

## adelaidegrapevine

NIGEL HOPKINS

Star Adelaide Thai restaurant **Golden Boy** is now well into its second incarnation, with new head chef **Miles Davies** now leading an all-Thai kitchen team. Under its opening chef Nu Suandokmai, Golden Boy opened with a menu that included some of the gutsy, authentic dishes that made his name at his previous Adelaide restaurant Nu's and won him an enthusiastic following. His early departure left customers hovering as the restaurant waited for a suitable successor, which it's now found in Davies.

Davies has put his stamp on the award-winning Golden Boy by redesigning more than half the menu, introducing authentic influences from broader South East Asia and adding more vegetarian options. His cooking, while perhaps a little less flamboyant than Nu's, still has great authentic character and flavour, no doubt helped by the period he spent cooking with acclaimed Sydney chef Christine Manfield. "My time at Universal with Christine was most eye opening and I fell in love with South East Asian food, both the traditional and Christine's celebrated contemporary twists. Christine is a courageous chef and her influence on me shines in the Golden Boy menu today," Davies says. The large menu includes terrific dishes such as seared salmon in coconut soup with chilli, spicy cumin lamb with Shandong red dates, Thai basil and rice cake, and a signature jungle curry of stir-fried sirloin with hot banana chilli, kankung and holy basil. Davies and his team also make good use of a charcoal grill, with dishes such as a roasted half spatchcock marinated in turmeric, garlic and Mekong whisky. For those customers unable to choose there is a \$58 per person Tuk Tuk menu designed for sharing. Somewhat hidden away beside the adjoining Botanic Bar, Golden Boy's styling is industrial chic, with high marble-topped tables supported on scaffolding, combined with low leather banquette seating and a kitchen table for up to six where the full kitchen theatre can be appreciated. 309 North Tce, Adelaide. Open lunch Friday, dinner Tuesday-Sunday; phone (08) 8227 0799.

Possibly the Adelaide restaurant that has given most satisfaction to the most people throughout 2014 is **Peel Street**, now in the heart of the city's burgeoning wine bar precinct. If famed British chef Yotam Ottolenghi were to come to town, he'd come here to eat - this is his sort of food, strongly Mediterranean but with a healthy dash of Middle Eastern energy and spice.

Co-owner chef **Jordan Theodorou** and his partners **Ben McLeod** and **Martin Corcoran**



have helped drive a resurgence in Adelaide's restaurant life that has made dining out not just a pleasure but a necessity - so book well ahead. The place is colourful and casual, the kitchen open for all to see fronted by a long polished concrete bar where daily lunchtime specials are displayed. The blackboard wall menu tells the story, with dishes such as banana blossom with chicken, chilli jam and coconut salad with crisp shallots, or chargrilled chorizo with smoked paprika mayonnaise and black mussel escabeche. All-time favourites include a mullet fish paste with chunks of iceberg lettuce. The salads are wild, colourful and crunchy, the flavours are ravishing and gutsy, and the value is extraordinary. 9 Peel St, Adelaide. Open breakfast and lunch Monday - Friday, dinner Thursday - Saturday; phone (08) 8231 8887.

Running a close second in the popularity stakes is the ultra-hip Italian, casual but clever diner **Ruby Red Flamingo**, which probably has had the original owners of this 140-year-old former Baptist manse spinning in their graves unless, of course, they have been seduced by the aromas of chef **Enzo Zerdino's** immensely popular maccheroni eggplant with smoked scarmorze.

This has been a very successful partnership between restaurant entrepreneur **Vittorio Ventura**, front of house manager **Lauro Siliquini** and chef Zerdino. Unlike its previous more glamorous incarnations as a fine dining restaurant, the RRF makeover was cheap and cheerful, with a mixed bag of slightly retro seating, bare tables, colourful walls and bold blackboard menus with dishes to share. Its heart and soul, however, has been utterly Italian and that's been its secret. Many of chef Zerdino's dishes are classically simple, such as his paillard di vitello - chargrilled veal with spinach and roast potatoes, spiedini - chargrilled

calamari and prawns, or gnudi spinach and ricotta dumplings, all sold in half or full serves. At full throttle the place is noisy, energetic, a little chaotic - and Adelaide has taken it to its heart with a vengeance. The wine list is small but slowly expanding, focused on Italian wine styles both Italian and Australian made. 142 Tynte St, North Adelaide. Open lunch Wednesday-Friday, dinner Wednesday-Saturday; phone (08) 8267 5769.

Two new long-awaited openings are about to be added to Adelaide's summer dining menu - acclaimed chef **Duncan Welgemoed** is about to open **Africola** on East Tce in Adelaide's East End (just around the corner from Golden Boy), while Willunga's Fino partners **Sharon Romeo** and chef **David Swain** opened **Fino@Seppeltsfield** in the Barossa Valley late November. South African-born Welgemoed, who will continue his association with his previous restaurant Bistro Dom, now promises "a contemporary African flavour exploring the foods of the tribes of South Africa and the influences of the Portuguese, the Indians, the Malaysians and the Dutch. There's not a single restaurant in the world doing what we're doing - we're actually exploring the food culture of South Africa and taking it to another level." In his time at Bistro Dom, Welgemoed showed that he was an extraordinarily capable and passionate chef, so although South African cuisine may not yet be on everybody's lips, soon it may be.

Fino's new venture at Seppeltsfield, while retaining their original Willunga restaurant, is equally appealing - this time focused on Barossa produce such as Schu Am Berkshire pork, Savannah chickens and Hutton Vale lamb. Located in the former 1850s bottling hall, Fino's three new dining areas have been designed by acclaimed architect Max Pritchard. It will be open daily for lunch and dinner Friday-Sunday. 🍷

Above: Golden Boy.