

The *diners* club

Get ready for restaurant makeovers, the return of some familiar faces and the arrival of some new ones as Perth's dining scene goes through a Spring clean of its own.

TAP, TAP, TAPAS

It's confirmed, small plates is big news in the restaurant industry and why wouldn't it be?

Eating, drinking, lots of different flavours, casual dining – the tapas dining experience seems tailor-made for the relaxed WA lifestyle. What better than a relaxed evening in a classy bar or alfresco with a glass of something delicious and a plate of something delectable.

Tapas bars and tapas plates are springing up all over the state but for some really top-end nosh, the opening of David Coomer's Pata Negra has caused the biggest stir in foodie circles around town (see restaurant reviewer Marina Fiore's take on page 158). South Perth's Palais 85 (85 South Perth Esplanade, South Perth) hosts a tapas, jazz and Champagne menage a trois on Tuesday evenings; Bunbury's Casellas Wine Tapas Grill (Shop 19, Silos Waterfront Street, Bunbury) won the 2009 Restaurant and Caterers Awards for Excellence and the really funky Andaluz (21 Howard Street, Perth) continues to pack them in.

NIGHTS OF CELLAR-BRATION

Weekly cellar nights are one of the survival tactics many restaurants are calling on during these challenging financial times and they certainly offer diners a great excuse to open up a bottle of something special they might have been hoarding for awhile.

The next time you feel like a bring-your-own experience in a place a little more up-market than your local greasy spoon or Chinese takeaway, well, much nicer actually, have a trawl through your cellar before making a Tuesday night booking at Bistro Felix (118 Rokeby Road, Subiaco).

If it's a Wednesday, float on over to Cottesloe's resolute Little Cloud (8/460 Stirling Highway) where science meets chef with delicious consequences and on Thursdays, head a little further down the coast for Salt on the Beach's (44 Port Beach Road, North Fremantle) cellar night.

WILD POPPY SYNDROME

After lighting up Perth's dining scene with his globally influenced fare at high-end eatery 1907, Graeme Shapiro has traded inner city for port city and a new cafe-restaurant, Wild Poppy. Keeping in line with that laidback Freo vibe, Wild Poppy's menu has been written with casual rather than fine dining in mind, yet still retains Graeme's trademark flair and international accents.

In addition to enjoying breakfast and lunch Monday to Saturday (with plans to move to seven day training as soon as possible, hello Sunday brunch), guests can also purchase artisan kitchenware and chef's own-made sauces, jams and pickles.

Friday night tapas evenings are also on the cards, as are seasonal degustation dinners where



Graeme Shapiro from Wild Poppy.

Graeme can flex his culinary muscle. What more can we say? It's great to have you back Mr Shapiro. Wild Poppy, 2 Wray Avenue, Fremantle. (08) 9430 8555. wildpoppy.com.au

GEE OH, GIGI OH

From classical German compositions to tasty Southern Mediterranean modernity, East Fremantle's Cafe Amadeus has been reborn as Gigi's on George.

Former Amadeus regulars will notice plenty of change, not least of all the conversion of the next-door tanning salon into a tapas den.

In the kitchen, former Mussel Bar head chef Ricky Lim is putting his modern and healthy spin on Mediterranean staples while the ever-attentive Kylie Dobson – another former Mussel Bar employee – is looking after the front-of-house-keeping.

The concise wine list covers considerable breadth in its selections and in great news for locals, Gigi's is open for dinner Sunday and Monday. Gigi's on George, 125 George Street, East Fremantle. (08) 9339 0099.



Jus Burgers attractions are set to spread to Subiaco.



BURGERS WITH THE LOT

A WA Government initiative designed to promote the state's food industry, the Buy West Eat Best campaign has collected its first restaurateur signature and that's the "John Hancock" belonging to Justin Bell, owner and chef of Leederville's constantly crammed Jus Burgers (743 Newcastle Street, Leederville), named by LifeStyle FOOD Channel as home of Australia's Favourite Hamburger in its

2009 I Love Food awards. You've probably had to swerve sharply once or twice to avoid hitting the never-ending stream of diners spilling out of the restaurant.

If traffic hazards in Leederville weren't bad enough, Subi frequenters can expect similar hijinx when Jus Burgers' second restaurant opens at the old Henry's site on the corner of Rokeby and Roberts Roads.

The space has had many owners over the years but with the arrival of Justin and crew to the high-vis location, I'm expecting the revolving door of restaurants to ground to a halt – as will the traffic when those familiar Jus Burgers queues start to form.

BELLISA-MO

It was at Caversham's picturesque Riverbank Estate that Louisa Iacopetta first caught the attention of foodies with her immensely satisfying produce-driven fare.

From there, she set up shop a hop, skip and a jump away in Guildford at Menu on James where her strong sense of seasonality continued to shine.

And while she might have relocated somewhere a little more central for her latest venture – much to the chagrin of Swan Valley locals – Bellisa Cafe looks set to build on Louisa's reputation for generosity of flavour.

Breakfast is about updating the favourites: eggs benedict are served on puff pastry while buttermilk hotcakes get a leg-up from fresh strawberries and honeycomb ice cream.

Meanwhile, what makes the lunch menu is dictated solely by what's market-freshest. During winter, this translated to fritters of goats' cheese and ricotta and chicken, leek and mushroom pie.

While we can all rejoice in the cafe being open seven days for breakfast and lunch, Louisa hasn't caved in to demands to open for dinner. Yet. Bellisa Cafe, 60B Walter Road, Bedford, (08) 9370 1348.

STILL COOKIN' AT CLANCY'S

Winner of Redback's Gourmet Pub of the Year (as part of the judging panel, Scoop can vouch for Clancy's place atop the podium), Fremantle institution Clancy's Fish Pub celebrates 21 years this October. To mark the milestone, the pub has organised a week of activities from October 19 to 25 that includes serving the original 70s menu from the pub's forerunner, Clancy's Tavern, a pub cook-off and live entertainment. Clancy's Fish Pub, 51 Cantonment Street, Fremantle. (08) 9335 1351



Salt cured Hiramasa Kingfish, Pata Negra.

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AN INDIANA SUMMER

One of our best spots to watch the sun set, Cottesloe landmark Indiana's is scheduled for a makeover, just in time for the return of warm weather.

Lighter and brighter is Indiana's new canon and the restaurant will be transformed into a modern beach house serving fuss-free yet flavoursome food – think bistro favourites, share platters and imaginative pizzas straight out of the oven.

The downstairs kiosk is also getting made over and will become Indifish – the beach-goer's destination of choice for quality fish and chips and refreshing il Gelato. Roll on summer I say. *Indiana's, 91 Marine Parade, Cottesloe Beach, (08) 9385 5005.*



COOKING WITH GAS: Anti-clockwise from below; Iain Lawless gets "durdee"; Clancy's turns 21 and chefs cooking off at Le Chaine des Rottisseurs' Grand Chapitre.

KITSCHY KITSCHY YA YA

When it comes to Asian cuisine, my rule of thumb is the dodgier-looking the restaurant, the better the food. It's an adage that's served me – and surprisingly, my digestive system – well.

So when Iain Lawless waxes lyrical in his thick Glaswegian accent about the "durdee" Asian bar he's opening, I get just a wee bit excited.

Turns out he too is a fan of Asian street food and his vision for Kitsch – lots of recycled bits, mixing the old and new, nothing-over-\$30 Thai-influenced dishes designed for sharing and an intimate environment – looks set to fill a conspicuous void in our fair city's dining landscape.

Although Iain's domain will be front of house with cooking duties left to former Room 19 colleague Anita Potter, the Lawless one will still be influencing the menu's direction and has already hatched plans for weekly word-of-mouth-only specials.

On top of all that, those simply after a drink are just as welcome at Kitsch as those after a pretension-free night of food, drinks and fun. *Kitsch, 229 Oxford Street, Leederville. Open from 4pm, Tuesday to Saturday.*



JAPANESE WHISPERS

A popular in-season pit stop for AFL and rugby fans before and after the game, Toraya Sushi serves modern Japanese fare with a couple of behind-the-counter secrets for those in the know.

If you're lucky, chef Keisuke Goto might have some 9-to-12 score wagyu available when you visit – these sirloins are the closest you'll get to Japan's legendary Kobe beef without clearing customs at Narita airport.

He's also gotten his hands on the super-luxe

toro, dubbed by many as the king of sashimi.

Cut from tuna belly, toro melts in the mouth like a divine pat of fishy butter, but be warned, it has been known to ruin maguro – the regular cut of tuna served on sashimi platters – for some.

And now that the understated eatery will be extending its opening hours doors on Wednesday and Sunday evenings, visits no longer have to coincide with Eagles or Dockers matches. *Toraya Sushi, Shop 8, Subiaco Square, Subiaco, (08) 9382 4433.*



CHAIINE OF FOODS

In July, the world's oldest gastronomic order, La Chaine des Rottisseurs, held its Grand Chapitre and AGM (the order's two biggest events) in Perth. La Chaine is an international society dedicated to preserving the traditions of fine dining and WA showed off its best as guests embarked on a weekend of unbridled gluttony down south.

The itinerary was enough to make even the most experienced of gourmands salivate uncontrollably: enjoying seafood and the view from on top of the BankWest tower, drinking wine pulled from the Aladdin's Cave that is Mike Tamburri's cellar and having dinner cooked for them by a Michelin-starred chef (see profile on Friends chef Andrew Barnes opposite) were just some of the highlights. With professional and non-professional members, what else is there to say but – where do we join? *Email lcdrwa@inet.net.au or visit chaine.org.au.*

BARNES STORMING

Armfuls of experience, opening and running a two Michelin-starred kitchen for almost a decade, overseeing a kingdom of 13 restaurants of various sizes and styles... it's the sort of resume Perth restaurateurs dream of holding in their hands.

And even when they do, they still don't believe it. "I thought somebody was having a lend of me," chuckles Friends Restaurant owner Clyde Bevan as he recalls reading Andrew Barnes' CV for the first time.

But this was no *Candid Camera* stunt and Friends' new head chef was serious about finding new opportunities for him and his family in sunny ol' Perth.

As an integral part of revered English chef Paul Heathcote's Heathcote Group, Andrew amassed quite the culinary CV including overseeing tapas bars, fine diners and even the construction of a £1 million private restaurant former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra built while owner of Manchester City F.C.

But just because Andrew's downsized his workload, don't think he'll be twiddling his thumbs all day.

When not in the kitchen, he's been busy reading up on Australian produce and is slowly getting closer to his vision of creating a true blue Aussie menu that shows off Indigenous produce, the inspired use of kangaroo (slow cooked as a quasi-ballottine), marron (an unlikely partnership with truffle and a cauliflower risotto works a treat) and bush tomato in early dishes offering delicious glimpse of the future.

Establishing healthy working relationships with suppliers is high on Andrew's to-do list and reflects his British training and cooking mentality.

"My time in Lancashire was probably more influential than anywhere else because it really got me into local ingredients," he says.

"We had producers who bred corn-fed chickens especially for us and there used to be a gamekeeper who'd go out shooting and would bring deer that he shot down to the restaurant."

In addition to reaching out to producers, Andrew has also extended a helping hand to tomorrow's cooks with Friends' apprentices the lucky first-hand recipients of his experience.

Oh, and we diners cop a pretty sweet deal too: the Arsenal supporter's food is big on flavour and texture and largely free of those fiddly bits that can complicate good nosh.

His truffle tasting menu – the first for his new employers and submitted just days after starting – was a study in restraint.

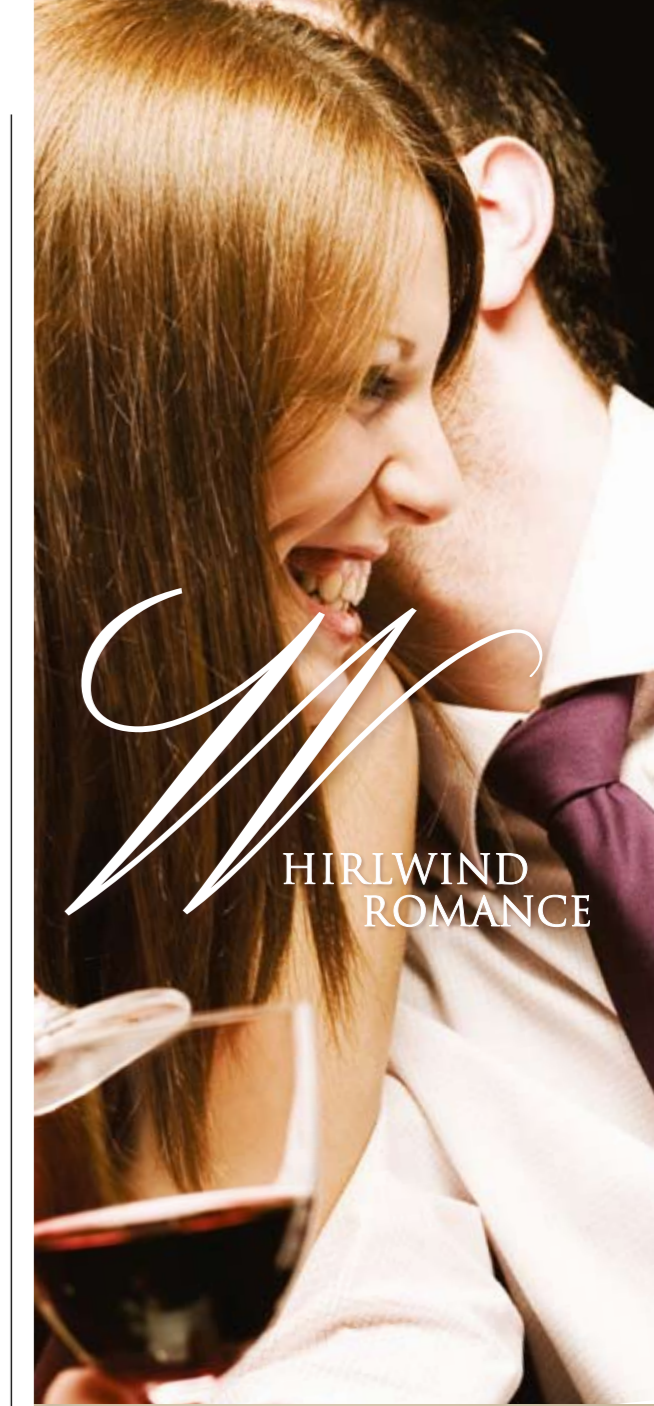
Rather than letting the truffles to do all the



NEW FRIEND: Andrew Barnes, (above) Friends Restaurant's new head chef will be bringing an extra touch of class to the Friends dining room (below).

talking, Andrew kept the gourmet fungi's volume low enough to let the rest of the produce, and his deft touch, be heard.

He's looking forward to exploring all the produce possibilities that come with the arrival of spring and summer. I'm looking forward too. *Friends Restaurant, Hyatt Centre, 20 Terrace Road, Perth, (08) 9221 0885.*



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EVENTS



BOOK NOW:
(far left and inset)
Table Seventy
Eight and chef
Damien Brown,
(left and above)
Yallingup's Cape
Lodge.

OH WHAT A NIGHT OFF!

After the success of the inaugural Chef's Night Off at Divido, the baton for the second event on Monday September 21 has been passed to Table Seventy Eight (78 Outram Street, West Perth).

Once again the night's aim is to create a casual environment for chefs and diners to mingle, network and discuss ideas, all with the aim of helping the industry grow.

And judging by the roll call for the first event – David Coomer of Star Anise and Pata Negra, Clint Nolan of Harvest and Manjimup Truffles' Al Blakers, among others – the industry is right behind the initiative. Meanwhile, Table Seventy Eight chef Damien Brown has been busy sweet-talking his supplier mates at Torre's Butcher, Leeuwin Estate and Ladle and Table for goodies to feed his guests on the night. I can't wait to see what he's unearthed for us.

Tickets are \$75 per person and include food and wine. Call Table Seventy Eight on (08) 9481 6566 and have your credit card details ready.

QUITE THE SOIREE

An evening of jazz, blues and fine food awaits on Sunday, October 25 at Yallingup's Cape Lodge, one of Australia's finest boutique hotels. Perform-

ing at Cape Lodge's first Jazz Soiree will be American pianist and songwriter Bob Malone, whose music combines Memphis soul, Chicago blues and New Orleans funk.

Accompanying the touring musician will be all the opulence, attention to detail and personalised service that are the calling cards of Cape Lodge's stunning lakeside restaurant: pre-dinner drinks on the deck, a four-course menu and even a special accommodation rate for those attending the concert.

Tickets are \$125 per person and can be booked on (08) 9755 6311.

TRUFFLE TRIPPING

Is there such a thing as too much truffle? According to Sharon and Dion Range of boutique Pemberton luxury retreat Stonebarn, not at all.

A celebration of the black truffle found in neighbouring Manjimup, Stonebarn's inaugural Truffle Dinner Weekends are the ultimate foodie getaway.

In addition to two nights' accommodation (Friday and Saturday) in a luxury king suite, guests will enjoy two three-course truffle themed breakfasts, an indulgent dinner showing off WA's new black gold and access to all the

property's facilities and activities. Guests are invited to bring along a bottle of something special for dinner but if there's nothing suitable in your cellar, relax, a trip to one of the nearby cellar doors should unearth something fitting.

The next two weekends are scheduled for September 25-27 and October 30-November 1 and numbers are strictly limited. The cost per couple is \$850 and reservations can be made direct with Stonebarn on (08) 9773 1002.



CHEF MOVES

• TALENTED CHEF Damien Young has been spotted cooking in various kitchens around town since leaving Bistro Felix, including Fremantle's Harvest where he started when he arrived in WA from Brisbane. But following his head chef posting at The Beaufort Street Merchant (above, 482 Beaufort Street, Highgate), Damien looks set to be staying put – or at least that's what Merchant owner Scotty Taylor is hoping. After all, he's just gone to all the trouble of installing a spanking new kitchen. But Scotty's fears look unfounded – Damien's just written an exciting provincial-style menu (Pork shank pot au feu? An "evolving" charcuterie plate with jamon iberico and parfait? Bonjour) and the steady stream of diners, drinkers, shoppers, cake fans and more doesn't look set to dry up any time soon.

• STEPPING INTO Damien's shoes at Bistro Felix (below, 118 Rokeby Road, Subiaco) is Helen Pratt. After completing her apprenticeship in some of Brisbane's most-revered French eateries, the Queenslander packed her bags to live and work in France. On her return, Helen used her position in the kitchen of the Kingaroy Hotel to introduce fine dining to her hometown. Bistro Felix was the next stop on her career path and after a year as Damien's sous chef, she recently took the head chef position.

Her classical training and commitment to sourcing local produce has yielded a modern interpretation of European cuisine that is both elegant yet accessible (for more on Perth's bistro scene, see page 180). Tangelo cuts through the richness of cured duck while a veloute of tomato and saffron is the perfect bedfellow to a portion of shimmering, just-set barramundi. Vive la France. Vive Helen Pratt.

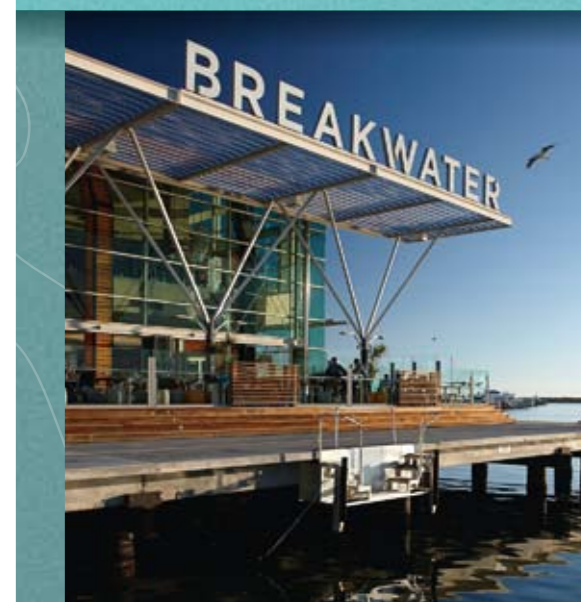


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