

In the clear

Fog's inviting menu and comfortable atmosphere belie its mysterious name

It's a mystery why some restaurants end up with the names they do. Fog is a case in point. This large, very smart restaurant with its glossy black features, stylish floor staff and clever, interesting food is about as far removed from damp, cold and impenetrable as you can get.

Perhaps there is an acronym involved, or a late-night brainstorming session that went on a couple of nightcaps too long but. But whatever the reason, Fog is more inviting than its name might suggest.

Occupying a potentially cavernous and cold space, Fog has been given a lavish, nightclubbish makeover that is – surprisingly – as comfortable as it is dramatic.

A strip of electric-blue carpet leads you upstairs from the street-level café space to the main dining room, where you walk under marvellous sculptural

light fittings made from red painted twigs – the main point of colour in a room otherwise moodily decked out in black (pillars, chairs, bar) and dark wood (floors and tables).

The lighting is low, the mood casually luxurious, and the service efficient and discreet.

US chef Jeremy Sutphin's food is big flavoured and interestingly conceived. There is a notable – and for Melbourne, rare – American influence in the cooking in the form of cider maple vinaigrettes or Tabasco polenta croutons or beef short ribs.

These few "exotic" touches add some extra dimension to dishes that are already nicely balanced and well cooked.

Tuna sashimi (\$19) – thin layers of fresh fish cut into squares and laid, mosaic tile-like, in the middle of a square dish – sat in a shallow pool of

soy, topped with sesame seeds. A faint piquancy came from some green jalapeno pepper slices, adding to what was an interesting dish flavour and texture-wise.

Also interesting was a dish of beetroot cubes roasted in verjuice (\$12), topped with toasted coriander seeds and shaved fennel and surrounded by little marble-sized balls of Meredith goat's cheese.

A terrific seafood stew (\$29) of mussels, fish, prawns and calamari mixed it with white wine, tomatoes, roasted capsicum and leeks (be sure to have bread to sop up the delicious broth), while a pork chop on the bone (\$26) came with a excellent combination of chunky white corn polenta, Swiss chard and knee-weakeningly good green tomato chutney.

An elderly looking side salad (\$8) was the only real misstep.



ARSHINEH HOUSPIAN

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Desserts kept it interesting, with an almond frangipane cherry tart (\$15) teamed with a burnt orange reduction and fresh goat's curd.

With its tasty food, stylish room and switched-on service, Fog has a clearer picture of what makes a good dining experience than its name might otherwise suggest.

COMPLETED BY

The wine list is a well-priced collection of mainly Oz wines. The 2004 Discovery Road Pinot Noir (\$45) from the Macedon Ranges was light and fragrant with rose petal and raspberry flavours tempered by subtle earthy undertones. A modest and food-friendly wine. [mwm](#)

Fog

142 Greville Street, Prahran. Tel: 9521 3155

OWNER Sam Frantzeskos

CHEF Jeremy Sutphin

OPEN Tuesday to Friday, noon to 1am; Saturday to Sunday, 10am to 1am

Licensed. All cards and EFTPOS

COST About \$100 for two, plus drinks