

Review: Statement Brings Stylish British Cuisine to Tai Kwun

Robust flavours and sophisticated presentation bring new heights to the beloved cuisine

Hong Kong's hottest heritage site Tai Kwun is fast becoming a dining destination in its own right, with a brace of recent high-profile openings – and the most recent to join the fray is Statement.

Occupying the first floor of the old Police Headquarters Building, Statement is part of an ambitious Aqua Group project that comprises three separate venues; a central lounge bar, The Dispensary, connects Chinese restaurant The Chinese Library on the east, and Statement on the west.



Statement's signature heirloom beetroot ravioli. (Photo: Statement)

Statement's plush interior (by Hong Kong designers AB Concept), a stately mix of teal, dove grey and dark woods, makes for an excellent fit with Tai Kwun's colonial-era architecture, whilst the food – a contemporary take on British cuisine proves just as stylish.

Our meal gets off to a great start with Hokkaido scallops, smoked cabbage heart and Welsh laverbread (a type of seaweed) butter. The scallops are cooked perfectly – plump, golden on the outside and tender within – and pair superbly with the smoky crunch of the cabbage and the indulgent seaweed sauce. However, the scallops are just a tad over-seasoned, meaning the entire dish is a little too salty as a result.



Cep and chanterelle mushrooms with Jerusalem artichoke puree. (Photo: Statement)

The Kettle Farm lamb tartare is well-seasoned, with a gamey depth and punchy tang that balances nicely with the earthy richness of the accompanying tomato chutney, although we'd have appreciated the addition of something crispy to add a textural contrast to the dish.

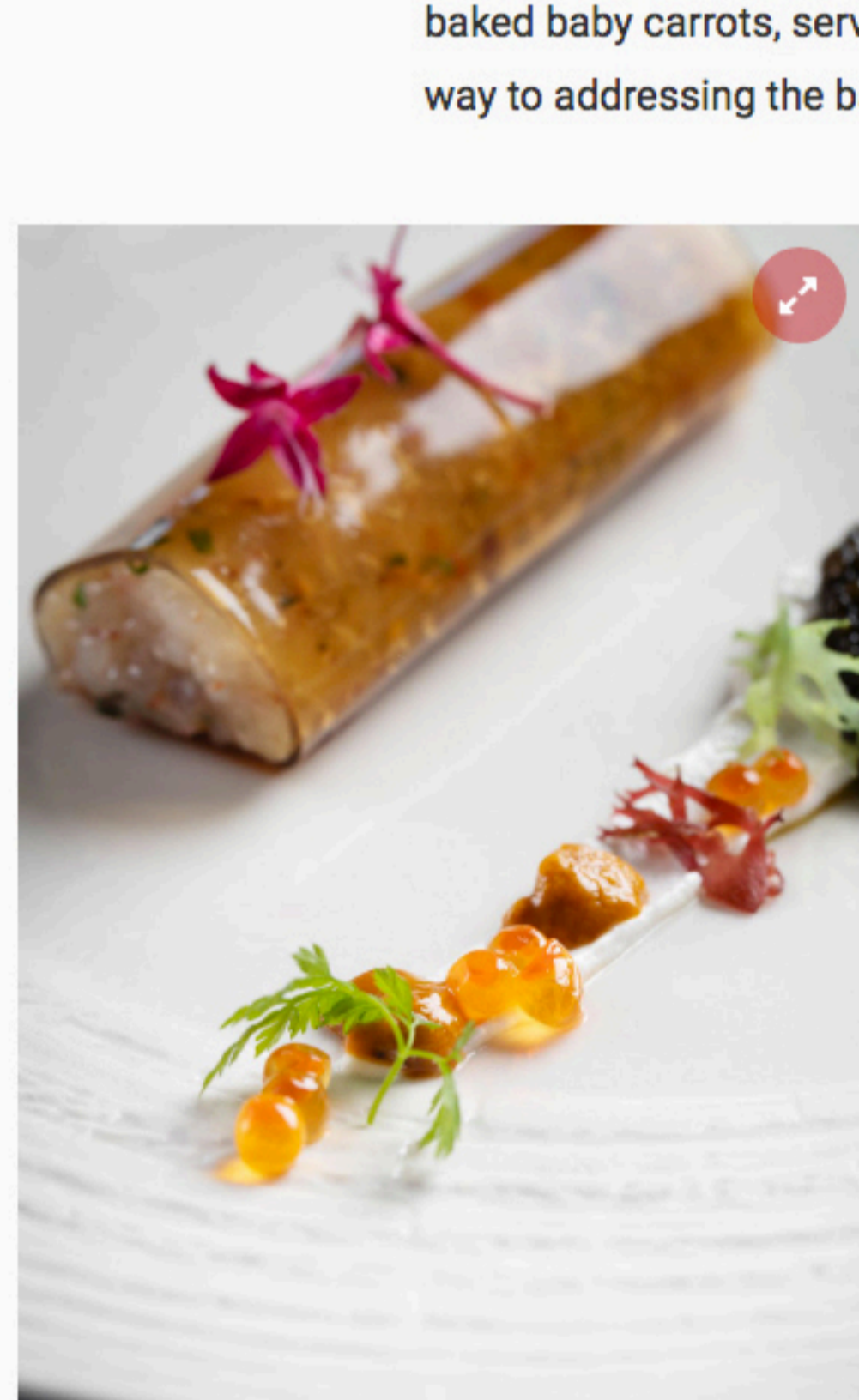
The heirloom beetroot ravioli arrives as three small parcels, featuring finely-chopped aubergine and red pepper filled inside thin beetroot sheets. These are delicious in their own right, as is the kaffir lime yoghurt they are served with (the refreshing zing of the kaffir lime is an inspired touch); eaten together though, and the thick creaminess of the yoghurt slightly overwhelms the delicate vegetable ravioli.



Slow-cooked, 24-hour marinated British oxtail with potato puree and heritage tomato compote. (Photo: Statement)

For mains, we try the Wicks Manor Farm pork loin with black pudding, butternut squash and quince jelly. The flavour combination is on point – we particularly enjoy the black pudding, which is shredded to give an almost pulled texture before being rolled into a ball and encased in golden breadcrumbs – but the pork itself is sadly overcooked and dry; without enough sauce to help it down, we end up having to leave at least half the portion.

The slow-cooked, 24-hour marinated British oxtail with potato puree and heritage tomato compote fares better. The meat is beautifully tender and falls apart at the touch; we love its slightly caramelised, crunchy edges and the full-bodied rich flavour of the meat, although again, it's just a little too salty overall. The sweetness of our side of baked baby carrots, served with creamy goat's curd and crispy buckwheat, goes some way to addressing the balance.

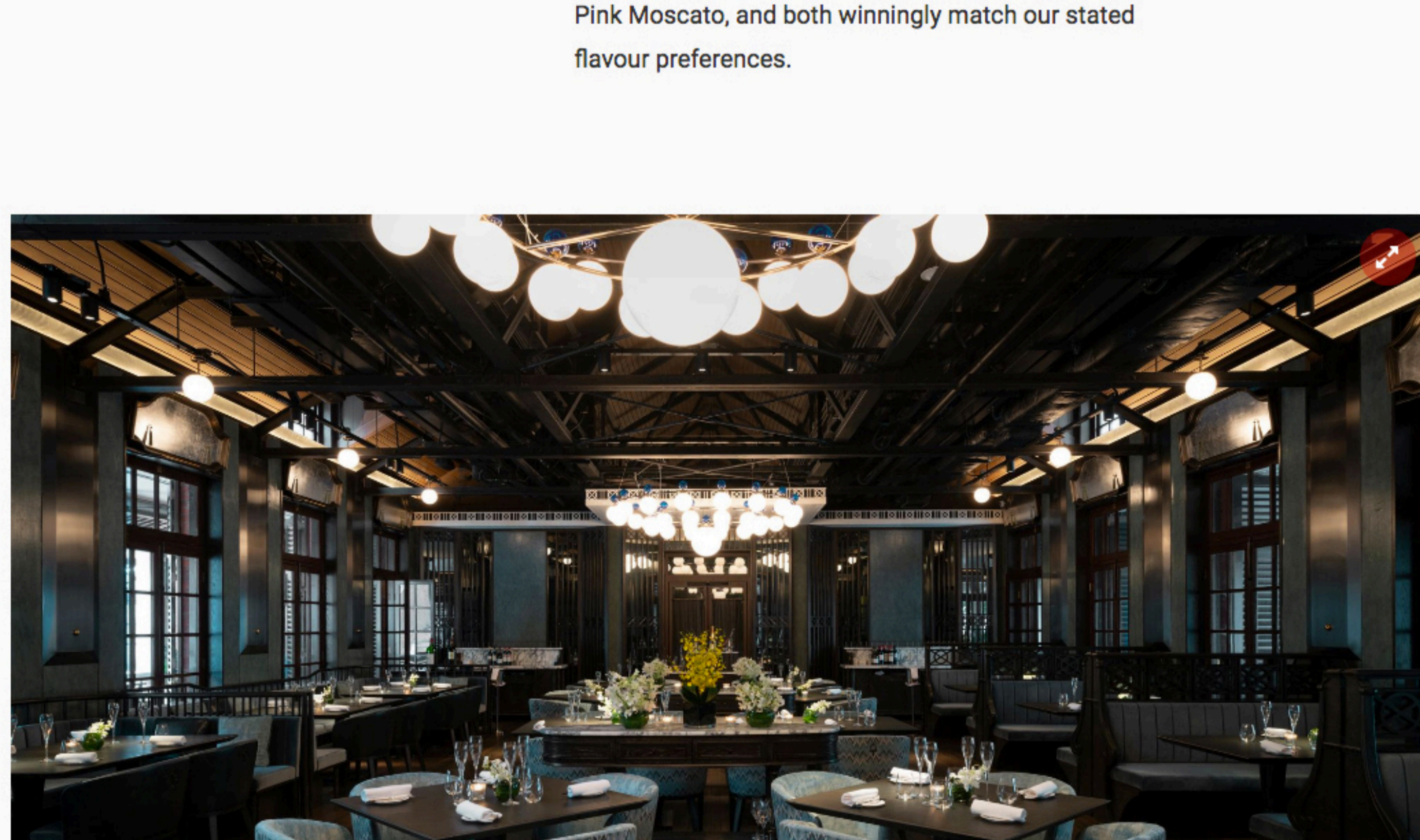


Red prawn tartare cigar with sea urchin and salmon roe. (Photo: Statement)

Every member of staff we speak to recommends the sticky toffee pudding for dessert. Statement's version is less dense than the traditional stodge of the much-loved British classic, although at this point in the meal, this lighter style of sponge is rather appreciated – and frankly, we could drink the accompanying butterscotch sauce by the ladle.

Even better however is the caramelised cinnamon set custard; essentially a crème brûlée, it boasts a sugar top that cracks satisfyingly against your spoon, whilst the custard has a dreamy silky texture and feather-light texture that makes every bite pure pleasure. The sprinkling of cinnamon gives the dish a gorgeous, comforting warmth whilst macerated blackberries inject a burst of freshness.

The wine list is excellent and extensive, with a range of price points available and helpful tasting notes given for the substantial by-glass selection. We opt for a flinty Sancerre "Les Baronnes" white wine and a honey-sweet Pink Moscato, and both winningly match our stated flavour preferences.



Statement mixes teal, dove grey and dark woods in its plush interior design. (Photo: Statement)

Service at Statement is friendly and well-informed too (noticing our English accents, we have several convivial conversations with staff about where in the UK we are from originally); our servers are able to explain each element and ingredient on the plate, although it does get difficult to flag them down once the restaurant is full.

With its focus on quality ingredients and robust flavours matched with elegant presentation and suitably sophisticated surroundings, Statement has all the necessary foundations in place – and with just a little more refinement, could easily hit even greater heights.

Statement, Police Headquarters, Tai Kwun, 10 Hollywood Road, Central, Hong Kong; +852 2848 3000

A meal for two with one beverage and service: around HK\$1,800

Rating: 4/5

How we rate

Each of our reviewers score restaurants based on four main criteria: setting, food, service, and drinks, taking into account more than the 35 different words of reference including manners of staff, usefulness of the wine list, and whether or not the restaurant makes an effort to be environmentally aware. 5/5 indicates an exceptional experience; 4-4.5/5 is excellent; 3-3.5/5 is good to very good; and 2.5/5 or lower is average to below average. Before visiting a restaurant, the reviewers will book using a pseudonym and do not make themselves known to restaurant staff, in order to ensure the venue is not made a regular guest—if this is not possible, or if we are recognised, we will indicate this in the review.