



PRAISE TO THE PIG

Nestled into an inconspicuous space on Soho's Shelley Street, Iberico & Co's Latin leanings make it a feast for the senses, discovers GAYATRI BHAUMIK.

A study in rustic glam, award-winning designer Kinney Chan has decked out the new Enoteca restaurant with a mix of glamorous, rustic and industrial elements, which fuse to create a harmonious space reminiscent of a chic neighbourhood bar in Barcelona. Clashing elements like velvet-lined plush chairs, black iron beams, and recycled wood floors and tables really shouldn't work together, but they do.

But you probably won't notice the décor because you'll be too busy eyeing the extended Spanish and Portuguese-inspired menu. Finding really good tapas (that doesn't blow the bank) outside Spain can be a hard task, but here, the beauty of the food is that it doesn't try too hard to replicate traditional tapas fare. Yes, there is *patatas bravas* – crushed potatoes generously

doused in garlic aioli and ham dust – and shrimps tossed in garlic butter and parsley, but consultant chef David Tamlyn, formerly of The Principle, uses the ' & Co' title to infuse a little creativity.

The restaurant features daily specials, including decadently rich slices of namesake pork belly, served with a crisp apple salad seasoned with homemade beer-infused mustard that cuts through the dense flavor of the belly-pleasing bacon. The dish was beautifully complimented by a glass of the Iberico Sangria Tinto, punched up with a heavy dash of cherry brandy; just the first on an intriguing drinks list that features a variety of sangrias, signature cocktails, beers and wines.

Although dishes are made to be shared and portions are of reasonable size, we may have slightly over-ordered. The flavourful

roasted vine tomatoes on toasted sourdough was succeeded by piquant pickled white anchovies in garlic and parsley, and crisp fries dressed up with black truffle salt and white truffle oil. Next up, the seared goose liver, served atop sourdough and a layer of fig and ruby port chutney, was a sensory delight and easily among the best foie gras experiences to be had in Hong Kong.

It was all we could do to even glance at the dessert menu, and although the churros with 72 percent cocoa chocolate sauce, and the crème catalan with almond-orange biscuit and lemon jam looked particularly inviting, we decided to do them justice by saving them for another day.

Elegant yet unpretentious, and dishing up sumptuous food at reasonable prices, Iberico & Co is sure to become a staple on the city's restaurant scene.

G/F 18 Shelley St, Central, Hong Kong, Tel: +852 2752 8811, www.enoteca.hk