

## New, upmarket Manly Pavilion restaurant is long overdue



From far left: The grilled buffalo mozzarella; Head chef Jonathan Barthelmess and general manager David Gray; The roast suckling pig; The view from the wraparound veranda.

Picture: VIRGINIA YOUNG

# Eat your heart out Sydney

Amanda Davey

MANLY Pavilion is finally open for business. After three years and \$8 million worth of restoration, refurbishment and rebuilding, this upmarket eatery is set to make its mark on the local scene.

Its highly anticipated launch last weekend was a subdued affair, but just days into its operation and the reservation book is filling fast.

A restaurant of this calibre is long overdue for the area, and will undoubtedly help to secure its place on Sydney's gastronomic map. Eat your heart out CBD and eastern suburbs!

While hospitality service has never been a strong point around here, frontman David Gray has employed a team of slick and highly polished individuals to man the floor.

Meanwhile, architects Squillace Nicholas have created a striking interior complete with soaring ceilings, an open and airy dining room and lots of interesting nooks and crannies, all of which capitalise on the harbour views.

But given the building's 77-year-old heritage, I'm wondering why there aren't more traces of the Art Deco about it, so richly evident on the exterior.

However, I'm no design guru and the flowing, ultra-mod decor does work well for the site.

We are here on a Tuesday evening and it's warm enough to sit outside on the wraparound deck, but instead we opt for the indoors to soak up the convivial ambience and do a bit of people watching in the process.

We see some familiar faces, including a couple of high-profile Sydney restaurant critics who are

### THE ESSENTIALS

**Manly Pavilion, West Esplanade, Manly**  
**Bookings:** 9949 9011  
**Prices:** Shared table experience \$88 p.p. or a la carte starts at \$22 to \$28 for entrees, about \$34 to \$38 for mains and \$14 for desserts.  
**Open:** 7 days, from lunch till late  
**Wine:** Fully licensed

getting lots of attention from the floor, but it's nicely unpretentious with a good dollop of laid-back casualness keeping it real.

Mulling over the wine list is our first indication that we are on to something special.

Sommelier Michael Watt, who enjoys a credible reputation, has obviously put a lot of effort into his substantial offering, working closely with head chef Jonathan Barthelmess, an impressively credentialled young gun who trained with Steve Manfredi and Janni Kyritsis, the recognised masters of Mediterranean cooking in Australia.

Barthelmess's food is inspiring but understated; simple, clean and, of course, totally produce driven.

He tells me at least half the place is opting for the \$88, fixed-price, six-course menu so we do the same, enjoying each surprise dish carefully chosen by the kitchen.

Meanwhile, we ask Watt to match wine with food, which is the way to go. We start with a mini plate of zesty, herby white



The new-look \$8 million Manly Pavilion at Manly Picnic.

Picture: VIRGINIA YOUNG (Photos)

anchovies crumbed and fried and served with tomato nioli.

In a nod to the famous Amalfi Coast, the grilled buffalo mozzarella, drizzled in quality olive oil and sitting atop a lemon leaf, is truly magnificent for its simplicity and freshness, as is the quickly-cooked shaved cuttlefish and fennel, marinated in roast chilli oil, lemon juice and herbs and topped with crispy eggplant chips.

Moving to the mains, we are presented with a hearty pappardelle mixed with a caramelised wild boar ragu that betrays the many hours and effort needed to create such a wonderfully gamey dish.

The roast suckling pig is also the real deal, slow cooked to retain the moisture but served with the crispiest of crackling and a handful of highly alcoholic cherries.

Dessert lovers will be in their element and, while there's only four to choose from, it could well be the hardest choice of the night.

But remember, it's very early days for Manly Pavilion and Barthelmess will continue to refine his fine fare as he gets a feel for the local market.

More pictures online at [manlydaily.com.au](http://manlydaily.com.au)