

# Time Out

## Barcelona

ENGLISH EDITION!



Barcelona  
Turisme

OFFICIAL GUIDE OF BCN

# BEST

# OF THE

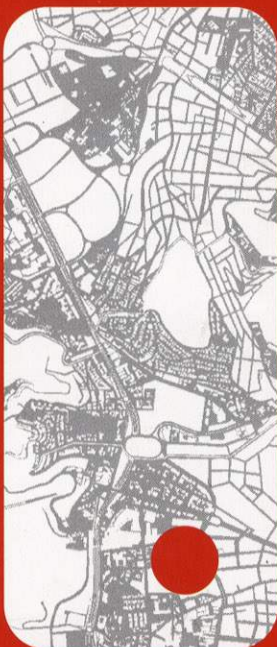
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## PLUS!

BARCELONA'S BIGGEST  
FIESTA OF THE YEAR,  
TÀPIES VS. MIRÓ,  
MARKET SHOPPING...

# 'HOODS

TAKE A TOUR OF OUR FAVOURITE SPOTS AROUND TOWN





CECILIA DE FATIMA

## The Roca way

Can't get a table at El Celler de Can Roca? Take an introductory course at Roca Moo. By **Pau Arenós**

I hadn't been back to Roca Moo since the previous – and first – chef, Felip Llufríu, left, and I'd delayed getting to know Juan Pretel's cooking for too long. When aristo-chefs like the Roca brothers open a new branch and delegate their powers to a head chef, the unstable cocktail of egos and responsibilities can be explosive. There are three schools of thought: 1) do nothing but claim the chef's creations as your own; 2) have the chef reproduce your dishes exactly, without allowing them the liberty to make their own contribution; or 3) allow the chef to develop their own ideas, and give them your backing, but let them take the responsibility – and the credit.

The intelligent and honest option is 3, and it's the one preferred by Joan Roca. It was his approach with Llufríu, and now with Pretel too. Roca Moo shares the spirit of El Celler – but it's not

El Celler. Anyone who wants to discover the world of the Rocas, and can't get a reservation in Girona – understandable, given the global demand – can get a taste of it at Roca Moo. And rediscover traditional tapas at Roca Bar.

I bade farewell to Llufríu over dinner with the head of the Roca clan, and I welcome Pretel in the same company. Roca has to try

two new dishes, and takes advantage of our meeting to taste them: he offers suggestions on plating and on a technique they're trying at El Celler. Pretel is a highly skilled cook who understands the fundamentals of the Roca philosophy. The dining room is expertly managed by Maria Sainz, and in charge of the cellar is Audrey Doré – who, on an earlier visit, introduced me to Mendall wines. All her suggestions are spot on, but she wins my heart with the Comabruna 2011.

Among the snacks, I'd highlight the *grissini de gambetes* – delicate breadsticks with shrimps – just because of the work needed in attaching the tiny crustaceans. The *cochinilla pibil* broche should be sold by the kilo. The liquid bonbon of vermouth and orange had a boozy kick. The trout with spicy *brava* sauce and *allíoli* (garlic mayonnaise) was lacking something: if it's supposed to

have a rough and ready edge, it should live up to its reputation.

Vegetables served on a base of cocoa, representing a Mediterranean garden, are sprinkled with a consommé at the table. This symbolic watering remains an empty gesture: the waiter omits to explain the reason behind it. The potato gnocchi with Iberian ham carbonara is sinfully good. The cucumber and tomato soup with black olive sorbet is all intense summer flavours: it's a bi-colour dish – and, according to Roca, is better combined at the table than in the kitchen.

We come to truly serious dishes with the mackerel, served with celery noodles and coconut carbonara, and the turbot with two curries: finger-licking good. Harmony, between two worlds, perfectly executed. The lamb was fine, but even better were the caramelised shallots, which were truly outstanding. It all finished off with impressive desserts from pastry chef Paolo.

The restaurants around Passeig de Gràcia could easily get together to create a gastronomic tour. From top to bottom, there's L'Eggs/Doble, Roca Moo/Roca Bar, Petit Comitè, La Pedrera, Lasarte/Loidi, Moments/Bistreau and Tapas 24. Is anyone in the mood to create a new food hub?

### ROCA MOO

Hotel Omm. Rosselló, 265 (Eixample Dret). T. 93 445 40 00. Set lunch menu: €45. Tasting menus: €87 and €110 (without wine).

### WHAT ELSE?

#### Look out for:

The bar, with a view of the cooks at work.

#### Recommended for:

A first taste of Roca cuisine.

#### Stay away if:

You don't think the Roca brothers are No.1.