

Finding nirvana

RESTAURANT LOUISE KELLY

The grandeur and opulence of Marco Polo on the second floor of the Treasury Casino is overwhelming. Past the sweeping foyer and its parquet flooring and the chic cocktail bar, is the grand entrance – and the start of a night of sheer indulgence.

Waiters are dressed to impress and nothing is too much trouble. Before you know what you need, it has been supplied.

With wine glasses filled with Knappstein Lenswood Gewurztraminer (\$10) and Rosemount Orange Vineyard Chardonnay (\$11) and the arrival of twists of hot olive bread, our anticipation was building. Watching this restaurant in full swing is awe-inspiring.

Senior sous chef Stephen Suen has been at the helm of the casino's signature restaurant since its inception, and he's obviously not tired of creating precise and exacting food. Should it be sand crab cannelloni or peking duck pancakes? The waiter hesitated in suggesting one rather than the other, a sign that both deserved careful consideration.

The duck (\$25.90) won. The six petite



drizzle of hoisin. This is a fine example of how simple dishes can be done well. And no sooner had I finished and there were hot, steamy towels to wipe my hands – perfect.

The fragrance wafting from the other entree was enticing. Glass noodles dressed with chilli, lime and fresh coriander leaves were surrounded by water buffalo carpaccio (\$21.50). It was light, fragrant and fresh.

The menu includes fresh mud crab or lobster done to your liking but on this night I chose the veal loin (\$33.80). Two cylindrical cuts of veal had been plated on swirls of pea puree and roasted



Double happiness ... Marco Polo's veal loin features two cylindrical cuts of meat, left

flavours competed for attention – all stood alone yet worked in unison. A generous serving of lightly dusted and fried prawns sat on a saffron potato puree with wilted greens on the side and a hit of chilli jam tied it all together.

The desserts seemed slightly underwhelming on paper. Not so the caramel banana crepe with mung bean ice cream (\$13.90). Delightfully thin crepes filled with a thick custard cream and caramelised banana had been folded, and to the side sat two small pieces of banana topped with crunchy toffee. The mung bean ice cream was as white as snow and almost chalky in its texture,

MARCO POLO

Level 2, Treasury Casino, George St, city.
Ph: 3306 8744. Chef: Stephen Suen.
Dinner daily. Licensed. All major cards.
Wheelchair access. Complimentary parking for diners.

Food: 9
Wine: 9
Service: 9
Ambience: 9