

Cognoscenti magazine

Because life is short

Boscolo Park Hotel L'Avenue Restaurant / Saveurs Restaurant Nice, France

Like most Boscolo Hotels properties, **Boscolo Hotel Park** is set in a city center with plenty of nearby attractions offering lots of touristic appeal. Overlooking the palm-fringed city garden that separates it from Nice's colorful old town, the hotel offers fine views of the Baie des Anges' (the Bay of Angels') magic azure—the sea is only a block away. Step outside the hotel and you're instantly drawn into a lively city scene with plenty of cafés and nightlife, and you'll also notice many fine examples of the town's characteristically pastel-colored buildings nearby, their tall, slatted window shutters left open or closed (depending on whether Nice's often-scorching sun is shining or not).

Inside the hotel, things are a little less exciting. Although the streamlined lobby is nicely modern, with the staff looking sharp in their all-black uniforms, the building itself has a somewhat institutional feel and poor sound insulation. True, all the amenities of a 4 star hotel are present, including TV, mini-bar, and mini-safe, but the emphasis appears to be on economy. Our upper-floor room had a nice balcony with a pair of chairs (unfortunately not

dusted) to lounge in. We found the crowded breakfast buffet to be similarly “budget.” Since the Boscolo Hotels group operates several beautiful hotels in Italy, and acquired this building only in 2000, we can safely assume there are plans for further improvements to



View on Nice's Bay of Angels from the Boscolo Park Hotel

bring this property up to true 4-star elegance.

Things got more interesting when we ventured downstairs to the trendy **L'Avenue Supper Club**, an independently operated dinner club leased from the hotel by the **Dalton Group**, whose nocturnal empire also includes the Hazen and Tantra clubs in nearby Cannes.

Tables in this sumptuous supper club undulate against the back wall, with circular booths filling the center area; lighting is stylish and discrete.

Chef Fabien Garino describes his cuisine as “fusion Asiatic-French.” We began with a medley plate, “*salade de l’avenue*,” that included delicate salmon *nems*, then moved onto a fricassee of jumbo shrimp that was creatively flavored with cranberry, orange and grapefruit juice. Everything was served impeccably fresh, with spicy Thai and Indian notes providing a nice change to those who might be jaded by a steady diet of classical French cuisine.

“We’re a restaurant that turns into a nightclub later,” explained Club Director Joaquin Murcia. We lingered long enough to watch the dinner club fill up with “the beautiful people”—some of whom began trickling into the back rooms, where the lighting was even *more* discrete. After starting on a soul/R&B note, the DJ’s musical selections slowly but steadily went uptempo, moving into progressive dance beats.

Next evening we dined at **Les Saveurs**, a new and independently operated restaurant located at the **Boscolo Hotel Plaza**, just a block away from the Hotel Park. This low-key dining venue has an appealing concept: wine and women! The all-female service staff wears red aprons over white tops and black slacks while providing friendly and professional service. All the wines on the card are available by the glass as well as by the bottle; the atmosphere suggests lounge-bar conviviality.

A *salade de homard rôti with mesclun d’artichauts sautés en vinaigrette de corail* was fresh and abundant. The seabass and lobster raviolis in *ravioles de loup de ligne et homard, jus mousseux de ciboule* were also fresh, but swimming in too much cream. *Dorade à la plancha* came with plenty of pungent black olives and vegetables, as did the *rougets poêlés* with *jeunes fèves*. But the lamb in *carré d’agneau en croûte d’herbes fraîches* hadn’t been well trimmed, and was more fat than lean.

From a wine card of mostly Cotes de Provence and

Italian listings, we chose a bottle of white 2000 *Chateau de Simone* with a bouquet of vanilla, good balance, and deep notes of stewed fruit to accompany our meal.

This article was written by contributing editors to *Cognoscenti Magazine*.

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