



Medusa Osteria Romana: Very Red, Very Salty

Description

The advert got me. A taste of Rome, brought over to Singapore. Fortuna Group's third concept, billed as [Singapore's first Osteria Romana](#), sitting in the basement of South Beach Avenue next to JW Marriott. Google reviews looked good. And at the back of my head was that carbonara we had in Rome, the one that spoiled every other carbonara for me since. So we booked.



The room delivers before the food does. Everything is red. Red walls, red tables, red banquettes, checkerboard marble floor, a whole cluster of disco balls hanging in the middle. Loud, cheeky, very photogenic. If you come for the photos you will go home happy. Keep reading if you come for the food.



What we ordered

Fried Burrata (\$26)

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Fried crispy burrata with carbonara cream, black pepper and guanciale, chives on top. Comes out as a golden dome sitting in a pool of yellow sauce and it does look good. Cut it open and the burrata floods out white and molten. That is the money shot.

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Then you eat it. The shell is actually crisp, credit where due. Problem is the carbonara cream around it. Heavy, and salty enough that whatever milkiess the burrata had is gone. Burrata is a delicate cheese. Fry it, then drown it in salty cream, and you might as well have used any melting cheese inside. The guanciale on top just adds more salt on salt.

Brussel Sprouts (\$16)

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Honey, chilli oil, parmigiano, guanciale, herbed breadcrumbs on top. Best thing on our table, which already tells you something. Proper char on the cut faces, breadcrumbs gave it some crunch, honey and chilli oil worked. But it is a \$16 side dish and it was the highlight of the meal.

Spaghetti Carbonara (\$32)

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This one really cannot make it. Roman carbonara is egg yolk, pecorino, black pepper and guanciale fat, whipped together with pasta water into a sauce that clings to every strand. What came was spaghetti sitting in a big moat of pale yellow cream, loose until it pooled at the edge of the plate. It coated the plate more than it coated the pasta. Thick, flat, a bit claggy, none of that silky tension a real carbonara has.

And salty. Pecorino is already salty, guanciale is cured, so you must be disciplined with seasoning. They were not. Three forkfuls in and I was reaching for water. Crispy guanciale on top was fine, but by then it was just more salt.

\$32 before service charge and GST, in a restaurant whose whole identity is Roman classics. Carbonara is the one dish they cannot afford to get wrong. They got it wrong.

The water and the chilli

Two things you should know.

Free flow water is \$3 per person. Just order it, no need to think. With food this salty you will be very glad you did. Best value on the menu.



Every table has a jar of house made chilli with a small spoon in it. Dark red oil, plenty of crunchy bits. Tastes like Lao Gan Ma with extra crunch. Not bad, I did use it, but I still don't know what makes it special enough to sit on every table.

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Service

No complaints here. Attentive, friendly, water topped up, plates cleared at the right time. The floor staff are doing their part. The problem is in the kitchen.



Would I go back

The room is fun. If you are booking a birthday dinner and you want somewhere loud and red where everyone's photos come out nice, Medusa does the job.

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But on food alone, it cannot compare to [the other Italian places we have eaten at in Singapore](#), and it is nowhere near Rome. The kitchen leans on salt and cream where it should be leaning on technique. I went in wanting to like it, and still came out disappointed.

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Go for the disco balls.

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Medusa Italian Osteria Romana

26 Beach Road, #B1-22 South Beach Avenue, Singapore 189768

Lunch 12pm to 2.30pm, dinner from 5.30pm, last order 9.45pm

Prices quoted are before service charge and GST

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