

mx Nosh

TASTY MORSELS

TRY THIS



LOCAL HERO

Italian Local, above, is the most recent book by top chef Tobie Puttock that features classic Italian recipes aimed to suit Australian conditions. It's out now for \$49.95 and has close to 100 recipes.

THIS NIGHT ROCKS

Tonight it's canapes and boutique beers at the Lowenbrau Keller at The Rocks to raise funds for the Sydney Children's Hospital. \$50. Starts 6.30pm. Ph: 9382 1188.

JAZZY RECIPES

Join the fun at the 15th annual Jazz Wine & Food Festival when the Hunter Valley Wine Industry takes a taste of the region to Shoal Bay from September 5-7. Ph: 1800 181 810 or visit www.shoalbayjazzwinefoodfestival.com.au

CHOP, CHOP

Looks like steak aficionado and restaurateur Kingsley Smith is on to a winner with his fourth restaurant, Chophouse, is now open at 25 Bligh St. Visit www.chophouse.com.au or ph: 1300 246 748.

THE ONLY SNAG

Tried the 50cm sausage at the Bavarian Bier Cafe in O'Connell St yet? It's \$20 for a handmade half-metre Schutzenwurst sausage with sebago mash and pure bier (300ml). Ph: 9221 0100.

— Something happening in Sydney food and wine? Let us know at huntm@mxnet.com.au



Picture: CHRIS PAVLICH

TIME TO VINO 66 Stanley St - Darlinghurst Ph: 9380 4252

Occasionally you come across a place that makes you feel like a foodie.

You get more excited about food and wine than usual because you are clearly among gastronomical geeks.

The brothers behind this freshly opened little wine bar have taken advantage of the new liquor licensing laws and set up a warm, boutique-style eatery on a well-worn dining strip.

These guys are serious about their wine – sommelier Clint Hillery has created wine lists at places like Altitude, Gazebo and Verandah bar.

The first sign that we're in the presence of gastro geekdom is the comment about the oysters. I believe it was something along the lines of "We've been excited about these all day".

We indulge in a dozen of the plump gems (three for \$8). They're big, creamy and beautifully accompanied by a dipping sauce with a lovely light tang.

We've started with a sparkling, with a plan to progress through the wine spectrum like true vino connoisseurs.

A 2005 drop from the Clare Valley, the Kilikanoon Sparkling Vouvray (\$8.50) is suggested and its crisp dryness becomes a touch sweeter when accompanied with the oysters.

We look to the artfully scribed blackboards (another secret for creating a foodie atmosphere) for our mains. They're under the cute moniker Friends Are Here. (Entrees are Waiting for Friends).

There's a few meat dishes, a few fish, a pasta and a soup.

We love the warming simplicity of the veal osso bucco (\$28). It's done in traditional Italian style, with three shanks stewed in a tomato base and teamed with a semolina-style orzo ragu. It's buttery creaminess is delicious with the rich and slightly sweet sauce.

The roast sirloin is just as good. It's a perfect medium and has been sliced and topped with roast onions, horseradish cream and a red-wine sauce (\$26).

Neither meal comes with vegetable accompaniments, but who needs nutrients when we have a smooth, slightly smoky pinot from Georges Michel in the Marlborough region (\$12 a glass)?

As we swirl the first fragrant notes of an excellent sticky around our mouths we stop to actually look at the place.

It's small enough to create a local feeling and the candles on every table and low lighting are perfectly judged.

We peruse the blackboard again – Who Needs Friends is dessert.

A gluten-free version of the excellent quince-and-rhubarb crumble is made, served with a feather-light vanilla cream. We also try the hazelnut praline parfait sandwiches (\$10), which are an elegant version of an ice-cream sandwich.

Because having fun with your food is what a foodie is all about.

VANESSA SANTER