

WHAT'S a good plan after being named best cafe for food in The Sydney Morning Herald Good Cafe Guide 2014? Keep the original premises and open a second, much larger venue proved a smart strategy for **Derek** and **Noni Puah** and **Zacharay Tan**. By day, **Devon on Danks** keeps locals and brunch fans happy with doughnuts, cronuts and signature breakfasts such as Dr Seuss's Green Egg and Ham. By night, an Asian-inspired menu reflects the rich culinary heritage of Penang - the home town of the Puahs and Tan. Filling the Waterloo site formerly occupied by two of the area's iconic eateries - Danks Street Diner and Danks Street Depot - the night was hot and humid when we walked into the 90-cover corner space. There's a sleek bar, huge blackboard menu and separate area for serious fans of Tan's risk-taking culinary approach that rarely misses the mark. Tan honed his love of French cuisine at Le Cordon Bleu in Sydney, after deciding he didn't want to be a pharmacist. Over the next few years he worked in a string of high profile restaurants - Jimmy Liks, Pier, Guillaume at Benelong and Bistro Guillaume in Melbourne. Teaming with the Puahs in 2013, the trio opened the Devon Cafe - named after its location in Devonshire St, Surry Hills, not the tasteless sausage meat. Tan's Lobster Roll has a cult following and also made the move to Danks St. It didn't really fit in with the other Asian dishes we ordered but we just had to have it - a light brioche roll filled with fresh-as shellfish, radish and tatsoi. The rest of the after-dark menu is tightly edited, flowing through eight headings from snacks to larger and solo eats. Share plates are a default position even for two from piquant openers such as live pippies in Mamak style dry curry and charred jumbo quail, green salad of cucumber, green tomatoes and pickled chilli. Solo eats that skewer your attention range from honeycomb beef tripe with sweet soy glaze to sate bibi - Penang Hainanese-style pork sate with sweet potato sauce. But be warned. When the menu says larger dishes are on the way, it means it. Our servers, a slick young American of Asian heritage, and Penang-born Jackie, made sure we were steered in the right direction with their informative and attentive service. Out came cooked-to-quivering-perfection Chinese egg custard



studded with spanner crab, soy and broad beans, and shiitake mushrooms. The slow-cooked whole neck of lamb with Sichuan pepper sauce was fork-soft and needed only boiled rice as a foil. The sweets alone are worth struggling to find a parking spot near this popular restaurant hub. For cool refreshment, look no further than S.E.A vacherin - kalamanis curd, pandan bavaois and granita, loquat sorbet and meringue. But for those who appreciate an unerring blend of intricate textures and flavours, the tofu fa, gula melaka and ginger ice cream balances opposing components so precisely they meld into a uniformed whole that pops in the mouth. A curated collection of beers and a wide-ranging wine list offers something for every taste from Rheingau rieslings to organic sav blancs from across the Tasman. Devon By Night, Devon on Danks, Wednesday to Saturday, 2 Danks St, Waterloo; phone (02) 9698 7795.

The Butler is also ensconced in a landmark restaurant site, once filled by such iconic eateries as Butler's and Mezzaluna. But the draw card that has kept the premises such a favourite for several generations of Sydney diners - a knockout view of the city skyline - remains as compelling as ever. Owners **Harris Watts** and **Ben Carroll** of the Applejack Hospitality Group (Bondi Hardware, SoCal) are behind the French colonial refit - leather banquettes, wicker cane chairs and plenty of plants. Many people drop by for the expertly made cocktails - Dynamite Sour, Cognacquiri and La Mule. Under the exhortations - Mangez Bien, Riez Souvent and Aimez Beaucoup (Eat Well, Laugh Often and Love A Lot), the Menu Alimentaire begins with Seafare, including roast snapper fillet, heritage carrots, dukkah and eel butter to Tabasco prawns, mango salsa and coconut quinoa. The Field Folly section appeals to heartier appetites from duck sausage, confit leg, pickled beetroot and celery to slow-roasted saltbush lamb shoulder, sage, gribiche. For anyone simply feeling peckish, there's some inspired snacks such as beef and

spiced pork slider with Creole mayo or Lyonnaise sausage rolls with rum and pineapple relish. Desserts change frequently and the wine list rests its cred on superior French and Australian wines. The Butler, 123, William St, Potts Point; phone (02) 8354 0742.

Pymont is jam-packed with some of the most expensive apartments within walking distance of the CBD. The high real estate prices are generated by spectacular water views. A cash-in-hand guarantee that also works strongly for **LuMi Bar & Dining**, where the floor-to-ceiling windows frame Pymont Bay. A collaboration between cutting-edge chef, **Federico Zanellato**, and the **Drakopoulos** dynasty of Sydney Restaurant group, LuMi is a must-visit if you want to impress new or longstanding romantic partners or wow important visitors to Sydney. Zanellato cut his teeth at Copenhagen's Noma, which has regained its top ranking on San Pellegrino's World's 50 Best Restaurants list, Attica in Melbourne and Ormezzio at The Spit, one of Sydney's leading Italian restaurants. At LuMi, diners can watch the staff plate up if they can drag their eyes away from the view. The chefs bring the dishes to the sleek, Danish-inspired tables on earthenware, not standard issue white dinnerware. One of the most original dishes is Evergreen - a herbalist's delight of sorrel, lemon basil, shiso and parsley used to flavour a refreshing assortment of granita, sorbet and jelly. Menu degustations are the thing but you can order a la carte if you are in the mood for battered zucchini flowers with Italian nuoc cham or lamb cutlets Milanese style and cocktail sauce. The very comprehensive wine list has a strong Italian bent but winds through Europe from Austria to France, with a smattering of Australian bottlings for local effect. That over-used adjective "stunning" is fully merited for both the venue and the food. LuMi Bar & Dining, 56 Piramimma Rd, Pymont; phone (02) 9571 1999.

Above Left: Food platter at Devon Cafe.