

## HOT SPOT



### MIKLA ISTANBUL

Opened just over a year, this elegant Mediterranean-inspired restaurant has quickly gained a rightful reputation as one of the best in town.

■ **Ambience:** Arriving at Mikla may be a bit of a hassle; it's on the top two floors of the Marmara Pera Hotel, which requires security clearance to enter. But once inside the restaurant, the heart-quickenning views of the Hagia Sophia, Suleymaniye and Blue mosques quickly make up for the trouble. The bar on the top floor offers an open-air view and a chance to hear the haunting call to prayer echoing across the city.

■ **Starters:** For a light beginning, try the salmon tartare with caviar and toasted bread, or the divine smoked salmon in a horseradish and cucumber foam.

■ **Main Course:** Chicken is combined to delicious effect with feta, tomatoes and cucumber. Lemon spinach and fennel purée give grilled swordfish a superb lift.

■ **Desserts:** Save room; the spectacular warm raspberry soup with vanilla ice cream is served with brown sugar at the bottom of the dish, which gives it a delightful crunch. The kitchen also churns out different flavors of ice cream each day, depending on the seasonal ingredients.

■ **Wine:** The list is expansive, offering up French, Italian and South African vintages, as well as some local favorites.

-GINANNE BROWNELL