

Cream of the crop

with **Lizzie Loel**

DOUBLE Cream, Brisbane's latest glamour restaurant venue, simply oozes Euro-chic.

Tucked into a strip shopping centre in Coorparoo, it is the second venture for Tony and Sam Smith who opened Cream, a European-style patisserie and cafe about 18 months ago.

Cream makes gorgeous cakes, as well as a range of paninis and other snacks, but there is nothing snack-like about Double Cream next door with brilliant young chef Trent Robson running an immaculate kitchen and putting his considerable talents into a small, but stunning, menu.

It's a brave move and one that Smith took out of his passion for elegance as well as his general weariness of Aussie bistro food.

His chef is incredibly passionate about food and its preparation and after returning from venues like The Glasshouse and Le Trompet in London was ready to try something new.

The level of innovation, formality and edginess of the food here is an incredibly different thing to find in a suburban diner, as is the elegance of the room itself.

Dark woods and marble surfaces scream Northern hemisphere and rich-cream, leather high-backed chairs and heavy white damask linens lend a special occasion feel.

But the service is friendly and very Australian in style. Knowledgeable and clearly desirous of pleasing and extending the diners' experience, the food is described

with genuine zeal and pride. And if I were serving this fare, I'd be very proud too.

Foie gras and quail ballontine comes with a little puddle of bearnaise, a small cup of steaming quail consomme and some stunningly fresh toasted fig-and-hazelnut brioche.

It's an awesome combination and so light we felt it only right to share it and move on to another couple of entrees. Cauliflower pannacotta with blue swimmer crab is a soft combination and one I can highly recommend. Add a dollop of salty avruga caviar and you have heaven. My friend, a seafood lover and devoted foodie, felt the dish lacked salt but I loved its subtlety.

It was the assiette of sashimi, however, that blew me away. Do not try this dish at home unless you have years of experience bringing subtle, gentle flavours of ultra-fresh seafood to life with a colourless jelly.

Robson perfects it, lying wafer-like slithers of a variety of white and blood fish, an oyster and some salmon on the base of a shallow bowl then sets it in a zingy gazpacho consomme jelly.

It's brave in presentation and innovation, healthy and delicious.

More substantial but just as beautifully presented, confit pork loin comes topped with crisp strips of salty crackling and fried sage leaves over a fine apple tart.

Geek it was good, but so was my roasted pheasant, a crisped-skinned fillet sitting in the centre of an oval plate surrounded by kipler rings and asparagus tips, a fat raviolo of pheasant and coated in an elegant jus fortified with mascarpone.

Awesome, and I'll have to return for more because my friend, spying my rapture, snatched my plate and inhaled the rest of the dish.

I can highly recommend the assiette of petit fours for dessert as it means you get to sample what this restaurant and patisserie can do at the sweet end of the meal.

There's a little rectangular custard tart with lightly bruleed crust, a shot glass of homemade yoghurt with strawberry soup on top, a mini Paris brest (choux pastry filled with



DOUBLE delight . . . roast pheasant breast with kipler potatoes, pheasant raviolo and eggplant jus, at Double Cream. Pictures: Suzanna Clarke

milk-chocolate mousse), a white chocolate and coconut truffle and a tiny almond pannacotta that packed a mighty punch.

A brunch menu is available between 10am and 3pm on weekends and contains everything from the traditional fry-up to a wild

mushroom salad with truffled egg.

At 24, Robson is clearly the new guard of chefs and could easily rival his older counterparts with his passionate (read obsessive) attention to detail and innate style. Now the southside has its own shining star.

DOUBLE CREAM

Address: 380 Cavendish Rd, Coorparoo. **Ph:** 3324 2713

Hours: dinner Tue-Sat, 6pm-late; lunch Fri, noon-3pm; brunch weekends, 10am-3pm
Liquor status: licensed

Prices: entrees \$13.50-\$16.50; mains \$22.50-\$28.50; desserts \$10.50-\$12.50; brunch \$6.50-\$12.50; wine \$26-\$125.50

Owner: Tony and Sam Smith
Chef: Trent Robson

Smoking: in designated areas
Parking: on site

Wheelchair access: yes

Other: seats 62; major credit cards, amex pending; airconditioned

The score

Food: 17 **Wine:** 14
Service: 17 **Ambience:** 17

ABOUT THE SCORE:
0-5 don't bother; 6-9 needs serious improvement; 10-12 reasonable; 13-14 good; 15-17 very good; 18-19 exceptional; 20 perfection