

**RESTAURANT REVIEW:**

# THE MODERNO

on Norwegian Cruise Line's  
Norwegian Gem

by

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**M**oderno is the latest specialty restaurant to be added to Norwegian Gem. It is a concept that debuted on Norwegian Cruise Line's largest ship, Norwegian Epic, when it entered service in 2010 and which has proven so popular that it is being rolled out throughout the Norwegian fleet.

The new venue is modeled upon the Brazilian Churrascarias. These restaurants originated in the cattle herding areas of Brazil and Argentina and incorporate the gauchos' approach to cooking and dining. Sometimes referred to as South American steak houses, the churrascarias are much different than the well-known North American steak houses both in the style of cooking and in the manner of presentation.

On Norwegian Gem, Moderno is located on the starboard side balcony overlooking the ship's main atrium. (Those familiar with the Gem will remember it as the location of the Tex-Mex specialty restaurant). As a

result, diners can hear the music being played in the lobby below and see the giant video screen at the forward end of the room. This ensures a lively atmosphere.

At the same time, the lights of the room are kept low in the evening. Combined with the room's dark wood furnishings, the venue has a romantic feel as well, especially close to the floor-to-ceiling windows that make up most of the starboard side of the room.

When you are seated at Moderno, you are given a menu. However, you do not select from the menu like you do in a traditional restaurant. Rather, the menu is essentially for informational purposes, giving you a list of things to come.

The meal begins with a trip to the salad bar. Here, in addition to a variety of different salad items including hearts of palm, tuna, shrimp, cured meats, fresh asparagus and roasted garlic, you also have a



*The Moderno*

choice of soups. The seafood chowder is quite tasty.

After the salad course, the side dishes arrive at the table. You do not decide beforehand which of the side dishes you will have -- all are brought to be shared by the table. They include buttered rice, black beans, garlic mashed potatoes and fried sweet bananas.

Then, a parade of servers dressed in gaucho costumes brings a variety of meats to the table. The first server said that they would begin with light meat and progress through the different dark meats. Accordingly, we began with chicken and worked our way through pork and lamb to beef.

The different types of meat were prepared in various ways. There was chicken breast, chicken leg, Spanish sausages, Portuguese sausages, pork ribs, lamb chops and four cuts of beef marinated and seasoned in different ways.

Each meat offering arrives on a long metal skewer. The server asks how much you want and then cuts the desired amount from the skewer. While it is tempting to ask for a substantial amount, it is advisable to have only a small portion of each as the parade of servers that will appear at the table is quite long. Each offers a new and tempting selection.

Of course, it is perfectly permissible to pass on a selection. For example, if you are a beef lover, it is fine to skip the early offerings so that you have more room for the later offerings.

The speed of the parade is controlled by the square cards that are given to each guest. Each card has a red side and a green side. You leave the card on the

table with the green side up if you want a server to come and bring you the next offering. You leave it red side up if you would like to have some time before the next selection arrives.

After the parade, Moderno gives you a choice of three dessert options -- Papaya Cream; Coconut Flan and Mango Rice Pudding. Only the item you select will be brought to the table. But if you have room and are so inclined, you can order two or even all three either to share or for yourself.

Moderno is not a traditional restaurant dining experience. Consequently, it would be misleading to single out any particular dish as outstanding or as the specialty of the house. A large part of the experience is trying all of the different dishes that are brought to the table. All are good in their own way but the whole meal is much greater than the sum of its parts.

Similarly, the service cannot be measured against the usual model. You do not have one server but rather several. In addition, to a large extent, you rather than the server controls the pace of the meal. Once can say, however, that all of the people who waited upon us were friendly and eager to please.

Moderno is open for dinner and has a \$20 cover charge. It is quite popular and so reservations are recommended especially for the peak dining hours.