

good food guide special edition

BEST NEW RESTAURANT

Well worth the wait

A decade in the making, Manly Pavilion proves patience is a virtue, writes **Terry Durack**.

Manly Pavilion might be Sydney's best new restaurant but it took 10 years to get there. Property developers-turned-restaurateurs Denis Catelan and John Codling started making plans for the site in 2000 when it was, in Codling's words, "broken down and let go".

One of three major bathing pavilions built in Sydney in the late 1920s and early '30s (along with Bondi and Balmoral), the place oozed potential with its lustworthy water views across to the Heads.

It took three years to lodge applications, two more before the pair had building permission, then another five before the opening, after an \$8 million investment.

At least Catelan and Codling had

plenty of time to build their team. A popular local restaurateur, David Gray, was signed on to host the floor while talented young Melbourne sommelier Michael Watt, who had worked at Circa and Ezard at The Adelphi, started compiling what would become one of Sydney's most intriguing wine lists.

In the meantime, the fledgling restaurateurs dined at Darling Harbour's Coast to check out the handiwork of young-gun chef Jonathan Barthelmess, whose mentors include Stefano Manfredi and Janni Kyritsis.

Once Barthelmess saw the site, he was smitten, as was former Josephine Pignolet Best Young Chef Award winner James Parry, who came on board as his second.

Architects Squillace Nicholas



Shore winners ... chefs James Parry and John Barthelmess at Manly Pavilion. Photo: Quentin Jones

have made the most of the clean, ship-shape lines of the heritage-listed building, with a sleek, white-washed, split-level dining room and magnificent Italian terrazzo terrace.

Barthelmess acts as a kind of anchor, keeping a sense of place by weighing in with a personal, highly styled, interpretation of modern Mediterranean cooking.

Progressive techniques and traditional, age-old flavours combine in a small dish of sweet scampi resting on a crisp celery

ragu, dusted with dehydrated seaweed and seasoned with the deconstructed elements – anchovy, garlic, olive oil – of a traditional bagna cauda.

Froths and bubbles are used judiciously to lighten and accent, as in a simply grilled fillet of jewfish with a tidal foam of lemon-powered avgolemono. His is not what you would call a kitchen of shortcuts. A dish of pasta sauced with a rustic wild-boar ragu starts with the kitchen breaking down the entire wild boar.

For dessert, Barthelmess and Parry riff with everything from chocolate and peanut caramel ice-cream sandwiches to cocoa ravioli with gorgonzola and honey.

Coffee is served with little lemonade gummi bears that turn grown-ups into kids.

It's a fine point as to whether the combination of 10 years' work, the massive commitment, the brilliant young chef and the outrageous views clinched the Best New Restaurant Award for Manly Pavilion – or those cute little gummi bears.

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Manly Pavilion Manly Cove

☞ Best Seafood Restaurant

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Rockpool Bar & Grill Sydney

☞ Best Small Wine List

Spice Temple Sydney

☞☞☞ Three Hat Winners

est. Sydney

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☞☞ Two Hat Winners

Buon Ricordo
Guillaume at Bennelong
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Rockpool
Rockpool Bar & Grill
Tetsuya's

☞ One Hat Winners

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Bamboo	Fish Face	Pier
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Catalina	Mad Cow	Spice Temple
Darley's	Manly Pavilion	Zest

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