate table for two by a window, sipping an aperitif of Moët & Chandon Brut Imperial champagne, enjoying the view of the Kremlin and St. Basil's Cathedral, and it was just beginning to snow. Executive Chef Rainer Sigg came over to our table and asked if we liked his "amuse bouche," which seemed a little odd, since we had not yet had anything to eat. We laughed when he said that he was referring to the large snowflakes gently floating by our window. Somehow it seemed fitting that it was snowing in Moscow in November 2006; it was the perfect setting to imagine sitting next to a cozy fireplace sipping a glass of chilled vodka, Russian, of course, or enjoying a gastronomic dinner at the Restaurant Baltschug with world-renowned Chef Rainer Sigg.

Piano music wafted in the air in the attractive dining room with cream-colored walls accented with café-au-lait, tropical plants, patterned red carpeting, and walls of windows framed with dotted fabric. Sconces and recessed lighting softly illuminated the paintings. Tables were elegantly draped with white linens and accessorized with napkins folded into crisp sails, white tapers in china candlestick holders, and yellow and tangerine spotted orchids in art glass vases, with pickled wood chairs with beige fabric, and banquettes upholstered with crewel-like designs in beige, celadon, and brown completing the ambience.

After having experienced Chef Sigg's creations at the Hotel Adlon Kempinski in Berlin, Germany, we knew that we were in for a sensational evening at the Restaurant Baltschug. We selected the decadent four-course menu created by Chef Sigg for the Gastronomic Festival "100 Best Moscow Restaurants." (Read Chefs' Recipes where Chef Sigg shares the recipes for this special dinner.)

Restaurant Baltschug Menu

Chartreuse of Pacific Tuna, Sesame Crusted Sashimi and Ginger Soy Sauce

Roasted Muscat Pumpkin Soup with Pumpkin Seeds

Filet of Beef and Foie Gras Wrapped in Puff Pastry, Parsnip Puree, and Truffle Sauce

Parfait of Acacia Honey in Chocolate, Prunes in Armagnac and Grenadine Orange Zest



Our real amuse bouche began with a disk of foie gras on a round toast garnished with a ripe red raspberry for Edward, and for me, a potato quenelle with a generous portion of inky black osetra caviar, which peaked our appetites in anticipation of the rest of the dinner.

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The starter of Chartreuse of Pacific Tuna, Sesame Crusted Sashimi and Ginger Soy Sauce was an artistic presentation on a large art glass plate with four squares of black and white sesame seed crusted tuna, round mousse with layers of Sauterne gelee topped with a quenelle of avocado, garnished with parsley leaves, with ginger soy marinade on the plate and avocado buttons. Edward took one bite of the mousse, that was so light I was surprised that it did not float off the plate, and proclaimed it "splendor on a dish," which I readily concurred.

This appealing starter was paired with a well structured, and aromatic 2003 Soave Pagus Corte Giara, from Veneto Italy, made with Trebbiano and Garganega grapes.



For our next course, we had the Roasted Muscat Pumpkin Soup with Pumpkin Seeds presented in a large deep bowl. Our server, Kerill drizzled soy sauce on the soup to add an intriguing flavor layer. The soup was paired with a 2004 Petit Chablis, La Chablisienne, 12.5% alcohol, made with Chardonnay grapes.



Edward continued with the Filet of Beef and Foie Gras Wrapped in Puff Pastry, Parsnip Puree, and Truffle Sauce paired with a 2003 Saint Emilion Christian Moulix, 13% alcohol, made with a blend of Merlot and Cabernet Franc, with an aromatic nose, and rich cherry, spice, and mid to heavy tannins.



I diverged from the set menu to experience Chef Sigg's Turbot on a bed of homemade tagliatelle and spinach, topped with a quail egg and garnished with more of my favorite black osetra caviar. The presentation was spinach leaves sautéed with finely diced shallots surrounded with a pool of foam, topped with homemade tagliatelle, a square of turbot, with a sunny side up quail egg, and a generous portion of caviar. I continued with the 2004 Petit Chablis, La Chablisienne, which was well paired with this course.

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By the dessert course, the snowflakes were even larger, and mesmerizing to watch from our window as the snow started to accumulate on the domes of St. Basil's Cathedral, like frosting on a cake. The dessert Parfait of Acacia Honey in Chocolate, Prunes in Armagnac and Grenadine Orange Zest, was exquisite. Dark chocolate swirled with white chocolate in the form of a comma was filled with honey parfait with a circle of honey on top, garnished with red raspberries and mint leaves, with three Armagnac prunes, orange zest, and two pools of crème anglais. Paired with a 2004 Muscat de Rivesaltes, Don Brial, 15% alcohol made with Muscat Petits Grains and Muscat Alexandré, with a honey and white peaches nose, with jasmine, white fruits, honey, and honeysuckle, and honeydew en bouche, the dessert and wine combination was magical.

Our last "souvenir" was an assortment of delectable goodies which included almond brittle with a crunchy toffee butter base topped with glazed sliced almonds, chocolate squares filled with hazelnut nougat, and white chocolate truffles filled with a butterscotch cream. The souvenir was a lovely ending to a very memorable evening with Chef Sigg at the Restaurant Baltschug.



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