



## SOPHIA'S RESTAURANT AND BAR

| BY TRACY ELLEN BEARD

**H**otel Restaurants and bars are a hit or miss, and Sophia's Restaurant and Bar at The Charles Hotel, a Rocco Forte Hotel in Munich, Germany, is definitely a hit in my book. It is stylish but not pretentious, and comfortable without being too casual. Everything my husband and I ate and drank at Sophia's was tasty and Instagram-worthy. Executive Chef Michael Hüsken does an excellent job serving modern Italian cuisine in the restaurant and the bar.

### Who is in Charge?

Rocco Forte Hotels are owned and managed by the Forte family. Sir Rocco Forte, his three children, and his sister Olga Polizzi sit at the team's helm. Sir Rocco Forte's daughter Lydia Forte is the Group Director of Food & Beverages at all Rocco Forte Hotels.

Lydia is responsible for new concepts, management, and the ultimate performance of each hotel restaurant and bar. She and her management teams at each hotel ensure they use only the best products from local producers. Quality comes first. The specialty products on the menu are

from Italy, and the wines are sourced from the best Italian winemakers.

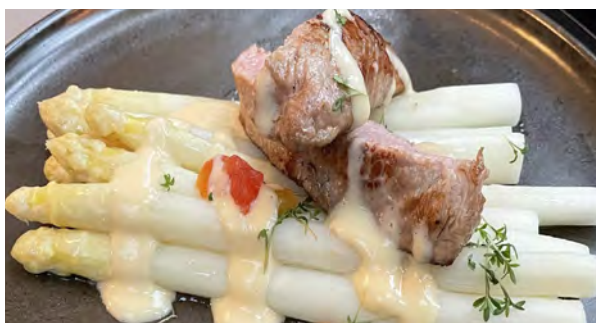
### Why Italian?

During my tour of The Charles Hotel, I spoke with the Regional Director of Marketing in Germany, Sabrina Nitzsche. Sir Rocco Forte's father grew up in Italy and then moved to the UK, where Sir Rocco Forte was born. Although he grew up in the UK, his Italian heritage ran deep. Sabrina said, "The Forte family has strong Italian roots. They all speak Italian, but they all grew up in London. They are British with Italian roots. They feel very connected to Italy."

Sabrina shared that she has only been in Munich for two years, but it was obvious to her that Italy dramatically influences the people in Munich. They love Italian food. Most restaurants here are Italian, but Sophia's is an Italian restaurant because of the owner's heritage.

### Sophia's Bar

The bar offers Italian sophistication with an intimate atmosphere. It is



the perfect place to sit and listen to music, enjoy a tasty bite, sip on some fabulous wine, or try out one of their signature cocktails like the one I did, the Abnoba. This smoked drink made with Monkey 47 gin, lemon, cassis, blackcurrant, and spruce was beautiful and decadent.

### Sophia's Restaurant

The quality continues at Sophia's restaurant. From the first-rate game to the trout, all the meat and fish are sourced from the Polting estate, and the delicious shrimp is from Honest Catch. Executive Chef Michael Hüsken does an incredible job with all the food.

Breakfast at Sophia's is a treat. The buffet boasts German sausages, pretzels, and other various breads, meats, cheeses, and an assortment of hot items. Diners can also order off the menu, including eggs benedict, avocado toast, and other traditional breakfast items.

### Dinner at Sophia's

My husband, Steve, and I enjoyed a fabulous dinner at Sophia's. Charlotte was our server, and she was a delight and offered many sugges-

tions. The dining room features tall windows bringing in the sunlight and providing stunning views of the terrace.

Our dinner began with an amuse-bouche of arancini sitting atop a savory aioli and grated Parmigiano Reggiano. The breading was crunchy, and the rice and cheese inside were soft and chewy.

The Fried Scallops with San Marzano tomatoes and baby basil followed the first delicious bites. The scallops were perfectly seared on the outside and tender on the inside. We also shared the Vellutata Di Astice, a lobster bisque with lobster ravioli and tomatoes. The bisque was light, and the lobster was succulent and fresh, something exceptional from the sea. We savored the seafood dishes with a 2021 Chablis by Jean-Paul & Benoît DROIN.

I opted for the Regional Asparagus from Schrobhausen for my entrée. This white asparagus is only in season for about two months each year. It is sweet, tender, and tastes completely different from the typical green version. The dish came with a side of marble-sized potatoes

and a luscious Hollandaise. Steve ordered the same for his entrée but enjoyed it with a saddle of veal.

To complete our dining extravaganza, Steve ordered the Blackberry Mousse with Amalfi lemon and white chocolate for dessert, and I indulged in the mango gelato with fresh strawberries. Both desserts were not overly sweet but also made a wonder finish to a fabulous meal. The Charles Hotel, a Rocco Forte Hotel in Munich, Germany, is gorgeous. The buffet breakfast at Sophia's is worth getting up for, and dinner at the restaurant is essential while staying in Munich. ❖