

Bites

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Machin-like efficiency to plating up



URBANE REOPENS: Chef Kym Machin and pastry chef Shaun Quade in The Euro cafe. Picture: Lisa Clarke

IT'S not just the decor that's different at Urbane. The recent million-dollar renovation, which has resulted not only in the reopening of Urbane but in the addition of The Euro alongside plus The Laneway bar out the back, has also cut a swathe through the kitchen team.

Not one of the original brigade remains apart from executive chef Kym Machin.

The current line-up of 30 headed by Machin now includes sous chef Todd Adams (an ex-Michael Lambie protege at Lamaro's and Taxi in Melbourne) plus new gun pastry chef Shaun Quade, who's spent time at Sydney's multi-award winning Quay and was more recently at glamour rural Victorian restaurant the Royal Mail Hotel, Dunkeld.

Both of these additions are Queenslanders returning home and Machin says the rest of the brigade is made up of keen up-and-comers. Machin hopes to put Urbane on the map, not just as a place to eat - tilting at a place in Australia's top 20 - but as a place for staff to come to work, using premium organic products. Staff will dish food for all three venues. "It's the best of both worlds. (Urbane and The Euro) will be using the same ingredients," Machin says. "The difference is that Urbane is all about modern plating and modern techniques, while in The Euro it's about classical plating and classical techniques."

The Laneway, which will be under Ryan Lane (ex-bar manager at The Bowery), also has a food menu offering the likes of slow braised wagyu chuck pie, wagyu burgers and charcuterie share plates. Watch this space.

ANOTHER change of restaurant ownership on the Sunshine Coast. Gary Skelton and partner Reni Van Tiggelen have sold their much-loved restaurant Harvest at Coolumb. Van Tiggelen says they had no intention of quitting but were approached by floor staff member Belinda Absolom and partner Tim to see if they would sell last winter. The intention is to keep long-time head chef Craig Galea in place and to continue business as usual. Skelton and Van Tiggelen plan to take a relaxing break from hospitality.

SEAFOD lovers will be in the pink at Confit Bistro in Fortitude Valley next month. Chef owner Jason Pepler is planning a nine-course tasting menu themed around beautiful prawns. Diners can expect the likes of potted prawns, prawn tartare with gazpacho sorbet, coconut prawns with laksa vinaigrette and even the old classic, garlic prawns. Pepler's partner Renee, ex-pastry chef at Tisane, has been busy too. She'll be selling individual Christmas puds (\$7) from the restaurant until Christmas.

CLOUDLAND'S Cellar Bar has delayed its opening until March. The Fortitude Valley venue, which originally planned to specialise in Spanish fare, will now be taking a broader focus with plans instead to dish up Mediterranean share platters. The cellar bar will be on display during a Garden of Eden New Year's eve event and can also be booked for functions before March.

BRISBANE'S Royal on Park has found a replacement for chef Gary Farrell, who is now running his own show at Isles in Twin Waters. Ross Howell, of Ross Howell Catering - ranked 7th in the world and who will represent Pacific Rim in the Global Chefs Challenge next January in Chile - is now manning the pans at the Walnut Restaurant. Ross is a seasoned culinary competitor, having taken part at the prestigious Bocuse d'Or World Cuisine in Lyon and the International Culinary Olympics, where he won two gold, one silver and three bronze medals.

KEEN to back Australian cheese makers' right to make cheese using raw milk? Sign Slow Food Australia's petition at slowfoodaustalia.com.au and contribute to FSANZ's assessment report in December at www.foodstandards.gov.au/.

STAFF at Brisbane's Di Bella Coffee have no doubt been letting off steam since winning the CSR Golden

Bean competition last week. The roaster took gold in the milk-based category with its buona corsa blend, and the southern hemisphere's largest coffee contest also bubbled up an impressive silver for Di Bella in the filter category for Getafix and another silver in the organic section for Morganic.

If you haven't been able to sit in on the At Our Table events organised around the state as part of the Q150 celebrations, there are still some tickets left for the final extravaganza at the State Library. The foodie happenings to

date have included everything from picnics to camp fire cook-offs and this Saturday, Bretts Wharf chef Alastair McLeod will serve a quintessentially Queensland menu. Diners will have a chance to meet some of the chefs who've been on board, including Dom Rizzo and Matt Golinski. From 6-10pm. Tickets \$63. Phone 136 246.

MORE than a third of all winning wines in Tyson Stelzer's and Matthew Juke's Great Australian Red Competition weighed in at under \$30 - great news for anyone searching for a

delicious yuletide drop. The overall winner is Yalumba '06 FDR1A cabernet sauvignon shiraz (\$36.95). St Hallet Gamekeeper shiraz cabernet (\$15) took honours for best wine under \$20. Get all the results of the event at www.thegreataustralianred.com

NEED a budget bite? South Bank's Institute of Technology's International Assessment Dinner is on tomorrow. The hospitality students are offering a three-course dinner with complimentary champagne and canape on arrival for just \$39.50 a head. If you

miss out on a place consider a yuletide lunch or dinner on December 14 and 18. It's a three-course Christmas meal with the traditional favourites. Lunch is \$35, dinner, \$39.50. It's a bargain and you'll be supporting up-and-coming hospitality workers.

THE sun on your back, some grapes between your fingers - always wanted to take part in vintage? Then try your hand at winning a competition to join the Clare Valley crew for vintage. Entries close Monday, January 11. Visit www.kirrihillwines.com.au

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Fossicking David Costello



POMx iced tea Available Woolworths supermarkets

THE humble pomegranate is super trendy these days, mainly because it is said to be bursting with polyphenol antioxidants. POMx is an outfit from California which uses the hefty Wonderful variety of the fruit. It blends pomegranate juice with lychees and white and green teas. Not bad for a summer sip. www.pomwonderful.com.au



Aya green tea Available online

AYASE Sugawara is a local lady who imports high-grade teas from Shizuoka in Japan. What you see here is Genmaicha with Matcha, a green tea with roasted rice and powdered green tea. The online shop also has organic and powdered teas and plenty of exquisite utensils, including pots, pitchers and canisters. www.ayagreentea.com



Gwydir Grove Widely available

MARGI Kirkby of Gwydir Grove at Moree has been experimenting of late with new "Australian fusions" added to her superb extra-virgin olive oils. We liked the native mint and garlic combination on blanched green beans, while spicy chilli and fresh lime brings a Moroccan flavour to baked potatoes. www.gwydirolives.com.au