

DINING OUT

NEW RESTAURANT REVIEWS

At Sambuca in Addison, Only the Menu Is Tame

Also: Cafe Istanbul, Sumo Steak, Street's, and Deco's By Arthur

SAMBUCA

DEEP, INVITING BOOTHS covered in animal prints, a high-tech bar area, a colorful Rousseau-type forest scene mural, and some free-wheeling iron handrails—clearly, a lot of attention has been paid to the decor in Addison's new Sambuca. The live jazz is another plus, except that Sambuca's hard surfaces (no draperies, no carpeted floors, etc. to help absorb noise) render the music almost painfully loud. After several visits, I've discovered that the bar area is the best place to dine, especially if you want to carry on a conversation.

It's also the best spot for people-watching, and Sambuca raises that hobby to a fine art. The bar area swims with some of the best bodies in town, many clad in animal prints and leather.

After that bacchanalian riot of noise and color, Sambuca's food seems almost restrained. The Caesar is tame; instead, opt for the spinach salad with its tasty croutons and intriguing sun-dried cherry vinaigrette. The bruschetta, topped with sun-dried tomato pesto, packs a punch, but the crostini topped with sautéed wild mushrooms would be much more interesting with a touch of garlic. The appetizer pizzas score high marks—they change daily, so hope the vegetarian one (heaped with artichoke hearts, bell peppers, goat cheese, and sun-dried tomatoes) is on the menu when you visit.

The specials seem to be more assertively flavored than the regular menu items, with especially good sauces like a perky tomato sauce on spaghetti, and a bold harissa-

PARTY PLACE:
At Sambuca, the main show is at the bar, not on the menu.



LISA MEANS

sauced filet mignon.

The wine list matches the food well, with choices from all over the globe, and an equally wide range of prices.

The dark chocolate mousse, once you scrape off the aerosol topping, ends the meal on a rich note, or, for an even richer finish, try the Romana Sambuca cake, drenched with the anise-flavored liqueur. At this point in the evening, the music is more mellow. Not that crowd at the bar, though. Order a glass of Sambuca, kick back, and enjoy the show.

—Suzanne Hough

Sambuca. 15207 Addison Rd., Addison, 214-385-8455. Lunch, Monday–Friday, 11:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.; dinner, Sunday–Wednesday, 6 p.m.–11 p.m., Thursday, 6 p.m.–midnight, Friday & Saturday, 6 p.m.–1 a.m. Moderate.