



Words: Alex Poltera

Twitter: @alexpoltera

THE TRAVELLING CHEF at *L'Atelier de Joel Robuchon*

Soho - London

Joel Robuchon is a French chef who has award winning restaurants spread over 11 cities in the world, deeming him the world's most 'starred' chef. L'Atelier de Joel Robuchon is a 1 Michelin starred restaurant in the theatre district of London, UK.

Spread over 3 floors, the eatery delivers a sense of incredibly modern surrounds with a predominantly black and red colour palette.

Greeted on the ground floor, we were taken up the stairs to the first floor which has a more traditionally-styled seating arrangement, unlike the entrance floor which is geared around the Japanese style of counter-top seating overlooking the chef's in action. The top floor is a bar and terrace with fantastic cocktails and beautiful surrounds. Our table was directly adjacent to the open-plan kitchen which I found particularly exciting. The chefs in the kitchen were busily buzzing from wall to wall and the aromas escaping into the restaurant were tantalizing.

We were presented with our menus and a bowl of fresh, fantastic-looking breads. The menu is a 'small tasting dishes' style whereby one would order two to three starters and 1-2 mains. I really enjoy this style as I am notoriously bad at making up my mind when it comes to deciding what to eat at a restaurant, so the idea of being able to choose a number of exciting dishes without looking piggy, was great!

We placed our orders and then our amuse bouche was brought to us. This consisted of a small shooter of foie gras mousse and parmesan foam



Each little component was utterly delicious and we were all quite sad once the superb morsel was finished. The three of us opted to have 'Le Jambon Iberico De Bellota' with toasted tomato bread to share before our individual dishes. A large plate with wafer-thin slices of Iberian Ham was brought to the table. Another dish with a piece of crisp toast topped with diced and seasoned tomato flesh was placed in front of each of us. The tomato was so simple yet so flavoursome. The flavours were treated with respect and nurtured with seasoning to bring them to life. It was probably the simplest starter I had ever experienced, yet the flavours have imprinted themselves in my memory forever, as being simply brilliant.

My next course was langoustine ravioli with Savoy cabbage and foie gras sauce. Two plump ravioli on the plate with braised cabbage in between topped with velvety, shiny foie gras sauce. The pasta was cooked al dente keeping the lightly seasoned sweet langoustine tightly inside.

The langoustine had a robust fresh shellfish flavour which was blown to stratospherically high taste pleasure levels when combined with the foie gras sauce. The cabbage brought it back down to earth with its 'umami' flavour which balanced out the intensely rich, decadent and sweet flavours of the other elements. This dish really was an exciting and delicious one to eat!

Next was the famous 'Le Burger' or: Beef and Foie Gras Burgers with lightly caramelised bell peppers. I was presented with the two mini sliders which were impaled with branded 'JR' skewers. There were also three perfect blobs of smooth homemade tomato sauce and a small dish of super-crisp thin fries. The burger buns were made out of brioche and had toasted sesame seeds on top. Inside was the beef patty topped with a chunk of seared foie gras.

The flavours were all rich and decadent, but the burgers were about two bites each so it worked out well. The dish was absolute indulgence. Every small detail was executed perfectly and it really did take burgers to a new level which I have personally not experienced before. By the end of the dish, I was already starting to feel full due to the incredibly intense flavours and rich ingredients.



We had a bit of a breather allowing us to enjoy our gin and tonics and let the food go down a bit. I was then brought the following course. This was the 'Veal Sweetbread with bay leaves, romaine lettuce and bacon'. The plate was presented and on it was a very simple composition of a large nut-brown sweetbread with two fresh fragrant bay leaves stuck in it and a leaf of romaine lettuce folded over containing the bacon mixture.

The sweetbread was seared on the outside and had a lovely black pepper and butter coating. The romaine lettuce was wilted and had a delicious mixture of smoky bacon and onion inside which went very well with the ofal. All of the dishes were relatively small, including the sweetbread, but once again the dish was rich and delivered a fantastically satisfying and exhilarating gastronomic experience. My friend chose the following: A delicious looking Quail stuffed with foie gras and mashed potatoes as a main and sea bream carpaccio with lemon and chilli as one of the starters.

He also had the langoustine ravioli and the burgers as he had dined here before and couldn't resist having the sliders again! The other member of our party had the Crabmeat seasoned with fresh herbs and slightly sour guacamole, followed by the ravioli.

After much deliberation, we decided that we would, indeed, have dessert. I opted for the 'Warm Guanaja chocolate soufflé and Sicilian pistachio ice cream'. What arrived next was truly a sight to behold.

A deep chocolate brown soufflé which was risen at least five centimetres above the mould on a plate alongside a dish with a sphere of light green pistachio ice cream in it.

The soufflé was faultless. The flavour of the chocolate was intense and pure and the warm, aerated mixture was absolutely heavenly. The ice cream was surprisingly light but had a satiny smooth texture and an intense pistachio flavour. The combination of the ice cream with the soufflé was nice, but I chose to eat them separately so as not to deflate the light cloud of warm chocolate. Two of us chose the soufflé and the other, a plum and chocolate 'salad' which looked incredibly interesting.

The dinner was a triumph. Every flavour combination experienced was unique to any other I had experienced before. The intricacies and details displayed and executed in the dishes were breathtaking and over-all the whole evening was sensational.

L'ATELIER DE JOEL ROBUCHON

13-15 West Street, London



T: +44 (0)207 010 8600
 Email: reservations@joelrobuchon.co.uk
 Facebook: [latelierlondon](https://www.facebook.com/latelierlondon)
 Instagram: [latelier.london](https://www.instagram.com/latelier.london)
 Twitter: [latelierlondon](https://twitter.com/latelierlondon)