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Executive chef Jerome Lagarde on the caviar menu at At.mosphere

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Fans of caviar might like to treat themselves to an evening at At.mosphere located on the 122nd floor of Burj Khalifa in Dubai. Executive chef Jerome Lagarde shares his passion for the delicacy, and reveals what's in store for patrons for the upcoming truffle season.

This month sees the first caviar menu at At.mosphere, why now?

In October 2014, there was only one dish on the menu that featured caviar. It also happened to be one of our best-sellers. There was evidently interest and demand, so I created a caviar menu, in collaboration with one of our trusted suppliers. I'm happy to say it's proving very popular. To give you an example of just how popular, on average, At.mosphere's consumption exceeds 10kg of caviar a month. The new menu comprises three varieties: transmontanus, oscietra and Kristal, each of which has a distinctive taste, texture and grain.

What are two of your favourite dishes from the new offerings?

The hand-dive sea scallops with yuzu marinière, which incorporates Kristal caviar. It's my favourite, as it has a beautiful fresh taste, with strong

flavours of the ocean. Equally, I love the tuna crudo with horseradish and caviar. It is a combination of three outstanding natural products: the raw tuna and a big spoon of caviar, finished with the roots of horseradish.

How versatile is caviar as an ingredient to work with?

Each type of caviar is suited to a particular way of serving. Transmontanus – which is a basic level of caviar – mixes well, inside a cream, crème fouette or stuffing. Oscietra is the perfect complement to a seafood platter, served hot or cold. When eaten, it explodes into a succession of tastes from mildly salty to fragrant, which makes it a great match for seafood. As for black Kristal, it is beautiful for sauces – it transforms them. It's a great companion for refined dishes, truly delightful. All three caviar varieties come from different sturgeon and the caviar, therefore, all are totally different in terms of grain, texture and fattiness etc.

What is the correct way to store caviar?

Caviar should be stored at -2° to 0° Celsius, for freshness.

What is your favourite way to eat it?

Simply, caviar can be enjoyed with a dollop of cream and yuzu zest on a warm blinis. Personally, when I lived in Ukraine, every Saturday I would visit a particular market with my two young sons. I have fond memories of us starting our breakfasts with caviar and cured salmon there.

When did you first taste caviar?

I tried caviar in 1988 when I was working at a three-star Michelin restaurant. In those days, the caviar was kept locked in a fridge inside the chef's office. Only the chef had access to it because it was wild caviar and very expensive at the time. One day, chef opened the caviar tin and placed a teaspoon from it in my hand. To this day, I can still remember the taste: the firm texture, rich, fatty and iodate – it was nothing short of exceptional.

Truffle season is fast approaching. What can patrons expect to find on the menu at At.mosphere from November?

We'll welcome the truffle season with two menus, featuring the melanosporum Périgord truffle and the Alba white truffle. Black truffles originate from Périgord in France "Maison Plantin", whereas white truffles are found in the town of Alba in the Piedmont region. We used 108kg of the black truffles last season and for the festive period, we consumed 18kg of the Alba truffles, which means our menu will certainly incorporate this magical ingredient again in the coming months.

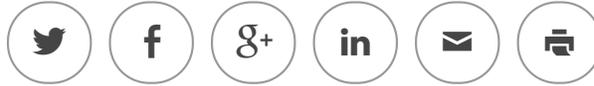
Which truffle dish are you particularly excited about?

Our pithivier signature dish is exceptional. Simply described, it's an enclosed, round pie of puff pastry stuffed with game meat such as rabbit, veal belly, duck, foie gras and truffles. We use artisanal Bordier butter for our pastry and we bake this à la minute – made to order, never in advance – therefore, we need approximately 20 minutes for preparation.

• **The caviar menu at [At.mosphere](#) restaurant is available until November for Dh880 per person, excluding beverages. For reservations, call 04 888 3828 or email**

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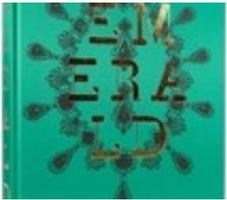
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