

**RESTAURANT GUIDE:**

# DINING ON CELEBRITY SILHOUETTE

**An inside guide with  
Food and Beverage Manager Carlos Echaiz**

**by**

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Celebrity Silhouette has more than a dozen different dining venues. All of these fall with the direct responsibility of Food and Beverage Manager Carlos Echaiz. Accordingly, I asked Mr. Echaiz to guide us through all of the dining options available to guests on Silhouette. "Between all the specialties and the main restaurant, you can be in a different part of the world every night."

#### *The Dinning Rooms*

"Our main restaurant is the **Grand Cuvee**. First of all, when you go inside, it is a beautiful design. That takes your whole mind into the dining experience." Grand Cuvee occupies portions of two decks. "On Deck 4, it is full Select Dining so it is a flexible dining alter-

native for the guests that [want to] come at their leisure. Then you have Deck 3, which is fixed classic seating at 6 and 8:30."

Similarly, the menu in the Grand Cuvee also has two sections. "On the left side you have classic favorites. It is basically everything that our guests have been requesting throughout the years - - things that they like to have available every day. You have there your Caesar salad, your escargot, your onion soup, grilled salmon, also plain things like New York steak and grilled chicken."

This restaurant is open "for breakfast lunch and dinner on a sea day; Breakfast and dinner on a port day."

"Once a cruise we do the brunch. Our culinary team goes all the way to have a very visual brunch with live music. It is where we display our ice carvings. It

is fun. We love brunch and I am sure our guests do too."

The Grand Cuvee is not the dining room for some of the guests on Silhouette. Guests staying in the ship's Aqua Class staterooms have their own dining room. The Aqua Class staterooms are premium cabins with more luxurious amenities than the standard cabins. Those guests also have privileges in the ship's spa. Accordingly, their dining room, which is called "Blu" has a healthy-living focus.

"It is not that healthy means less food or smaller portions. It is just stay away from the creamy-based sauces. We do more emulsions and try to use less butter and less cream. We do things that are healthier without taking away from the dish itself."

The quality of the ingredients and their freshness come through. "Being smaller in size than the main dining room, we have the opportunity to do [more ala minute cooking]."

Blu offers breakfast and dinner. "It is all open seating. It is a 10-day cycle menu."

"It has been very successful. Guests book Aqua Class just to have the chance to be in Blu. They create a small family there."

#### *Specialty Restaurants*

Celebrity's signature specialty restaurant is **Murano**, "our fine dining restaurant." This is a gourmet venue with an elegant and sophisticated style.

The concept is the same as the original specialty restaurants on Celebrity's Millennium class ships, e.g., The Ocean Liners on Celebrity Constellation and the Normandie on Celebrity Summit. "On the Solstice class, we do not change the name as on the Millennium class. It is Murano throughout all the Solstice class ships."

Murano features a "very elaborate menu with all 100 percent ala minute cooked and fresh product. You have the Fine Senses dinner on the left side that is basically a fixed menu, a little bit of a taste of the regular menu and it is paired with specific wines. You will experience all five senses with food, service, and wine, for a fixed price. Then on the right side you have the regular menu and you can pick out whatever dishes you want -- two, three, four -- whatever is your taste."

"The service is outstanding. You have one wait-



*Carlos Echaiz*

er for every couple of tables and so he will be 100 percent involved in your experience. A lot of dishes are prepared right there table side in front of you, which makes it very special." The restaurant also has a dedicated sommelier.

Because of the expense of operating such a venue, restaurants of this caliber are becoming increasingly scarce on land, not to mention at sea. "But we want to give that experience to the guests, continuing the tradition of our fine dining restaurants. We couldn't be Celebrity without Murano."

Like Murano, the **Tuscan Grille** offers a multi-course dinner for a fixed charge. Overlooking the ship's wake from the back of Deck Five, it offers "the best view in town."

The Tuscan Grille is styled as an "Italian steakhouse with a seafood influence. You are going to feel half in Italy."

"The variety is immense. The menu goes from deep fried calamari to beef raviolis to beautiful salads like arugula and mozzarella. You have the cioppino, a seafood soup that is beautiful. You have the onion soup Tuscan style that you cannot miss. You have steak tartars and all this is as a first or second course."

"Then you divide in three the main courses. You have pastas - - linguini with lobster, you have your mushroom raviolis, all kinds of pasta. Then you go to your fish - - tuna is my favorite, amazing presentation - -scampi and scallops, And the final part of the steakhouse, you have your rib eyes, filet mignons, veal chops."

"You have a separate dessert menu. You have: tiramisu, a classic Italian dessert; A fondue, in which you can dip your marshmallows and pineapples in chocolate."

"Also at the entrance, you'll see we have all these bottles of wine displayed there. We have a beautiful selection of wines."

Neighboring the Tuscan Grille on the starboard side is **Qsine** " - - uniquely unordinary, quite an experience. The first one was on Eclipse."

"Qsine is the creation of our master chef Jacques Van Statden. I would say it is a journey through Jacques' mind - - his culinary experience around the world put together into one restaurant. You cannot define it as Italian, French, Mediterranean, South American - - no, it is Qsine, just Qsine."

It is clear that Qsine is different from the moment that you walk in. "You go inside, you have lamps that are upside down, chairs that are not even, kind of an Alice-in-Wonderland decoration and design."

"You sit down and you [are given] an iPad - - that is already something different and unordinary - - with videos of every dish." You do not order an appetizer, soup, and main course. Rather, the menu items are "all dishes and they will all come as they are ready in the galley. So you pick out ten dishes and the [kitchen] will start preparing all ten and as soon as they are ready, they start coming out."

This unique approach carries through into "the presentation of the dishes. You have them in such different ways like: M's Favorites comes to your table in a suitcase. [Another dish] comes with blinking lights. The Slider Party comes in cast iron pots. The whole point is to have fun."

All of this can be overwhelming to the uninitiated. Therefore, the waiters do not merely take orders and bring food to the table. "The waiters are called culinary tour guides. They will guide you through the culinary journey of Qsine. First of all they will explain the concept. Then they will guide you through the menu - - how to order and how much to order. They have experienced the whole menu themselves, so usually they are giving ideas. They do not just carry food, they guide you throughout."

A new specialty restaurant that debuted on Silhouette is the **Lawn Club Grill**, which is located on

the top of the ship adjacent to the ship's lawn of real grass. "It is open for dinner as a specialty restaurant. A very simple menu, lots of fun."

"The Lawn Club Grill is also a creation of our master chef Jacques Van Staden. Something that was missing [from Celebrity's line-up of specialty restaurants] in his view was something interactive, something where the guests can actually participate with us and be part of the whole experience."

At the Lawn Club, "you start with the flat breads - - pizzas - - and you make your own. Then we have a nice meat refrigerator where you can choose your meat cuts, your fish, a beautiful selection of seafood and you can grill them yourself. They give you aprons and hats and you feel like a chef."

Besides being fun, it is also a learning experience. The preparation and cooking is done under the supervision of one of the restaurant's chefs "They are very knowledgeable and so you can bring home a little bit of Celebrity cooking style and skills."

If cooking does not interest you or if you are trying to escape such tasks while on vacation, "you do not have to cook. We will cook everything for you like a regular restaurant. Then you just sit and relax and we'll take care of everything."

And there is much to be said for just absorbing the atmosphere. The restaurant opens out onto a large grassy area which is prettily lit in the evenings, thus making for a nice view. Furthermore, on some nights, "we do live concerts right next to the Lawn Club Grill. You have the jazz band, you have our guitarist and you have the strings. So you can be there grilling your steak, enjoying a glass of wine, with the jazz band playing on the side, watching the sun set. It cannot really get better than that."

While dining in the specialty restaurants has in the past been an evening affair, Silhouette opens Murano and the Tuscan Grille for lunch on sea days. The Lawn Club Grille is also open for lunch occasionally. In addition, it is used to give combination cooking classes and lunches, which must be pre-booked.

### *Casual Dining*

Silhouette's large buffet restaurant is the **Oceanview Café**. "Design is the first thing that comes to your attention." Beyond the room's floor-to-ceiling windows and its colorful outdoor seating area, which includes sofas and cushioned chairs, the Oceanview was designed so as to function more efficiently than traditional shipboard buffets. "On other ships, no matter what, you are going to stand in the line cattle-style." In order to avoid having traditional cafeteria lines

where every guest passes every item that is being offered regardless of whether he or she wants it, "we divided everything into islands." The islands allow the guest to go directly to the station where the item he or she wants is being served without having to file by stations that he or she is not interested in. "So even if you have 2,000 guests on an embarkation lunch -- the busiest one -- you still don't see lines."

A by-product of this design is that there is no need for trays. In a traditional cafeteria, you need a tray to carry all the food that you think you might want because you do not want to come back and wait on line again. "Here, you do not have to wait in a line. You don't need to be carrying your tray throughout the buffet. You can just pick up one item, sit down and come back again."

Another drawback of traditional cafeterias is that the food often waits in warming trays for long periods and becomes cold and tasteless. "We don't prepare huge trays of things. We try to have them small so that we can have [the food] fresh all the time."

The menu changes on "a 14-day cycle, in the Oceanview Café for lunch and dinner. We also have some fixed items in the Oceanview. We have the pizza station, the pasta station, ice cream station, salad bar and dessert buffet. They go throughout the entire day starting at lunch until nine o'clock in the evening."

In the Oceanview, "we serve all meals. We have breakfast in the morning. Then we have lunch. We do tea time at four o'clock every day. Then we are open at night for dinner including a sushi bar. Then we have snacks for the late night people who need an extra bite. We keep it open until 1 or 1:30 in the morning."

Up one deck and across the pool area from the Oceanview is Silhouette's open air hamburger venue, the **Mast Grill**. Guests familiar with the Mast Grill on previous ships will find that the focus has changed on Silhouette. "Now the Mast Grill is focused only on ala minute burgers and hot dogs. Before we had a lot of items -- tacos, chicken wings and salads, all of which are available in the Oceanview. As a result, we could not offer a real burger house quality. So that is why we changed. We are going to focus only on burgers, quality French fries and hot dogs. We make them ala minute as the guest request with special sauce, mushrooms, cheese etc. It is more fresh and made there in front of your eyes."

One deck below the Mast Grill in the Solarium area is a venue with a much different focus, the **Aquaspa Café**. "It is our healthy [casual venue and]. is open for breakfast and lunch every day."

With the spa and the fitness center only a few steps away, the Aquaspa is a favorite place to stop in

before or after a workout or treatment. However, "the Aquaspa Café is open to all our guests." The quality of the offerings also attracts the ship's officers as well. "I try to escape quite often there and have a nice piece of tuna or chicken."

"For breakfast we have poached fruits, muesli, organic yogurt, smoothies, and fresh squeezed juices. Then at lunch, we have on request ala minute tuna, salmon and chicken made freshly in front of you. Of course, there is also a big salad bar, appetizers and desserts that are more on the healthy side."

The same team that staffs the Murano specialty restaurant in the evening staffs the Aquaspa Café during the day.

While the aforementioned venues are complimentary, Silhouette also has two casual venues where there is a nominal cover charge (\$5 as of this writing). "It is all you can eat. You can have soups, salads, savories, crepes, desserts for the fee."

**Bistro On Five** is our crepes house. It is one of my favorite places. Fresh, ala minute and in-front-of-the-guests made crepes. It is open from six in the morning until midnight so we go from breakfast crepes -- you have your eggs and bacon on a crepe -- to lunch and dinner when you have those beautiful Mediterranean or Italian crepes." Bistro On Five also offers a selection of salads, soups and desserts.

The other casual restaurant with a cover charge is a new venue, **The Porch**. It is located next to the Lawn Club Grill and has a glass-covered seating area that looks out over the starboard side of the ship.

"The Porch is open for breakfast and lunch. It is very quiet and relaxed. If you just want to sit and enjoy the view, have a coffee in the morning with some pastries or have lunch, you can escape there and just relax."

Its menu features "fresh paninis, Caesar salads, a selection of cold and hot soups" and desserts.

Silhouette's specialty coffee bar is **Café al Bacio**: "A lovely place to chat; lovely place to be during the day to enjoy a cup of coffee and relax. We have a lot of live entertainment here on sea days -- the strings are playing, our guitarist. So guests just come and chill out and have a nice coffee or tea."

Along with their beverage, guests can have something to eat. "We have available a rotation of small bites. In the morning, it is a selection of Danish, sweet breads, donuts, small croissants -- all in small portions. For lunch time, we change to gourmet sandwiches. Then, after three o'clock we have small desserts. And there is a selection of cookies, which is throughout the day." While there is a charge for the coffee, the food is complimentary and may be had even if the guest does not wish to purchase a coffee.

Guests familiar with the Cova Café coffee bars on Celebrity's Millennium and Century class ships may wonder what makes Café al Bacio different. "First of all, there is the coffee itself. Here, we use Lavazza, an Italian brand. We have done a lot of training with them. They come every couple of months training all of our staff in how to keep the standards of Lavazza. We make beautiful cappuccinos. They are a work of art rather than a coffee."

In addition, whereas the Cova Cafés on the earlier ships bore the name of a café in Milan, Italy, "Al Bacio is our own identity. It is not an outside brand. It is our coffee shop."

A new feature on Silhouette is a satellite coffee shop "Al Bacio Secundo in the Oceanview. It is a smaller Al Bacio, just to provide the same quality of coffee and service to our guests in the Oceanview if they want a specialty coffee."

Across from the main Café al Bacio on Deck 5 is the **Gelatoria**. "The Gelateria is the real Italian gelato. We have an ice cream station, of course, upstairs in the Oceanview, with regular ice creams. The difference here is the [gelato is made differently]. It is more creamy, more milk, less water. And the tastes are all fresh, natural. You will try it and you will never stop. We also make waffles ala minute." There is a charge for the gelato.

Yet another new feature on Silhouette is food in the ship's wine bar **Cellar Masters**. "It is a small menu of tapas, cold and hot. So you can order your tapas with your wine and have an aperitif glass of wine with a nice Spanish tortilla."