

Kasbah Tamadot

MARRAKECH

Kasbah Tamadot may only be an hour's drive from Marrakech, but it's a world away from the in-your-face bustle of the city's busy souks. Located in the Atlas mountains, Richard Branson's hotel and restaurant offers its patrons a serious spectacle – from the breathtaking views from its elegant dining room to the ebullient food and beverage manager Roman Arnaud, who clearly enjoys the theatre of entertaining diners.

New Zealand chef Lee Cowie has created daily seasonal menus that combine classic Moroccan and European dishes. If you're tired of couscous with everything, the idea of roast quail or seared scallops may come as a welcome relief. However, in our opinion, the locally themed dishes worked best. A starter of traditional pigeon *pastilla* (a type of pie) was hugely satisfying, in comparison to a salad of roasted pumpkin with walnuts and ricotta, which felt a little on the sparse side.



Equally, the main course of *mahamcha* – filo pastry stuffed with vegetables and mozzarella, and a spiced tomato sauce – was delicious. The local rib-eye steak was closer to medium than the medium-rare requested, but the meat was top quality.

We finished with a selection of French cheeses, including a fine Camembert and Comté with prune compote, but in

hindsight, it was a shame to miss the date ice cream, made with local ingredients.

Kasbah Tamadot has a vast wine list, with many international labels, but do try the local wines, such as Eclipse or Volubilia.

Here's a final tip: visit at lunchtime, when the mountains are looking their best.

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