



# Cozy joint with a friendly barman

It is strange that it never struck me that a bar attached to a good restaurant should also be good. I don't think I can assess both when I visit the location. If I am in the mood for drinks, I just concentrate on the bar, almost ignoring the restaurant and if I am in the mood for a good meal, then drinks are secondary, I tend to order a good bottle at the table.

Then, last week we went out early (6:30p.m.) to beat the traffic and therefore, had more than enough time to drink and eat in that order, but not to try two different establishments (and waste time in traffic).

We went to Blanco's Bar at 7p.m. and found it fairly full, which is not surprising, given the size of the bar; it is a small and cozy place. My favourite corner is literally a corner, almost cut off from the rest of the bar with big booth-like sofas. With a couple of extra stools, a group of six to seven could easily make this spot their private little party. That night, however, it was occupied by one person, selfishly hoarding space that could easily have taken a larger group — like the three of us for instance. Never mind (although I didn't feel quite as charitable then), it gave us a chance to sit at the bar and be regaled by the barman's pleasant sales pitch. I have always maintained that making cocktails is more dependent on the barman's enthusiasm than the class of bar. At Blanco's Bar, the barman is also quite keen on showing interested clients his talents, which were not so bad; we tried a mojito and a cosmopolitan. More than the quality of cocktails, it is the friendliness of the barman that is heartwarming; too often you have sour-faced staff who would sooner be at home than serve you.

They had an interesting cocktail of the day listed on the specials board: Madafu Mojito. Made from Madafu Rum (madafu means coconut water), it sounded intriguing, but I gave it a miss. Much as I like fresh coconut cream or water, I am not a fan of coconut ice cream, liquor or oil, Malibu being one of them. After my mojito, I concentrated on the wine menu, one of the best features at Blanco's bar or restaurant. They do have a simpler wine list for the bar, but you can order wine from the restaurant's wine menu. The latter is a four-page listing of good quality wines from Europe, the Americas and South Africa. The top-notch red wine retails at more than Sh10,000, but good wines also retail for a decent price, comparatively. My wine of choice here was a Nederburg Baronne, a good quality South

African red wine blended with Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes. At Sh2,100 a bottle, it is much better value for money than what a similar amount would fetch elsewhere.

The wine is just one of its attractions, Blanco's Bar has good music and a relaxed yet classy ambience. High ceilings, heavy drapes, comfortable sofas, and soft lighting make it soothing to the eye. A unique feature are tables with glass tops that enclose sand beds with currency notes from all over the world; a similar theme is repeated at the bar, where coins from different countries are embedded in the wood.

If you get hungry, there is a small snacks menu to choose from, but nothing beats the restaurant: it has received rave reviews earlier this year in our Eating Out Column. It does make sense to have a decent bar attached to the restaurant.



## BLANCO'S BAR

Timau Plaza/Argwings Kodhek Road  
Hurlingham,  
Tel: 3864670 / 1  
(Parking ample and secure)

Rating

### Pricing Guide

- Bargain
- Cheap
- Affordable
- Expensive
- Exorbitant

In Nairobi, the majority of restaurants do not serve meals after 10p.m. so unless one starts early, there is no way to catch up with friends for a drink in a bar and then proceed for dinner elsewhere.

Drink responsibly, drive carefully.  
Never drink and drive.

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- Riziki-Jamnazi
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- Tony Nyadundo
- Umbrella-Rihanna

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