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THE CITY AS A
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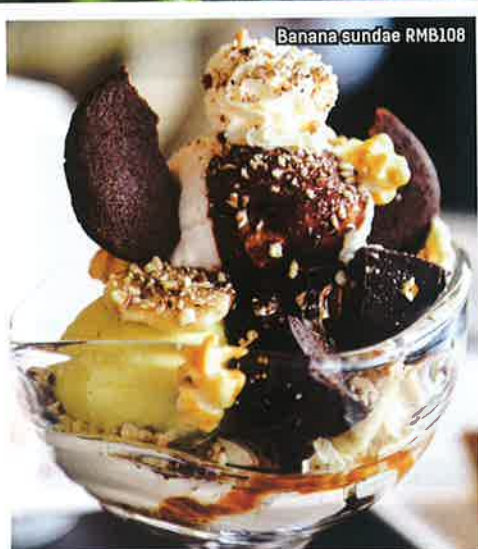
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APRIL 2015



Shrimp and avocado cocktail RMB98



Banana sundae RMB108



Tomato burrata salad RMB118

POP

Three on the Bund's penthouse American Brasserie

BY BETTY RICHARDSON

Three on the Bund, AKA 'Shanghai's finest epicurean destination' has added another restaurant to its layer cake of eateries, and this one's right on top. But is it a crowning glory or a casual little sister to its powerhouse neighbors Jean Georges, Mercato, Chi-Q, Nougatine, Whampoa Club and Unico?

Replacing ailing predecessor New Heights, POP is styled as an 'American brasserie,' a seemingly new invention by the hand of Three on the Bund. This term apparently alludes to a somewhat all-encompassing cuisine, touching base with more than a few French and Mediterranean traditions. Given the propensity of Americans who refer to their land as a 'cultural melting pot,' perhaps diversity is apt.

Starters opened with a fabulous **tomato burrata salad with pine nuts, pesto and balsamic vinegar** (RMB118) fine sliced orange, green, yellow and red heirloom tomatoes around a whole Solo Latte burrata – same as used downstairs in Mercato.

Second, a **shrimp and avocado cocktail** with citrus dressing, for its size slightly overpriced at RMB98. This is a shrimp cocktail as the English know it – with a creamy Marie rose sauce (tomatoes, mayonnaise, Worcestershire sauce, lemon juice and pepper) rather than the mayonnaise-free American variety.

Finally, a true American champion: **Caesar salad** (RMB68), with poached egg, bacon, parmesan, golf ball-sized croutons and anchovies. Good value for money, the poached egg was an ingenious touch; after mixing it imbued extra depth and escaped the cloying creaminess of over-dressed Caesar salad.

Spicy **seared tuna with puy lentils, chorizo and piquillo peppers** (RMB178) was healthy, well-sized and packed with flavor; a choice for anyone seeking a diet-conscious entrée. Not befitting of an 'American brasserie,' but hey, we're not ones to knock good food.

Braised beef short-rib with risotto and mushrooms (RMB228) paired with incredibly **light truffle pureed potato** (RMB38) it's a generous portion, but we preferred the glazed **Iberico pork belly, sweet potato and kale** (RMB158) as we like our meat fatty. If lean is

your thing, go for the beef.

POP's menu doesn't have many of the things one might associate with Americana: no ribs, pizza, hot dogs or wings here. They do have steaks and burgers, which can be **'surfed' with a half lobster for** RMB340, or embellished **à la 'Rossini'** with a slab of foie gras and truffle for RMB90. Steaks start at RMB200 for flank and round off at RMB1080 for **850g bone-in ribeye** (for two). **Wagyu beef burger with bacon, cheese, onion and fries** comes in at RMB128.

Desserts were a fun, retro and pretense-free highlight of our meal. Arguably the most 'American' items on the menu, the **ice cream sundae** (RMB108) topped with bananas, chocolate sauce, brownie, caramel popcorn and biscuit took us straight back to childhood, while homemade ice cream (we chose coconut sorbet, pistachio and coffee) kept it classy. For those with monster appetites (or post-breakup blues) go supersize with the **jumbo sundae** (eight flavors of ice cream, marshmallow, berry compote, brownie, chocolate sauce, Oreos and caramel popcorn, RMB288).

A slice of warm **pecan pie with vanilla ice cream** (RMB75) proved a homey slice of USA; **banana, chocolate and pistachio doughnuts** (RMB65) were an excellent accompaniment to our coffee.

We're sure there will be critics of POP to call it out for not being 'American enough' to warrant its elaborate marketing campaign, but overall POP is a place exceptionally hard to dislike.

Price: RMB4-500 per person, more with cocktails/steak. Plus 10 percent service charge.

Who's going: Mix of locals, French businessmen, out-of-towners.

Good for: Dates, casual dinner, business dinner/lunch, city views.

// 7F, 3 Zhongshan Dong Yi Lu, by Guangdong Lu. 中山东一路3号7楼 近广东路. Nearest Metro: Nanjing Dong Lu, 15 mins. Open daily, 11am-2pm, 5-11pm. Local and international cards accepted. (6321 0909)