

EATING WITH N.J.

MY FOODCENTRIC ADVENTURES ABOUT RESTAURANTS, HOMECOOKING, AND TRAVELS.

RESTAURANTS

DISFRUTAR - BARCELONA, SPAIN

APRIL 15, 2017



- **DISFRUTAR**
- **CHEFS: MATEU CASAÑAS, ORIOL CASTRO AND EDUARD XATRUCH**
- **#55 IN THE WORLD'S 50 BEST RESTAURANTS OF 2017**
- **ONE TO WATCH AWARD 2017 BY MIELE**
- **1* MICHELIN**
- **VISITED: OCTOBER 20TH, 2016 - LUNCH SERVICE**

After indulging in the restaurants of Porto, Lisbon, Spanish Basque Country and Andalucia, my gastronomic pilgrimage ended at Disfrutar in Barcelona. Barcelona was the very city that my husband and I fell in love with during our first visit in Europe back in 2010. To my surprise, I have definitely saved one of the **best** restaurants for last!



CHEF EDUARD XATRUCH IN ACTION.

Disfrutar is ran by three outstanding chefs namely, Mateu Casañas, Oriol Castro and Eduard Xatruch, who all were head chefs at probably the most legendary restaurant of all time, elBulli in Roses, Catalonia. What these brilliant chefs brought to Disfrutar was not a replica of elBulli, but their own personal interpretation and impeccable utilization of familiar flavours that were expressed in the most imaginative and exciting manner.

The restaurant offered two distinct tasting menus, “Classic” which focuses on the classic dishes of the restaurant, and “Festival” which focuses on newly created dishes. Since it was our first time at Disfrutar, we chose the Classic menu of about 18-courses and opted to elevate it to the “Gran Classic” menu which offered about 25-courses.

THE RESTAURANT



FAÇADE OF THE RESTAURANT





THE MAIN DINING ROOM

APERITIVO

It has been a habit of ours to drink aperitivos (aperitifs) before a tasting menu as it opens up the appetite and taste buds.

“Fer el Vermut” a saying in Catalan that translates, “to do vermouth”. It is a tradition of drinking the aperitivo Vermouth before a big lunch while socializing with family and friends. Spanish red vermouth of “Vermut Negre” has the perfect balance of bitters, sweetness and botanicals.



VERMUT

AMUSE-BOUCHE SERIES



FROZEN COCKTAIL WITH PASSION FRUIT, RUM AND COFFEE
TOPPING THE FROZEN COCKTAIL WITH GROUND COFFEE BEANS.



FROZEN COCKTAIL WITH PASSION FRUIT, RUM AND COFFEE
A BEAUTIFUL COCKTAIL THAT POSSESSED A REFRESHING TEXTURAL COMBINATION OF AIR AND ICE. THE CHUNKS OF PASSION FRUIT ADDED SWEETNESS, THE RUM GRANITA ADDED DEEPER FLAVOURS. THIS COCKTAIL WAS TOPPED WITH FRESHLY GROUND

COFFEE BEANS WHICH PROVIDED EARTHY AROMAS AND DARK COCOA NOTES.



THE BEET THAT COMES OUT OF THE LAND

OUR HOST PLACED A BOWL OF “FAUX” SOIL ON OUR TABLE. HE THEN PROCEEDED TO SHAKE THE BOWL. TO OUR SURPRISE, TWO RUBY-COLOURED PUFFS EMERGED OUT OF THE SOIL LIKE MAGIC! HE THEN EXPLAINED THAT THE PUFFS WERE MERINGUE MADE FROM BEETS, AND THE SOIL WAS MADE FROM SESAME SEEDS. WE LOVED THE THEATRICS ON THIS DISH, MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE MERINGUE WERE SWEET AND EARTHY BITES OF HEAVEN!



LYCHEE, ROSES AND GIN

AN ELEGANT AMUSE-BOUCHE CONTAINING DEWDROPS OF GIN ON THE ROSE PETALS AND WHAT APPEARED TO BE A WHITE RASPBERRY WAS IN FACT A FROZEN LYCHEE. WE USED THE PETALS AS SPOONS TO GET TO THE DROPS OF GIN AND TO ENSURE THAT WE GET THE NATURAL ESSENCES OF THE ROSE. IT WAS FLORAL, BOTANICAL AND SWEET. THIS WAS DEFINITELY ONE OF THE STAND-OUT DISHES!



AND THEN CAME ALONG A WOODEN BOX CONTAINING GOODIES.



SALTED CANDY WALNUTS, MANGO, TONKA BEANS AND WHISKY
INSIDE THE WOODEN BOX WERE A SLICE OF SWEET MANGO AND A
CANDY MADE FROM TONKA BEANS, SALTED WALNUTS AND WHISKY.
ALL TOGETHER IT WAS A TASTEFUL MEDLEY OF NUTTY, CRUNCHY,
SALTY, OAKY, AND SWEET FLAVOURS.



MULTIPESCADITO FRITO WITH FRESH TROUT ROE

A PLAY ON PRAWN CRAKERS. THIS LIGHT, CRISPY, AND AIRY CRACKER CALLED "MULTIPESCADITO" WAS MADE FROM ALGAE AND TOPPED WITH MINI FRIED FISH AND SALICORNIA. SERVED WITH A SIDE OF TROUT ROE ON A BEAUTIFUL SILVER SHELL. WE WERE THEN INSTRUCTED TO PLACE THE ROE ON TOP OF THE CRACKER. THE ROE PROVIDED THAT HEAVENLY POPS OF RICH SWEET, AND OCEANIC FLAVOURS, AND WAS AMAZING WITH THE CRUNCHY TEXTURES OF THE CRACKER.



MULTIPESCADITO FRITO



TROUT ROE

**DELICIOUS TROUT ROE WITH LEMON ZEST. A DELICIOUS
ACCOMPANIMENT TO THE CRACKER.**



DISFRUTA DE LA ACEITUNA

THIS DISH DISPLAYS A HOMAGE TO ELBULLI, THE LEGENDARY RESTAURANT WHERE ALL THE THREE CHEFS HAILED FROM. THE OLIVES WERE MADE FROM COCOA BUTTER ENCASING LIQUIDS OF OLIVE OIL AND BITTER ORANGES. AS SOON AS IT HITS YOUR MOUTH, IT EXPLODES WITH THE MOST WONDROUS OF FLAVOURS AND SENSATIONS. THE INTENSITY OF BRIGHT OLIVE FLAVOURS AND ORANGE AROMAS SHINED THROUGH.

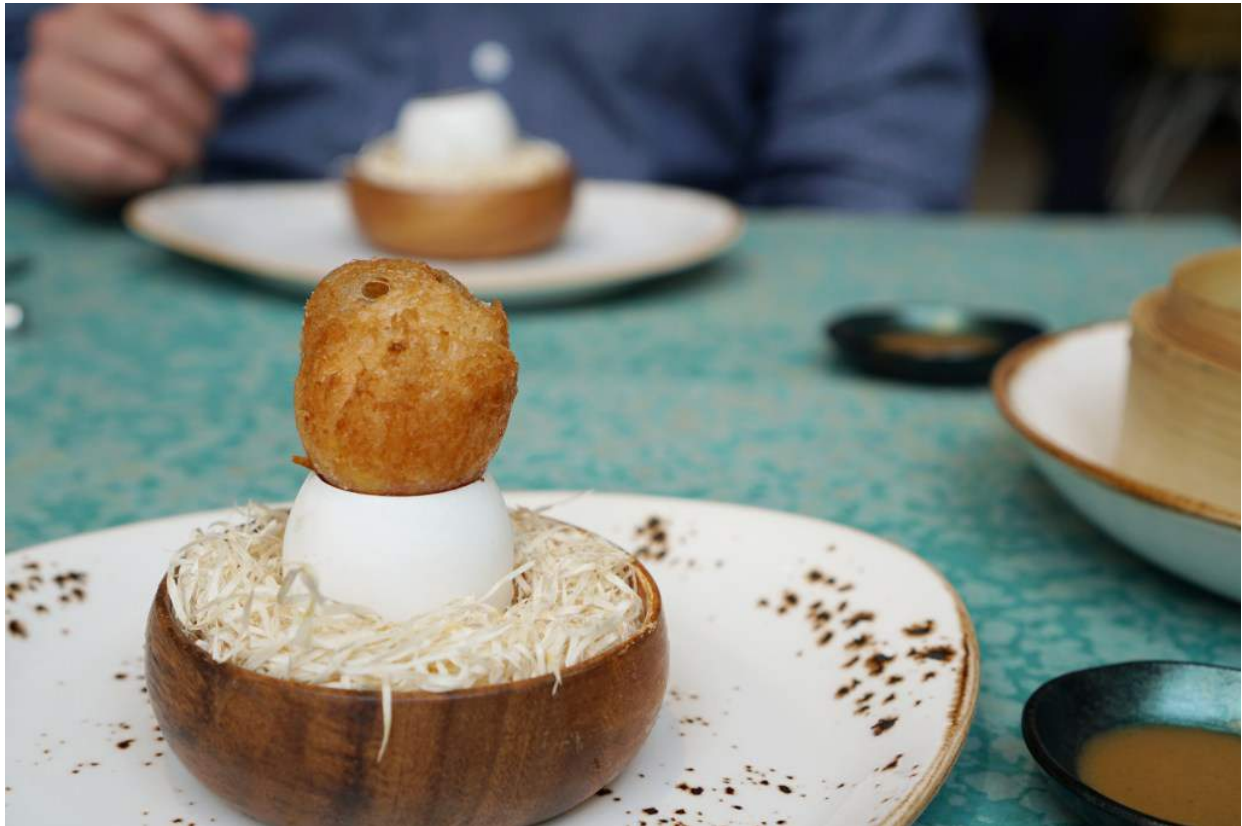


BISCUITS AND TEA
SMOKED IDIAZÁBAL BISCUIT WITH TEA OF APPLE AND CELERY



BISCUIT OF SMOKED IDIAZÁBAL CHEESE
AN ODE TO A POPULAR SPANISH CHILDHOOD SNACK, THESE ARTIACH BISCUITS WERE MADE FROM SMOKED AND FROZEN IDIAZÁBAL CHEESE THAT POSSESSED AN BUTTERY, NUTTY AND SMOKEY NOTES. THE BISCUIT WAS PAIRED WITH A HOT TEA MADE FROM APPLES AND

CELERY. THE HOT TEA NOT ONLY HELPED MELT THE FROZEN BISCUIT, BUT IS ALSO MAGICALLY INTENSIFIED THE BEAUTIFUL FLAVOURS OF THE IDIAZÁBAL CHEESE.



CRISPY EGG YOLK WITH WITH MUSHROOM GELATIN

THEN WE WERE PRESENTED WITH A CRISPY EGG SERVED ON A NEST. THE EGG WAS MADE FROM A CRISPY TEMPURA, ENCASING AND SURPRISING US WITH A LUSCIOUS LIQUID EGG YOLK CORE. THE CRISPY EGG WAS SITTING ON A WHITE EGG SHELL THAN CONTAINED ANOTHER MOUTHWATERING SURPRISE, A GELATIN MADE FROM WILD MUSHROOMS AND PORCINI. THE GELATIN WAS LIGHT AND EXUDED DIVINE INTENSITY FOR MUSHROOM NOTES.



MUSHROOM GELATIN
A HEAVENLY GELATIN MADE FROM WILD MUSHROOMS.



MUSHROOM GELATIN
A HEAVENLY GELATIN MADE FROM WILD MUSHROOMS.



MUSHROOM DUMPLING

**FOR THE NEXT COURSE, A SMOKING BAMBOO BOWL WAS BROUGHT ON
OUR TABLE.**



MUSHROOM DUMPLING

AN INVITING AND CREATIVE DUMPLING WITH A FILLING MADE FROM MOUTHWATERING KING BOLETUS MUSHROOMS AND PINE NUTS. THE FLAVOURS WERE SUBLIME. SERVED ON A BAMBOO BOWL WITH SMOKE COMING OUT OF THE BOTTOM FOR THAT ALLURING DIMSUM FLAIR.



CORN TART WITH FOIE GRAS

A PREPARATION OF BUTTERY FOIE GRAS, TOPPED WITH THE CREAMIEST CORN "ASPIC" THAT SPLENDIDLY MELTS IN THE MOUTH AND EXPLODES WITH AN INTENSE SWEET CORN FLAVOURS. THE CORN WAS RESTING ON A CRISPY CRACKER WHICH PROVIDED A WONDERFUL CRUNCHY TEXTURE. THIS WAS ONE OF THE MANY STANDOUT DISHES AT DISFRUTAR. THE COMBINATION OF FLAVOURS WERE MIND-BLOWING!



CEVICHE DECONSTRUCTION

HERE WAS A BOWL OF CEVICHE, DECONSTRUCTED IN VARIOUS LIQUIDS, COLOURS, AND TEXTURES. THE TANTALIZING AROMAS EXUDED OF CITRUS, SEAFOOD, AND ONIONS. THE CREAM, MADE OF “LECHE DE TIGRE”, A STAPLE IN PERUVIAN CEVICHE, TOOK ME BACK TO MY BEAUTIFUL GASTRONOMIC EXPERIENCES WHEN I VISITED PERU. THIS CEVICHE DISH, WAS PROBABLY ONE OF THE BEST CEVICHE I HAVE EVER EATEN.

THE TABLESIDE PRESENTATION OF DISFRUTAR'S MACARONI CARBONARA



DISFRUTAR'S MACARONI CARBONARA

THE MOST CREATIVE PLAY ON CARBONARA. HERE IS A TABLESIDE PRESENTATION OF TRANSLUCENT PASTA MADE FROM A GELATIN OF JAMÓN IBÉRICO, MIXED WITH CUBES OF BACON, AND TOPPED WITH A HEAVENLY TRUFFLE FOAM. IT WAS THEN TOPPED WITH FRESH SHAVINGS OF PARMESAN. ALL MIXED ON OUR TABLE FOR A WONDERFUL SHOW!





TOMATO "POLVORÓN" AND ARBEQUINA OIL CAVIAR

ANOTHER IMAGINATIVE PLAY ON THE CLASSIC SPANISH SWEET POLVORÓN, INSTEAD OF SWEET, THIS DELIGHTFUL SAVOURY VERSION WAS MADE OF RIPENED TOMATO AND TOPPED WITH CAVIAR MADE FROM ARBEQUINA OLIVE OIL. ARBEQUINA IS KNOWN TO POSSESS HIGHLY AROMATIC, FRUITY AND BUTTERY NOTES AND IT WAS THE PERFECT ACCOMPANIMENT TO THE SAVOURY POLVORÓN.



LIQUID SALAD

AS THE NAME IMPLIES, IS A LIQUEFIED SALAD MADE FROM VARIOUS SWEET, BITTER AND REFRESHING GREENS. IT WAS SERVED COLD, AND WAS A PERFECT PALATE CLEANSER FOR THE NEXT COURSE.



EEL WITH CREAM AND CAVIAR

A “WRAP YOUR OWN” RAVIOLI DISH, CONSISTING OF LUXURIOUS OSSETRA CAVIAR AND WRAPS MADE FROM EEL GELATIN THAT PROVIDED SWEETNESS AND EARTHINESS. DRIZZLED WITH SOY MILK CREAM. WE WERE PROVIDED WITH THE UTENSILS TO HELP US WRAP THESE EXQUISITE BITES OF HEAVEN.



EEL WITH CREAM AND CAVIAR



EEL WITH CREAM AND CAVIAR



LANGOUSTINE "AL AJILLO"



LANGOUSTINE "AL AJILLO"

SUCCULENT AND SWEET LANGOUSTINE, BUTTERFLIED, TOPPED WITH PARSLEY FOAM AND SEASONED WITH AROMATIC SLICES OF BLACK GARLIC AND CHILI. A VERY DELIGHTFUL, FLAVOURSOME AND WELL-BALANCED DISH.



RED MULLET, PORK BELLY AND AUBERGINE GNOCCHI
A BEAUTIFULLY COOKED RED MULLET FISH, TOPPED WITH A LAYER OF
AN EXQUISITE PORK BELLY. SERVED WITH GNOCCHI THAT UPON
BITING, EXPLODES WITH THE MOST ENTICING AND VIVID SMOKED
AUBERGINE FLAVOURS.

HARE SEQUENCE

The next three dishes utilized Hare as the main ingredient.



STARTING THE HARE SEQUENCE WITH A HARE COCKTAIL
AND THEN, OUR HOST BROUGHT OUT A TRAY OF WHAT APPEARS TO BE
A COCKTAIL COURSE.



**CAREFULLY PLACING
THE ICE, TARRAGON
AND ORANGE PEEL
INSIDE THE GLASS.**



POURING OF LIQUID



**SPRAYING THE
ESSENCE OF
ARMAGNAC**



HARE CONSOMMÉ, TARRAGON, ORANGE AND ARMAGNAC

I GOT EXCITED WHEN OUR HOST STARTED ASSEMBLING WHAT SEEMED TO BE A “COCKTAIL” BESIDE OUR TABLE. HE PLACED ICE, TARRAGON, AND ORANGE PEEL INSIDE THE GLASS. HE REVEALED THAT THE LIQUID BEING POURED WAS A CONSOMMÉ MADE FROM HARE. HE SPRAYED ARMAGNAC INSIDE THE GLASS, STIRRED IT, AND SERVED IT TO US. THE FLAVOURS WERE SUBTLE, DELICATE AND WELL-BALANCED. IT WAS ONE OF THE MOST TASTEFUL CONSOMMÉS I HAVE EVER HAD! WE WERE INSTRUCTED TO SAVOUR THE “COCKTAIL” AND DRINK IT WITH THE NEXT COURSE OF THE FROZEN BISCUIT WITH FOIE GRAS.



FROZEN BISCUIT WITH HARE'S FOIE

A SAVOURY BISCUIT WITH DECADENT FOIE GRAS TERRINE MADE FROM HARE AND TOPPED WITH CACAO. IT WAS PERFECT WITH THE HARE CONSOMMÉ.



LAKSA OF HARE JUICE

OUR NEXT COURSE WAS A SPICY NOODLE DISH USING HARE BROTH AND FLAVOURED WITH LAKSA, KAFFIR LIMES, AND CHILI.



MOROCCAN STYLE PIGEON

A BEAUTIFULLY COOKED, MEDIUM-RARE SQUAB, PACKED WITH DEEP MOROCCAN SPICES. SERVED WITH A SIDE OF COUSCOUS AND ORANGE BLOSSOM GELATIN. A TASTY AND WELL-BALANCED DISH. THE SQUAB WAS TENDER AND THE GELATIN PROVIDED BEAUTIFUL FLORAL NOTES.

DESSERT SERIES

What I loved about the desserts at Disfrutar was that they were able to maintain and respect the natural flavours of their ingredients. Fresh flavours were highlighted, and it was not overly sweetened.



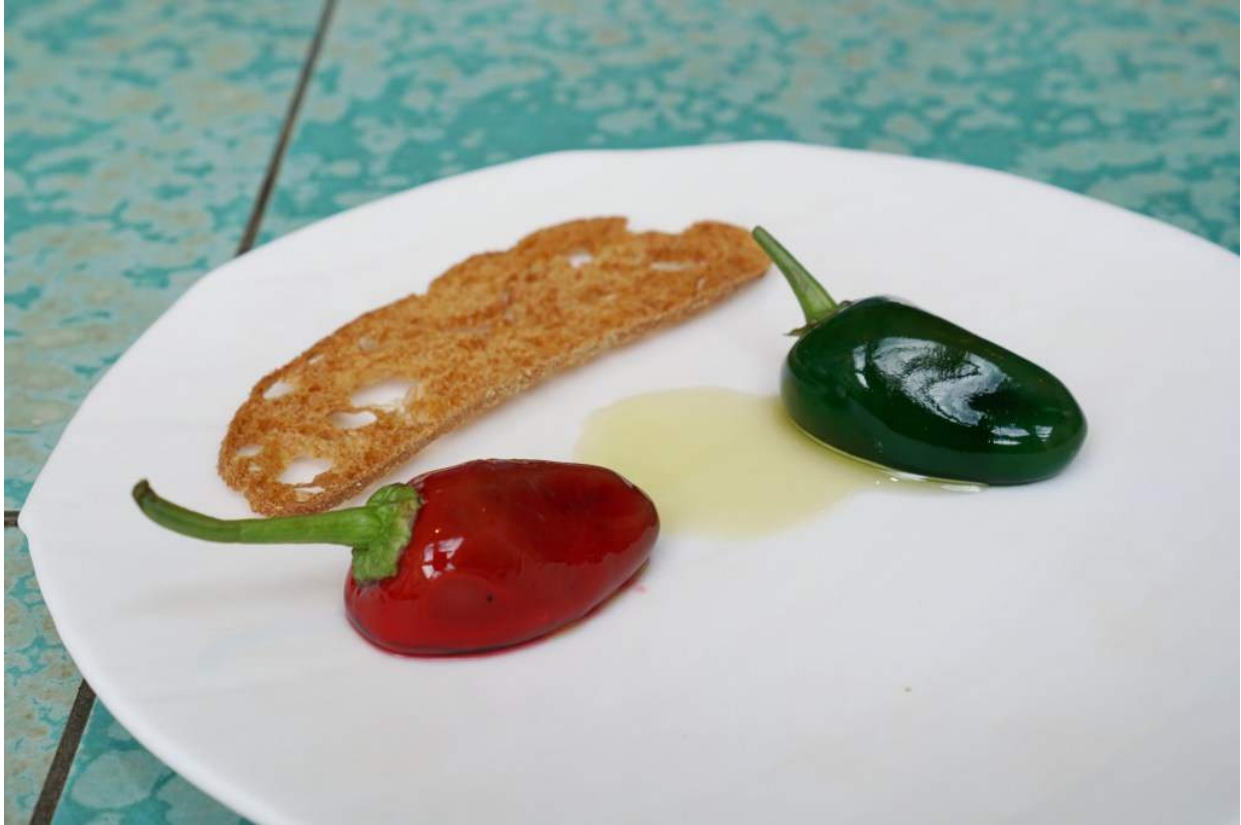
MANGO SORBET SANDWICH

STARTING THE DESSERT SERIES WITH THIS INGENUOUS PLAY ON ICE CREAM SANDWICH. THE BREAD WAS IN FACT, MADE OF THE AN AIRY CARDAMOM MERINGUE, THAT MAGICALLY CRUMBLES AND MELTS AWAY IN THE MOUTH. THE MANGO SORBET TASTED OF THE RIPEST MANGO AND WENT BEAUTIFULLY WITH THE SPICED CARDAMOM NOTES OF THE MERINGUE.



CHEESECAKE CORNET

CRISPY CORNET MADE OF RED FRUIT, FILLED WITH CHEESECAKE AND A CRUMBLE BASE. THE CORNET WAS TOPPED WITH CHERRY SORBET AND MINT. THE TANGINESS OF THE CHERRY BALANCED OUT THE CREAMINESS OF THE CHEESECAKE. THE MINT ADDED A BURST OF FRESHNESS.



CHOCOLATE PEPPERS, OIL AND SALT

IN A TRUE DISFRUTAR FASHION, DO NOT LET THESE PEPPERS FOOL YOU. THE PEPPERS WERE MADE OF SWEET AND SPICY PEPPER JELLY AND CREATED TO LOOK LIKE REAL PEPPERS. INSIDE THE PEPPERS WAS A SURPRISE OF A LOVELY AND SILKY CHOCOLATE GANACHE. TOGETHER WITH THE OLIVE OIL AND SALT, THIS DESSERT WAS A DIVINE COMBINATION OF SWEET, SPICY, SALTY AND BRIGHT FLAVOURS.

“TARTA AL WHISKY” SEQUENCE

In this interactive sequence, Disfrutar played with our sense of smell and taste. This sequence was a deconstruction of Whisky cake into separate components of whisky, hazelnuts, egg and cream. Our host brought out a bottle of Lagavulin Single Malt Whisky, in which he poured tiny splashes into our palms. We were then instructed to rub the whisky all over our hands, and then smell our hands to get all the oaky and spicy aromas of the whisky that will interact with the next dessert bites.



TARTA AL WHISKY

NOW THAT OUR HANDS WERE “AROMATIZED” BY THE LAGAVULIN WHISKY, WE CAN NOW USE OUR AROMATIC FINGERS TO PICK UP THESE LOVELY BITES. UP CLOSE WAS A BITE OF HAZELNUT AND HAZELNUT OIL IN AN AMBER OF SUGAR ENCASING. AFAR IS A SWEET FROZEN EGG CUSTARD. THE AROMAS OF THE WHISKY FROM OUR HANDS MADE THESE BITES TRULY ALLURING.



THE CREAM

A LUSCIOUS CREAM MADE FROM VANILLA BEANS AND YUZU. A BEAUTIFUL ACCOMPANIMENT TO THE HAZELNUT AND EGG BITES.

THE FINALE

For the grand finale, a cotton plant was brought to our table. Our host instructed us that for our final bite, we have to pull out the cocoa-dusted cotton puffs from the plant

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COTTON PLANT



COTTON OF COCOA AND MINT

OUR LAST BITE WAS A PLAY ON COTTON CANDY, ATTACHED ON A COTTON PLANT. THE FLUFFY COTTON CANDY WAS MINTY, AND IT WAS DUSTED WITH COCOA. IT WAS SWEET, LIGHT, AND REFRESHING.



COTTON OF COCOA AND MINT

OUR LAST BITE WAS A PLAY ON COTTON CANDY, ATTACHED ON A COTTON PLANT. THE FLUFFY COTTON CANDY WAS MINTY, AND IT WAS DUSTED WITH COCOA. IT WAS SWEET, LIGHT, AND REFRESHING.

We were highly impressed by the quality and creativity of our overall experience at Disfrutar. The Chefs were masters at delivering profoundly creative dishes while maintaining an utmost respect for the natural flavours of their ingredients. A depth of maturity and elegance were present in every dish. The dishes were exciting, new, and stimulated our senses!

The service at Disfrutar was exceptional. From the moment we walked into the restaurant, we instantaneously felt welcomed and special as we were greeted by the friendly staff and the Chefs, all waiting for our arrival. Every dish was carefully explained to us and the staff was attentive to our needs.

I forgot to mention that the word “Disfrutar,” is a beautiful Spanish word that means “to enjoy”. Indubitably, we enjoyed and most of all, loved our experience at Disfrutar. It was one of those experiences where we were not expecting a lot, but

they inherently blew our minds with the delivery of outstanding flavours coupled with their sense of fun and creativity.

A trip to Barcelona is not complete without a stop at Disfrutar. This restaurant is our favourite restaurant in Barcelona.



THE MASTERS OF DISFRUTAR

MEETING CHEF ORIOL CASTRO AND CHEF EDUARD XATRUCH. THANK YOU VERY MUCH CHEFS FOR AN OUTSTANDING EXPERIENCE IN YOUR RESTAURANT.

DISFRUTAR

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SHARE