



The Hotel's Wish restaurant, in Miami Beach.

Wish Well

We could hardly wait to try Wish.

The restaurant, located in The Hotel on South Beach, has a reputation for being one of the most enchanting spots in town. Its patio, on a busy corner of Collins Avenue, is atmospheric and hidden behind lush greenery and a waterfall that blocks out city noise and allows for privacy.

As luck would have it, the night we visited it poured. We were ushered past the horde of hip-huggers gathered

around the pulsating bar to the inside dining room that doubles as the hotel lobby. Directly opposite the elevator, it is within striking distance of the front desk. In all fairness, this inside "room," designed by fashion guru Todd Oldham, is quite cool. In a nod to mod, the space is swathed in shades of blue, sports two-tone green velvet couches and bold mosaic

wall hangings. Not exactly what we expected but in the end it did not matter. The enthusiastic service and fantastic food made up for the soggy environs outside.

We tried desperately not to fill up with the ginger flatbread, which was served in a wire basket chock-full of equally tempting freshly baked wheat bread. There were many star appetizers. The crispy oxtail wontons, cinnamon dusted and served on a bed of portobello mushrooms with cucumber, zucchini and arugula puree was a winner, as were the light and spicy crab rolls. An absolute must is the Roaring Forties blue cheese salad, it is

studded with chunks of tangy blue cheese, sliced gala apples, crunchy walnuts and crisp greens none of which got lost amid the scene-stealing fig jam dressing. For main plates there is an abundance of seafood. We went with the evening's special: opa, a South Pacific fish. It was stunning. Buttery and moist, it fell away at the touch of a fork. On another visit we might try the crispy skin snapper, which is served with grilled shrimp, or maybe the spicy seared tuna, flavored with lemon-sake butter. This night we had our eye on the roasted rack of lamb, but because our server confessed that he and his wife come in just for the ribeye we decided to find out why. Now we know. The steak, a 14-ounce bruiser, was expertly prepared, flavorful, juicy and tender. The creamy risotto side dish that came along for the ride was not shabby either. By evening's end the skies had cleared and we just couldn't resist finagling our way outside for dessert. There we tasted the incredibly romantic atmosphere along with a luscious orange soufflé. — Barbara Perkins

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Wish at The Hotel, 801 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach. Lunch daily, 11:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.; Dinner Tuesday – Sunday, 6:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 6:00 p.m. – midnight. (305) 531-2222 or (305) 674-9474.

POWER ISSUE WHO WILL IT BE?

2005

SouthFloridaCEO