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ULTRAVIOLET PART I – WHERE THEATRICALS PLAY ON FOOD

Posted February 13, 2018 by [Ruth Tertilt](#)

Ultraviolet by Chef Paul Pairet is by all means a truly immersive if not manipulative sensory experience for both mind and taste buds. The concept conceived by Chef Paul Pairet is an ode to the human sensory experience where food of course spearheads this moving play. It takes diners to a different level and way of eating haute cuisine in an almost sinister yet desperately mysterious atmosphere.

Given no address except a phone number and comprehensive instructions, the 10 diners are told to congregate at the advised meeting point. This isn't actually part of the concept but rather part of the process so that diners arrive in unison because what you'll find at Ultraviolet is that everything is based on timing. Think of the experience as a well-orchestrated play where every element is counted for. From lights, sounds, visuals, scent and temperature to the bringing and taking away of food, everything has been rehearsed. You're literally stepping into a play, only this time the play is the food whilst multi-sensory technology highlights the experience.





As soon as everyone is gathered at the said venue, a shuttle bus awaits to take its diners to the Ultraviolet restaurant. It is on this journey that the experience begins – through busy streets you end up in a deserted almost barren address. We won't give those details away but what we can illustrate is that there are absolutely no signs of a restaurant being here, you will find however, workers leaving at what appears to be some kind of factory.

As we did not join the diners and were given instead a backstage experience to review Ultraviolet, we were led by one of Chef Paul's trusted personnel's who met us at the address. Upon greeting us, she led us to the restaurant by way of tapping in a password into a warehouse-like door. As you enter, you'll find yourself in a darkened room and forget what actually happened as you become too distracted by the what's next. At least for us, we felt we were inside a grimly car lift that would somehow descend only to find that the compartment rotated towards a rather largely obscure bowl. Our personnel opened this magnificent bowl and instruct that we observe and smell what was inside it, which we came to find were shells of abalone encased in what looked like hay. We later found out that this was to be cooked in fire (only) in front of the guests.

We were then led to where everything happens – the dining room. With only ten seats and ten swivelling office-like chairs you might as well be in a meeting. Only when the projection starts to go, you then feel like you're in some sort of art installation where you suddenly become the subject.

We had the privilege of sitting down with Head Chef Greg Robinson who introduced us to the concept and menus served at Ultraviolet. To give us an idea, Ultraviolet ran us through each dining scene with Chef Greg trying to rapidly explain it all. The multi-sensory experience proved riveting. Scenes of garish music, strange visuals and contemplative texts made you wonder what Chef Paul was thinking about when conceiving the menu.

Ultraviolet serves three different types of menus categorially – A, B and C. Menus being served on the day depend on the reservations site and for our backstage experience evening we were shown how Menu C was orchestrated. Standing backstage was a first-hand witness at just how precise and in sync, and even how quiet, Chef Paul's team of chef's work. But it seems that you have to be when you're delivering a 4.5-hour meal that is timed to multi-sensory visuals and sounds. What is so fascinating to behold however, is just how assembled the UV kitchen runs, that they can deliver a 20-course meal effortlessly.

Menu C consists of four different acts and is introduced through Act I – The Sea. The Abalone that was shown at the entrance was the first dish to be served. All lights were turned off, sounds began to take off and the UV kitchen opened its sliding windows for its diners where all they could begin to see was a pot of burning fire that was cooking the abalone. The texture was incredible and the taste of ash so subtle that you could still grasp the freshness of these decadent molluscs. To know that all it took to prepare this dish was by fire is testament to what little ingredients you need and how innovative you can be to deliver seafood with such an engaging if not memorable texture.

What proved a standout for our Act I taste buds was the SurfSurfTurfTurf dish composed of grilled oyster, cuttleskin and foie gras along with Carabineros de Heulva – you'll just have to go in order to find out. Layers of flavour and bold textures – it was mindboggling albeit innovative and extremely delicious to say the least.





Moving onto Act II, it makes sense that the journey moved back to The Land. Things got a bit more adventurous when you got to build your own haute tasting BLT sandwich, with all the parts perfectly laid out for you on a canteen-like tray. Of course, all of the dishes of Menu C were standouts, but we especially loved knowing that Chef Paul carried his signature dish from his previous restaurants to the UV kitchens. Chef Paul's notorious truffle burnt soup bread with chars of burnt edges dipped in soup made for a moist, soggy, yet utterly fulfilling piece of soup bread. It is dipping – bread- in – soup to a whole new level. The way that it is kept to perfection so diners experience that moment when bread is dipped into a creamy soup, is poetic. Out of that came 'Mushroooooooms' – an incredible take on how one can get innovative with mushrooms. An airy meringue made of mushrooms – It was intelligent, experimental and engaging.

Credits: Image by Scott Wright of Limelight Studio