

Created by: Debra C. Argen

101 bar and restaurant

[101 bar and restaurant](#) is a hip, trendy restaurant where the fashionable come to enjoy Chef Gunnvant's modern Icelandic and international cuisine, with a measure of Indian influences stirred in to entice the palate.



The restaurant located inside the 101 hotel has a minimalist contemporary décor in black and white, with an interesting focal point of a white sculptural wall by the artist Lilja Palmadóttir in the rectangular dining room. An atrium ceiling and a large window at the end of the room add airiness and light. The black bar is located on the left hand side of the room where barmen create innovative cocktails with names like 101 Naughty and the Viking Martini and there is seating for the cocktail crowd at high long tables with tall white stools with round white leather backs. The dining area is on the right hand side of the room, which features a black acrylic wall, black leather banquettes, and black acrylic and black leather swivel chairs. The square black wood tables are accessorized with square white plates, white napkins, and square glass vases with convex green bubbles with white votive candles to softly illuminate the room.

Edward F. Nesta and I had dinner at 101 bar and restaurant in April 2007, where our waiter, Paulo Rodas began our evening with their delicious signature cocktail, the 101 Naughty to accompany Chef Gunnvant's warm nan bread and tantalizingly spicy homemade mango chutney.



We thought that we could have easily been content to spend the evening just eating the bread and chutney it was that good, until the local Langoustine with Codfish Roll arrived for our first course. The course was presented on a square plate with the langoustine, codfish roll, and a pool of lemon butter sauce with capers, a generous slice of lemon and a sprinkle of sea salt. I loved the unexpected surprise of the sea salt as it melted on my tongue adding a touch of the sea to this very fresh and tasty course. Paired with Macon Villages, Chardonnay, Bourgogne AOC, France, with an aromatic nose, and balanced acidity, and peaches, pears and wood on the palate for Edward, and Oyster Bay Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand with its hint of melon for me, this was a delightful introduction to Icelandic cuisine.

Between our first and second course, Barman Einar Valur brought us a glass of Brennivin, the traditional

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national digestive, set in a rocks glass with layers of red and blue crushed ice. This reminded me of what it would be like to drink liquid pumpernickel bread. Made from cumin seeds, I wanted to pair this potent potable with a canapé of pumpernickel bread topped with smoked salmon, sour cream and caviar.

Paulo told us that beer with alcohol, which is now very popular was illegal in Iceland until 1989; before that, Icelanders would mix alcohol-free beer with vodka. The government finally acquiesced in 1989 and allowed alcohol beer.



Iceland is well known for its lamb, and Edward selected the Grilled Fillet of Lamb with Salsa Verde, Baked Red Onion, and Fondant Potatoes as his second course. This was an artistic presentation of two pieces of lamb of varying heights crowned with Icelandic herb pesto on a bed of red onions with a pool of rich sauce, potatoes and deep fried celery root. Paired with a 2000 Castello Banfi Brunello di Montalcino, Toscana DOC, Italy, this course was gorgeous.



For my second course, I had Halibut with Arugula and Grilled Sliced Portabello Mushrooms, presented as halibut on a bed of arugula with four sautéed cherry tomatoes, a potato herb cake, and a lemon butter sauce, which paired well with the Oyster Bay Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand.

What I especially liked about the comfortable restaurant, besides the excellent cuisine and the cocktails, was people watching where the cocktail hour crowd transitioned to the dinner crowd and then back to the late night cocktail crowd, as the tables kept turning throughout the evening.



For dessert, Chef Gunnvant sent us Mango "Skyr" Mousse with 30-year old Sherry made from Skyr, an Icelandic product that is a cross between yogurt and curd, is very healthy, and fat-free. Topped with strawberries, this was a silky dessert where we did not have to count calories! Einar paired the dessert with

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another cocktail, the 101 Vanilla Espresso, a delicious elixir of espresso, La Belle Crème, Kahlua, Absolut Vanilla, and homemade vanilla syrup, topped with whipped cream and three espresso beans, which was a stylish ending to a great evening.

Please read other articles on **101 hotel** in the **Hotels and Resorts**, and **Chefs' Recipes** (in **English** and **Icelandic**) where Chef Gunnvant shares recipes for a tasty three-course menu and Barman Einar shares the 101 Naughty recipe sections.



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