

Oasis of Moroccan fare in West Indies

PROVIDENCIALES, Turks and Caicos — Lemon Café is a Moroccan oasis amid the hard, dry landscape of Providenciales. It is the brainchild of owner Natalie Zaidan, 35, a Canadian expat who visited the island as a child. Zaidan, who has lived here for 12 years, does high-end landscaping and owns a nursery. She designed and built Lemon Café a couple of years ago.

Chef John Tsavalas, a childhood friend of Zaidan, has created a superb Moroccan menu with tapas treats such as spicy calamari, rice-stuffed tender merguez, silky couscous, and perfectly prepared baba ghanoush. Exemplary entrees include North African moussaka with eggplant, lamb burger with yogurt mint cucumber sauce, and the most popular dish, lamb prune tagine, simmered for hours with such ingredients as honey, cinnamon, and clove. Tsavalas's most recent creations include a sumac-rubbed rib eye roast and lobster with preserved lemon.

The place is dimly lit and wonderfully moody with bench seating on the perimeter of the open-to-the-elements sides, smaller tables and communal ones in the middle, a glitzy, soft-orange-lighted bar at one end, and gauzy accent drapes billowing from the high ceiling.

The most popular place to eat at night is the elegant courtyard, with two-foot stone squares surrounded by lush grass and draped by ficus trees, from which small white lights shine. Entertainment includes regular “Arabian Nights” with belly dancing, tarot card readings, and Tsavalas doubling as a fire spinner on occasion, delighting diners by whirling lighted poi balls.

Zaidan planted a garden to furnish the restaurant with fresh vegetables and herbs. The organic meats are flown in regularly, said Zaidan, who opened the restaurant to “provide a change of food down here.

A lot of it was sort of the same, I wanted to do something different.”

PAUL E. KANDARIAN

Lemon Café, Village at Grace Bay, 649-941-4059, www.lemon-cafe.com. Mon-Sat lunch and dinner, noon-3 p.m., 6-10, Sun 6-10, entrees from \$17.



PAUL E. KANDARIAN FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

The Lemon Café's bar is bathed in muted, moody lighting.

Currents

True birders can see millions on Alaska route

The city of Wrangell in Alaska's Inside Passage holds the Stikine River Birding Festival April 28-May 1 to welcome the millions of birds that stop here during their annual journey north along the Pacific Flyway, an aerial migration route that links South America and Alaska. Each spring, millions of sandhill cranes, snow geese, and Western sandpipers, and more than 2,000 eagles cruise through this region. The four-day event includes early morning bird walks, wildlife and birding expeditions on the Stikine River, a chance to meet nature and wildlife artist Linda Infante Lyons of Anchorage, and family activities such as building birdhouses and creating paintings using natural dyes made from salmon eggs. 907-874-7563, www.stikinebirding.org

Maldives shark safari

The Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Kuda Huraa has launched new Shark Safari Snorkels to teach travelers about the often-misunderstood creatures' positive impact on the ecosystem. On this 3-hour excursion, a marine biologist takes snorkelers age 8 and older to Bandos Island, where

they can observe black-tip and white-tip reef sharks in their natural habitat. The safari runs Mondays and Fridays at 2:30 p.m., and is only available to Four Seasons guests. Rates: adults \$62.50, children under 12 \$28.40 (including taxes). 011-960-664-4888, www.fourseasons.com/maldiveskh

Zagat website revamp

Zagat.com, which provides consumer-generated restaurant reviews, has added free features to its revamped website. You will find interactive maps that allow you to search for restaurants by neighborhood or near a popular landmark; helpful lists broken down by topic, such as top burger joints, delis, and child-friendly restaurants; links to local and national reviews; and new stats that indicate how each restaurant ranks in its cuisine category and neighborhood. Also, sign up for dining deals, make online reservations, and access thousands of menus and photos. Go to zagat.com or download the Zagat app to your Apple or Android device. 800-540-9609, www.zagat.com

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