

restaurant

Cream of the suburbs

with Lizzie Loel

FIRST there was Cream, a glamour-patisserie in the European style along busy Cavendish Rd at Coorparoo, then came Double Cream, a chic little affair with seriously edgy French-style food and a good wine list.

But unfortunately it didn't work. Perhaps it was just a bit too formal for the 'burbs and Trent Robson's food needed to be in an inner-city venue.

Owner Tony Smith decided to close it and concentrate on his patisseries, one next door at Coorparoo and the other at Nundah while he thought about what to do with the Double Cream space.

Several months and some soul-searching later, enter Cream Bistro, with a vastly more casual feel, no more linen-clothed tables or haute cuisine and more in line with what the locals are looking for, if the recent increase in business is anything to go by.

Smith is a busy boy, having just won the contract to supply Qantas with his range of sweet and savoury morsels, and now he has the bistro to manage again so he is wise to keep things simple.

The menu looks perfect with a choice of just six entrees and six mains, all of which hold immediate appeal.

Roasted field mushrooms with olive toast, rocket and parmesan sounds very e'cco bistro, and a caesar salad with a soft-poached egg and tempura anchovies almost had me until I spotted the prawn and pea risotto with mint and basil.

Plump prawns were buried under a

light risotto nicely seasoned with fresh mint, a drizzle of oil around the plate and, although some think this combo is not de rigueur, shaves of parmesan add to the salt content.

The gnocchi is made gluten-free as are many of the items in the patisserie and this results in a different texture.

The potato gnocchi had been sauteed in a seriously garlicky oil until crisp and browned, and tossed through with crushed black olives, wilted diced tomatoes and shredded rocket. It had a meaty texture, was very substantial and must be a big bonus for coeliac sufferers to find dishes like this available to them.

Reef and beef makes an appearance in the form of a scotch fillet in two sizes, topped with grilled king prawns and bearnaise sauce.

Also on the mains list is spaghetti marinara and everybody's favourite comforter, bangers and bintje mash with a red onion marmalade.

Smith says the spiced slow-cooked lamb shanks are one of his bestsellers but I couldn't pass on the perfect roast chicken with rosemary and lemon that sat over a medley of roasted vegies. Melting onions, little crunchy new potatoes and wilted spinach sat soaking up the pan juices in what was one very generous-sized main.

Our atlantic salmon, cooked until all sides of the fillet were golden and crisp, was perfectly rare within and deliciously doused in brown almond butter and a creamy but still textured polenta.

We loved our mains and also our side of steamed broccolini with a generous



SIMPLE and scrumptious... clockwise from left, atlantic salmon; tiramisu; plum and pear tart; prawn and pea risotto. Pictures: Bruce Long



dollop of Tasmanian goats curd and a sprinkle of olive oil over it.

If the sound of textures alone means sounds minimal, try this for a wine list. You can have a choice of house sparkling, white or red for \$4.90 per glass. Or there is a range of mixed drinks and beers. BYO is the other option, so come prepared if you want a wider choice of wines and you won't pay corkage.

The children's menu is an age thing — you pay \$1 per year of age from 5 to 12 years, and there's a nice range of dishes on the menu, properly cooked (read no nuggets).

Dessert is where this place gets serious and it's been a while since I tasted a better tiramisu. Another coeliac-friendly choice, the savoiardi biscuits are made on site, gluten-free, and they are light and incredible moreish.



Ditto the wobbly pannacotta, fresh as a daisy, and the not-too-sweet plum and pear tart with a lattice top.

This is great quality suburb-appropriate dining that is approachable and affordable.



CREAM BISTRO

Address: 380 Cavendish Rd, Coorparoo

Ph: 3324 2713

Hours: Lunch Tue-Fri noon-3pm, dinner Wed-Sat 6pm-late

Liquor Status: licensed and BYO
Prices: entrees \$9.90-\$13.90; mains \$15.50-\$26.50; desserts \$9; house wine \$4.90 per glass

Owners: Tony and Sam Smith
Chef: Sheena McRuvie

Parking: on site

Wheelchair access: yes, full facilities
Other: seats 65; all major credit cards; airconditioned

The score

Food: 15

Wine: n/a

Service: 15

Ambience: 14

About the score: 0-5 don't bother; 6-9 needs serious improvement; 10-12 reasonable, room for improvement; 13-14 good; 15-17 very good; 18-19 exceptional; 20 perfection