



RISTORANTE WILDNER

THE RESTAURANT OF THE Pensione Wildner in Venice occupies the first floor of the hotel, which is the perfect unassuming yet charming boutique bed-and-breakfast hotel to book for rakes on a budget, your children on their first trip to Venice, or for you to book for yourself should you wish to escape into the arms of a lover perfectly shielded from the prying eyes of café society at the Danieli. While the Pensione is colloquial in its appeal, its restaurant is an animal all of its own; one whose culinary majesty is fuelled by owner and front-of-house man Luca Fullin's fierce desire to provide the very finest seafood in Venice. Wildner's restaurant differs from the soft, delicate approach of Al Covo, its house style evoking a sort of culinary Shotokan karate in contrast to Al Covo's more restrained T'ai Chi. This is strictly for fans of full-flavoured, no-holds-barred, hit-you-below-the-belt Venetian cuisine. But the result is nothing less than spectacular. The seafood ravioli swims in a sauce so reduced to smoky perfection that it could be served as a bisque in other restaurants. The langoustine pasta is a revelation, perfectly expressing the Japanese concept of elusive savoriness known as 'umami', the risotto with prawn and asparagus is magical, while the fritto misto is capable of inducing fully grown men into savage acts of gullet-busting frenzy. For the finale, Fullin will produce a local catch of the day that he will grill to a tipping point where the skin exudes a crisp smokiness while the meat literally evaporates on the tongue. For those of a more carnivorous bent, it is of note that Fullin's steak tartare is a thing of beauty. That you can feast on this at sunset, at a place that overlooks the sun plunging into the Grand Canal while casting rose streaks of dying light on the island of San Giorgio Maggiore, makes it not just an experience, but a moral imperative when in Venice. *WK*

www.hotelwildner.com

