

WITH a steamy summer coming to a close, one newish spot, in the heart of Broadbeach, has been one of the most talked about openings on the Gold Coast.

Mamasan is a pan-Asian venue with a moody decor and blurred lines between indoors and out. Guests sit at high tables under a canopy overlooking the town square of the **Oracle Complex**, sea breezes not far away but inside it's all polished wood and subtle Asian references.

The menu is multi-sectioned beginning with delicious-sounding small bites like sweet corn cakes with pineapple nouc cham, Sichuan pig's ear salad and KFC or Korean fried chicken – spicy chicken wings piled high and covered in finely shaved parmesan and almond "snow".

Sashimi tostada's also have the Korean treatment – finely diced raw ocean trout is doused in Korean red sour sauce and san choy bao is made with slow-cooked Byron Bay pork, green beans and peanut. Next up dumplings and buns; that's one dish that shouldn't be missed. King crab ravioli dumplings sound like a fusion dish but it's really just the shape of the dumpling that looks like ravioli; the rest of it is pure, subtle and delicate Asian flavours of water chestnut and toasted coconut sambal. Oracle Boulevard, Broadbeach; phone (07) 5527 5700.

Iceworks at Paddington sits across the road from the hallowed grounds of Suncorp Stadium so it's standing room only pre- and post games, but late last year the place was closed temporarily for renovation and rebranding. It's now Darling & Co and sports a pretty, feminine decor and fresh, light menu that perfectly suits the location. Outside on the deck there's a more robust line up of dishes that suits the sporting crowd, but inside the restaurant offer is more refined. There's a plethora of seafood sourced from north of the city - Noosa spanner crab salad sits on betel leaves, topped with finely diced watermelon and nigella seeds, Sunshine Coast yellow fin tuna taco's with radish, jalapeno and coriander and Mooloolaba king prawns are served sizzling in lemon butter doused in harissa. There's more seafood, this time from WA - Cone Bay barramundi is delicious served in a mild broth with diamond clams, peas and fennel, or you can tuck in to a 12-hour low and slow cooked Milly Hill lamb



shoulder for two with roasted vegetables, classic steak frites from Cape Grim or hand rolled gnocchi with oyster mushrooms, truffle and mascarpone. 157 Given Tce, Paddington; phone (07) 3367 9800.

Over the river at West End, **Ben O'Donoghue's** popular **Billicart Kitchen** has opened a second venue, this one a restaurant and provisions store next door. The decor reflects the classic features of the quintessential Queenslander - weatherboards and ornate stained glass windows and a colourful melange of casual furnishings. An open kitchen never seems to stop - breakfast (which is super popular on weekends when it blends into lunch) fires up around 7am everyday and lunch sees the growing population of office workers gathering in groups. A small range of tartines - four cheese fondue with spiced tomato relish, the house rye and a potato waffle croquet madame are very popular – probably because they are utterly laden with bubbling, oozy cheese. Corn fritters are light puffs served with lightly grilled avocado, heirloom tomatoes and red chilli, and yoghurt baked fish has an earthy walnut crust and a side of smashed squash. 2-4 Edmonstone St, West End; phone (07) 3177 9477.

Further into West End, several new breweries have surfaced offering a great range of golden and pale ales brewed on site and served in quirky surrounds. The latest to open is the **Catchment Brewing Co** in the heart of



Boundary St and has been well received with both locals and beer aficionados. Brewing two types of warm-climate brews, these venues can see food as an after thought but not here. Here it is incorporated into the food wherever possible. Mussels are steamed in beer, fish is battered in it and there's even a spiced ginger beer dressing over the oysters that come natural or you can opt for toppings of ham hock and bourbon or wakame and ponzu dressing.

A blackboard of daily main course specials is featured in the front part of the bar (out the back is a giant deck where the stainless steel brewing vats are also located) and may include dishes like whole spatchcock with pearl barley, harissa and corn salsa and a salad of duck and pickled figs. 150 Boundary St, West End; phone (07) 3846 1701.

Above top: Interior of Darling & Co, Brisbane.
Above: Bahn mi sliders, borrowdale pork belly, kimchi, from Darling & Co.