Sample Positive Restaurant Review

A Howlin' Good Time at Lune

San Francisco has slowly been gaining a reputation as a bastion of food innovation. And I don't doubt that for a bit. I have been dining in some of San Francisco's best-kept secrets for many years now, and I must say it's quite an experience. This so-called food revolution happening in the Bay Area has seen many of the country’s best new restaurants sprouting like mushrooms in this lush valley. And for those of you searching for a culinary experience like no other, look no further than Lune.

Nestled amid the lofts and showrooms that pepper the city’s trendy SoMa district, Lune is the brainchild of Chefs Marcel Petain and James Pham, childhood friends who grew up on the French-Vietnamese fusion cuisine they’re bringing to the bay.

The restaurant is located in a rather unassuming converted warehouse that’s quite easy to miss. However, the interior will remind visitors of a minimalist,Cast Away-esque tropical paradise. The decor allows the simplistic beauty of the food to really shine, though beauty isn’t the only thing bringing folks to Lune. The restaurant buzzed with excited energy and was comfortably full with seemingly satisfied patrons.

We started with Lune’s famous deconstructed banh mi, which is essentially a salad of pickled vegetables, spicy mayo, french baguette croutons (which they make themselves), and truly remarkable, perfectly cooked pork served on ladle spoons. My wife and I shared one order, which consisted of six full spoons of banh mi goodness. We certainly could have shared a second order, though that is more a reflection on the otherworldly taste than the portion size.

For the main course, I decided to go with Lune's nem vit, spring rolls filled with roast duck and exquisitely tart green mango. The flavor of the green mango balanced the richness of the sinfully tender duck very well. My wife ordered goi cuon, which consisted of marinated pork, grilled bacon, ripe mango, and greens wrapped in a rice paper roll. The dish was executed perfectly, and the bright colors of the ingredients peeking through the thin rice paper made it a feast for the eyes as well as the stomach. I did find it a bit too sweet for my liking, but I know a lot of people who would be willing to pay top dollar for a dish like that. The servings were big and a bit pricey, but it was well worth it.

There were a few dessert, but we went with an original Chef Pham creation called Pham Fatale: a pandan and dark chocolate lava cake made even richer with the addition of coconut milk. Pandan is a type of leaf used to flavor many sweets, and it has a flavor that will be unfamiliar to most of Lune’s patrons. It’s a little grassy and a little nutty, with hints of vanilla and a bit of that coveted umami flavor. Paired with bittersweet dark chocolate and rich coconut milk, the cake is simply divine.

Though I would love to be selfish and keep Lune all to myself, the work of Chefs Petain and Pham is too good to stay hidden for long. There’s no doubt a table Lune at will quickly become the hottest reservation in town.