

## Restaurant Prado in the Bellevue Hotel, Gstaad

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By Sue Style

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Choosing what to eat recently at the Restaurant Prado in the Bellevue Hotel in Gstaad was made mercifully simple: the *prix-fixe* dinner menu featured three of my favourite things (turbot, pigeon, chocolate). Done deal, no need for agonising choices – which is just as well as the lighting in the small, narrow restaurant is so subdued that you'd need a private pencil torch to read either the menu or the wine list. For the latter too, the pain was neatly removed by maitre d' Ben Vanherck, who proposed three different wines, all Swiss (at our request), one for each course.



Appetites were sharpened by a mouthful of foamy, iced red pepper soup with morsels of fish terrine and a bird's nest of flash-fried fish.

It takes courage and confidence to build a first course entirely around the pea. To serve his leguminous themes and variations, the chef had chosen a square glass plate like a window with four panes. One section contained a brilliant green pea sorbet on a spoon, another a blini topped with smoked herring and Avruga caviar set about with crunchy (raw) peas. A third quarter held an exemplary sliver of carrot and pea terrine and on the last pane was perched a shot glass of wild garlic and pea soup.

A chunk of turbot was cooked with Swiss precision. Less predictable was the distinctly Mediterranean feel to the dish: clean, light, a whiff of saffron, crunchy vegetables and a crowning sliver of turbot skin which had been flash-fried in the manner of basil leaves or vegetable chips. With both peas and fish came a white Merlot from Vinattieri in Ticino, fruity but dry with a better backbone of acidity than you might expect from a Merlot.

The pigeon breast brought forth an impressively muscular, ruby red 2003 Pinot Noir Rarum from Nauer in Aargau, a canton celebrated more for its carrots than its wine. We consulted the maitre d' about Swiss cheese and a slice of soft, truffle-infused brie from master cheesemaker Johann Graf in neighbouring Schönried slid onto our plates. Time enough to allow the kitchen to busy themselves with the chocolate creation, an *oeuf surprise* of deep, dark chocolate mousse cradled in an eggshell and a small square of gooey chocolate cake with a velvety oval of pistachio ice. A glass of deep golden, late harvest Riesling x Sylvaner from Zahner in Canton Zurich was the third wine, another delectable Swiss curiosity.

Tel: +41 33 748 00 00; [www.bellevue-gstaad.ch](http://www.bellevue-gstaad.ch). Five-course menu: SFr190/ (£108).

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