

Beluga & Ben's on the Beach

By [Brian Berkmen](#)

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Beluga restaurant is a case-study for how to get it right. Through a series of on-going special offers on sushi and cocktails and frequent advertising, Beluga has ensured those who are attracted to the honey-pot find something deliciously sweet and come back again - and again.



I always enjoyed chef patron's Craig Paterson cuisine at The Cape Grace and am ashamed it took me so long to sample his wares at Beluga and sister restaurant Sevruga.

With partner Oscar Kotze and a large brigade of chefs, they are producing excellent cuisine at amazing prices.

The fact the restaurant was jam-packed before 7pm is proof of the efficacy of well-promoted special offers. The fact it remained packed until we left after 10pm is proof of a well run operation that provides delicious food. They are now famous for their Pacific Rim sushi offering. We ordered a portion of vegetable tempura (R39) offered with a sweet chilli sauce or wasabi mayo although we were summarily brought the sweet chilli. It is a large portion and a perfect, though mildly calorific, accompaniment to drinks.

The mixed salmon and tuna platter came next. It was beautifully presented with the seared tuna sashimi and salmon sashimi served side-by-side as if a single piece of fish to be teased apart with chopsticks. It was great value at R189 so at half-price you can imagine! Expect 6 x Salmon Roses, 6 x Seared Tuna Roses, 4 x Seared Tuna Sashimi, 4 x Salmon Sashimi and 2 x Rainbow Rolls.

We both remarked that we should have ended our meal at this point, having enjoyed an elegant sufficiency but ignoring probity we ordered main courses.

The duck bobotie (R99), one of chef Craig's signature dishes, is brilliant. It is served in a ramekin with a rolled rootie and shards of samoosa pastry with a miniature leaf salad dressed in atchara oil. This bobotie is not minced duck but rather sweet shredded meat under a rich (yes folks, its made with cream) savoury custard topping. Although not a new preparation idea, the Terrikyaki-glazed salmon (R129) is served with pomme berny (mashed potato shaped like a pear,

crumbed and deep fried and a wonderful beetroot and tatziki salad. Very good.

The chocolate truffle cake was just too rich and sweet for JP to enjoy more than a spoonful.

Beluga, The Foundry, Prestwich street, Cape Town. 021-418-2948.

Ben's on the Beach is another restaurant that is justly popular for its brilliant value for money offering. There were people waiting at the bar for a table to become free on the Sunday when we lunched there.

Our waitress was particularly good at dutifully warning tables that the Smoked Salmon Savoy (R39) (diced salmon in a dill mayo with crème fraiche served with a few greens) was salty. I didn't find it so. I found the chicken livers (R32) (enclosed in bacon and served with a creamy mild peri-peri sauce overcooked, but JP loved them.

At R99, the Mauritian Seafood casserole is among the most costly menu items, but the portion is so huge that two would be sufficiently fed on the wine-steamed line fish, mussels, calamari and prawns (not those tasteless floury ones like bad apples but juicy firm ones) all cooked with ginger, chilli and doused in coconut cream and served with rice and steamed broccoli with tomato smoor. So often these dishes taste like a homogenous mush but here each individual flavour was clear and gently held together in the silkiest sauce like a pashmina billowing in the wind.

Ben's on the Beach. 021-021 853-7977

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