

REVIEWS

"Sad the Chef is leaving" Reviewed 10 January 2013

After hearing about Chef's Georges decision to return to London. We decided that we had to go and have a last meal at O Leao de Porches on Tuesday the 8th January 2013. As usually the meal was utterly superb and what a shame that Chef George is leaving. The restaurant is charming and the service attentive which we are sure will continue but the food will probably revert back to Belgium and Portuguese cuisine as it was before. We will follow Chef George's career and hope be lucky enough to have another meal cooked by him in the future, wherever he may be.

"Unbelievably amazing - 100 times better than the competition" Reviewed 23 November 2012

This place had it all - the service was amazing, the atmosphere was beautiful but its the food that stands out the most. I had a rabbit terrine with "textures of apple". I was dubious at the description of it but it was perfect. The rabbit was so tasty and there were truly beautiful textures of apple that added a whole new dimension. For main I had a flawless confit of duck leg with pear. Perfect. The wine was amazing and the amuse Bouche was inspired. My girlfriend doesn't eat meat (but eats fish) and she has struggled to find food that she likes in portugal. This place was stunning for her. She had a filo pasty wrapped goats cheese with a honey dressing - brilliant. Then a salmon fillet with smoked salmon foam and broccoli florets. Outstanding. The dessert of chocolate delice with orange reduction was the best chocolate dessert I have ever had. The total price was reasonable especially when considering the standard of food. After the meal we instantly booked a table for the next night (which is tonight)!!!! Can't wait to try the lobster done three ways.....or should I have the beef? Too many delicious options! Top marks for the Lion of Porches.

"What a treat!" Reviewed 14 November 2012

Seven of us went to O Leao for our friends Wedding anniversary dinner. We were made to feel very welcome, the service was excellent, very attentive without being intrusive. The food was out of this world, I have never had such a lovely meal. The flavours and presentation were so impressive, I cannot praise it enough. This is a special place for a special occasion, not cheap, but well worth it. An exceptional fine dining experience not to be missed.

"Best value for 100 Km" Reviewed 23 October 2012

We stayed in Armacao de Pera for a week in October - golf, beach, pool and fine dining. We dined twice at O Leao de Porches because it was so good and stood head and shoulders over the other recommended places (Porches Velho, Mirasys, Pimentapreta and Belmondo). One one evening we spent €85 and on the second (and last) €145. We were blown away by the starter - fresh oyster cauliflower soup! As my main I had the black pork which, without a lie, melted in my mouth. The selection of Portuguese wines was extensive with a good price range. On the second visit we indulged with pre-dinner drinks, an upscale wine and 'puddings'. The dessert flavours were too much - pineapple poached in scheszwan pepper with a lime sorbet! Hello! Don't miss this if you are in the area. The setting (17th century, so they say) in a very, very old home is both intimate and historic.

"Ruby wedding celebration meal" Reviewed 5 October 2012

We celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary in June 2012. Our holiday to the Porches area was very enjoyable. However, the high light of the holiday was our evening spent at O leao, we found out about this top class restaurant while staying at the Vilalara Hotel (excellent). We decided to locate the restaurant earlier in the day and had the privilege of meeting John the highly talented British chef. We were welcomed by Bianca, the owner and the whole menu was explained in detail. Each course was delicious, but the main course was extra special- fillet lamb and 'cherolet' (excuse spelling) beef- both mouthwatering, never tasted meat cooked to such excellence. WELL DONE to all concerned.

"Fantastic!" Reviewed 17 July 2012

Tip of the hat to the chef and the staff at O Leao. We had the 5 course tasting menu with wine pairing, the best best food experience we have had on the Algarve coast after 5 summers spent in the region. The menu combined excellent local and international cuisine. Good wine, although a bit simple for our taste. Very friendly staff, however some of the junior waiters lacked english (and general food and wine) knowledge. Overall, good value for money (ca EUR 100 per person, incl. wine). Service and wine menu shortfall for a star, but most certainly worthy a bib gourmand. We will visit on our yearly trip to the Algarve.

"Always improving!" Reviewed 3 July 2012

We returned for another excellent dinner at O Leão de Porches. Although this restaurant is yet to be recognised by the Michelin system there can be no doubt as to the star quality of the cuisine prepared by its chef George. The amazing feature is that the kitchen is providing this high quality for up to 30 dinners with just chef George assisted by two young apprentices both of which have yet to have six months professional service! After a refreshing cucumber based amuse-buche we thoroughly enjoyed a starter of the day, tempura of cuttlefish roe, and then followed by a steak tartare with its extra depth of asian flavour. The main courses were, a steak with peppercorn sauce and chips with truffle emulsion, a special version of the Portuguese dish "favas com chorizo", and a fantastic duo of crusted lamb. All of these were attractively presented and full of satisfying flavour. To finish we shared a "strawberry symphony" and a poached pineapple with lime and ginger sorbet. To accompany the meal we drank the red and white house wine from the Douro which was refined enough to compliment the various dishes. This restaurant is rather unique in the Algarve as it is serving Michelin Starred level cuisine with lower prices than can normally be encountered. It is certainly not attempting to compete with the large majority of Algarve restaurants which serve typical international tourist dishes or those excellent "tascas" with their local tasty Portuguese specialities.

"Exceptional!!!" Reviewed 17 May 2012

During a recent holiday in Portugal a group of us went to O Leao de Porches for dinner on the recommendation of a friend. The setting is lovely from the cobbled street entrance in the centre of Porches village through to the valuted dining area of the historic house. Service was very friendly and informative with excellent wine recommendations. As for the food - the presentation and quality of the dishes is certainly of Michelin Star standard - we were without exception delighted with our choices. Fantastic food, fantastic atmosphere - do not miss a chance to eat at this restaurant. Exceptional!!!

"Beste restaurant bezoek in onze vakantie aan Algarve" Reviewed 23 September 2012

Gisterenavond gaan eten in O Leao de Porches.. En wat een mooie ervaring zeer gezellig restaurant... Vriendelijke bediening en eten van hoge kwaliteit... Als amuse kregen we een gazpacho van komkommer en een toastje met paté van sardines.. Mijn vrouw had de coquilles als voorgerecht deze waren perfect gegaard en van uitstekende kwaliteit..ikzelf had de tartaar van ossenhaas met truffel gewoon waanzinnig.. Als hoofd had ik de kabeljauw met 2soorten wortelen puree en hazelnoot en mijn vrouw had het duo van lam.. Beiden weer uitstekend gegaard en prachtig afgewerkt.. Als dessert had ik de crème brulee van laurier en blauwe bes.. Verrassend luchtig en een mooie afsluiter mijn vrouw had de aardbeien met espuma van aardbeien graniet van munt en sorbet... De afwerking van het eten is zeker een ster waard.. De prijs was in vergelijking met bij ons goedkoop we waren 122ekwijt..inclusief drank.. Er kan gekozen worden voor een 5gangen menu vd chef voor 58e... Na een leuke babbel met de Belgische gastvrouw bianca hoorde we dat haar chef 3jaar in de fat Duck in Londen heeft gewerkt en daarna de green house.. Hij wam ons zelf even begroeten net als de andere gasten... En hij heeft zijn volledige leerschool in londen gedaan.. Het was een prachtige avond en hopelijk kunnen we hun tweede restaurant deze vakantie ook nog bezoeken..

"Best restaurant visit our holiday to Algarve "

Last night dinner at O Leao de Porches .. And what a beautiful experience very pleasant restaurant ... Friendly service and food quality ... As an appetizer we got a gazpacho of cucumber and a toast with sardines pate .. My wife had the scallops as an appetizer these were perfectly cooked and of excellent quality .. I myself had the tartare of beef with truffle just amazing .. As main I had the cod with mashed potato, carrots and hazelnuts crumble and my wife had the duo of lamb .. Both again cooked perfectly and beautifully finished .. For dessert I had the creme brulee of bay and blueberry .. Surprisingly light and a nice ending my wife had the strawberries with strawberry espuma of granite of mint... The finishing of the food is definitely worthy of a star .. The price was cheap compared to us we were 122 Euro .. including drinks .. You can choose a 5 course menu of the chief for the 58 Euro ... After a nice chat with the Belgian hostess bianca we heard that her boss spent 3years at the Fat Duck in London and then the greenhouse .. He came ourselves to say hello, just like the other guests ... And he has done his entire school in london .. It was a wonderful evening and hopefully we can get their second restaurant this holiday also visit ..

"Sterreniveau" Reviewed 16 July 2012

In vergelijking met de meeste restaurants in de kuststreek, kan je hier rustig tafelen in een aangenaam kader. De kok, die zijn opleiding heeft genoten in The fat Dick (3 sterren in Engeland) tovert een palet van smaken in al zijn creaties. Eens wat anders als je wat variatie wenst tijdens een langer verblijf in de Algarve. Niet echt goedkoop in vergelijking met de Portugese restaurants. Reken al vlug 50 EUR per persoon voor een aperitief, hoofdgerecht, dessert en aangepaste wijn. Het niveau is echter dit van een 1-ster restaurant in België. Al bij al dus goedkoop als je hiermee de vergelijking maakt. Belgische uitbaatster is super vriendelijk en gastvrij en geeft je met veel plezier uitleg over de gerechten en allerlei randinformatie over de herkomst van de voeding. Zeker de moeite waard als je eens lekker wil tafelen in een rustig kader tegen een aanvaardbare kostprijs.

"Star Level"

Compared to most restaurants in the coastal area, here you can have a quiet meal in pleasant surroundings. The cook, who received his training at The Fat Dick (3 stars in England) conjures a palette of flavors in all his creations. Something else if you want some variation during a longer stay in the Algarve. Not really cheap compared to the Portuguese restaurants. Calculation quickly EUR 50 per person for an appetizer, main course, dessert and suitable wine. The level is that of a 1-star restaurant in Belgium. All in all therefore cheap if you play the comparison. Belgian manager is super friendly and welcoming and gives you lots of fun explaining the dishes and all kinds of edge information on the origin of the food. Definitely worth it if you want to have a nice dinner in a peaceful setting at an acceptable cost