A TASTE for Art

Boasting classically gorgeous interiors and stunning art pieces that showcase the artistic bounty of the archipelago, visitors to Tugu Kunstkring Paleis can expect an unforgettable evening dining experience amongst majestic art pieces.

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By *Steven Jauw Waludin*

Nestled in the leafy and lush Menteng district, Tugu Kunstkring Paleis dazzles passers-by with its striking classical Dutch architecture. Opened by the Dutch Governor Frederick Idenburg in 1914, the building served as the headquarters for the Fine Arts Circle of the Dutch Indies in its earlier years. Following the organisation's mission of promoting and elevating the vibrant art works of the Indies, the building showcased various art exhibitions including artworks by famed artists such as Vincent van Gogh, Pablo Picasso, Paul Gauguin and Marc Chagall. Today, the historical building remains true to its heritage of housing elegant artworks and celebrating creative endeavours. With a capacity for 1000 people, Tugu Kunstkring Paleis hosts various galleries and art events for the discerning creative minds of Indonesia. The building houses a shop gallery, which showcases a rotating assembly of stunning art pieces, jewellery and artworks as well as a fine dining restaurant, a lavish lounge and a lovely tea house.

Visitors can enjoy a unique dining experience at the Tugu Restaurant. The main dining hall exudes old European charm with its grandiose classical elements. Intricate hand-crafted chandeliers hang majestically from the ceilings. White and red satin curtains drape the lofted alcoves. Gorgeous hand-detailed wooden chairs sidle up to dining tables, draped with pristine white tablecloths. A dazzling collection of curated artworks adorn the walls in intricate gilded frames.

The restaurant menu boasts an extensive offering of classical Betawi dishes utilising the finest produce meticulously sourced from across the archipelago as well as premium imported ingredients. First-time visitors are urged to try the 12 course Rijsttafel offering which opens with a hearty oxtail soup and classical sayoer lodeh – a light Batavia style vegetable curry with young papaya, vibrant sweet corn and string beans. For mains, diners are treated to Bebek Opor – a dish of succulent roasted duck stewed in a spicy coconut curry, served with crisp fried potato and refreshing Japanese kyuri cucumber. Visitors will be charmed by the all-time favourite satay. Adhering to a famous recipe handed down from old Batavian times, luscious Australian tenderloin cubes are skewered and marinated in a bewitching spice mix with notes of coriander and coconut milk before being grilled to crisp perfection. The captivating gourmet experience is punctuated with a sweet delight with a serving of apem in durian sauce – an elegant and timeless Nonya dessert complemented by an utterly delicious durian sauce. For visitors with a heartier appetite, there is the 16 course Rijsttafel menu as well as the daunting 24 course Rijsttafel choice, which features tantalising classic Batavian delights such as slow marinated empal, red Portugese king prawns curry, ikan panggang and sweet delights such as the decadent Lapis Djongkong and delightfully zesty lemon pudding. *(www.tuguhotels.com/restaurants/jakarta/kunstkring)*

Grand Rijsttafel Betawi

Bitterballen