

brisbane grapevine

LIZZIE LOEL

THE first couple of months of 2018 saw the demise of several iconic names in the Queensland restaurant scene.

Survey Co, a much loved bar and restaurant in Burnett Lane in the heart of the CBD announced it was under administration, and food and wine identity TJ Peabody, whose family own Craggy Range Winery in Hawke's Bay, shocked his loyal following with his post-Christmas announcement that he was closing the last of his empire, Italian diner *Nativo* and the still new and beautifully bedecked *Burnt Ends*, both at The Barracks complex adjacent to Caxton St in Brisbane's inner west. He closed his American style *Nantucket Bar and Dining* at Indooroopilly, a leafy, affluent enclave in the city's west earlier in the year and followed that soon after with the closure of *Nickel*, an upmarket fine diner in Fortitude Valley. Citing business difficulties, all establishments came and went in 2017 leaving something of a culinary hole in the western suburbs.

But as these adjustments inevitably happen and popular doors close, new ones burst forth with fresh vigour and hopefully a winning formula.

Drum Dining, which swung open its wide, wooden doors recently, is one such venue. Taking up a position on the popular *Teneriffe* enclave, *Drum* is the brainchild of **Nick Pinn** who also owns *Malt Dining*, *Malt Trader's*, *Malt Pier* and the hugely popular *Albion* hotspot, *Vaquero*.

Pinn partnered up with veteran chef **Paul Hoffman** who, for a couple of decades, operated the kitchens of *Cru Bar* and *Sixes & Sevens*, both in trendy *James St*. The pair has created an ambient space with a pared back, sharing style menu, a nicely curated wine list and an enviable collection of spirits, including slow gins, American whiskeys and lashings of popular vodka labels. Hoffman's menu centres around simple bistro dishes such as *Rannoch quail with witlof and parmesan* and a tangy citrus gastrique, fish fingers with a pine nut crumb, pickled fennel and sauce gribiche, and duck leg on white polenta with gorgonzola picante. There are options for snacks also designed to share that pair perfectly with the jugs of elaborate sounding punches combining *Havana rum*, berries and prosecco or *Absolute vodka*, lime and mint, ginger beer and aromatic bitters. 12 Longland St, Newstead; phone 0499 079 719.



Another year, another deluxe hotel opening; this time the **W Hotel** in *George St* at the river end of the CBD. Complete with rooftop pool and **Wet** poolside bar, which serves smoothies and cocktails as you float around the heated saltwater pool or recline on myriad of lounges surrounding the urban oasis.

The signature dining space has been secured by **Three Blue Ducks**, originally from *Bronte* in Sydney and then at *The Farm* in *Byron Bay* as well as a newer venue at *Rosebery*, back in Sydney.

With views across the river looking west towards *Mt Cootha*, responsible sourcing of produce and a bounty of local seafood on offer daily, there's an exciting choice of charry goodness from the arsenal of fire at the disposal of chefs **Mark La Brooy** and **Darren Robertson**, who have devised dishes cooked in the wood fired oven, on the rotisserie and over the charcoal pit.

"When approached by *W Hotel* to embark on a *Three Blue Ducks* venture in Brisbane, it was important to us to ensure that we shared the same values and sustainable business practices," said **Jeff Bennett**, co-owner of *Three Blue Ducks*. "We share the same ethos for quality and we'll be using locally sourced produce that is farmed ethically. Although our current venues greatly differ in aesthetic, our philosophy and ethos remain very much the same, and we can't wait to work alongside *W* with views over the *Brisbane River*."

"Brisbane is craving a venue like this - vibrant, honest, fresh and local with stellar views. It's going to be a hotspot for an indulgent weekend brekky and tempting lunch or dinner in the city, a place where you feel at home amongst friends and family to share delicious dishes within a lively environment," said *W Brisbane* GM **Hal Philp**. "We're both

non-traditional brands with a shared vision of showcasing local, real food and drinks, which makes this partnership the perfect match for *W Brisbane's* signature dining experience". Level 3, 81 North Quay, Brisbane; phone: (07) 3556 8888.

There's a plethora of Sichuan and Cantonese-style venues about to spice up our sub-tropical paradise with the openings by the team from **Rick Shores** and **Longtime**, **Neil Perry's Spice Temple** and **Stanley**, a large Hong Kong-style eatery situated at the impending **Howard Smith Wharf** development overlooking the CBD and *Kangaroo Point Cliffs*.

Then there's **Donna Chang** and multi-purpose venue set over two levels with mezzanine private spaces and a 180-plus seat restaurant. Downstairs in the basement will be **Boom Boom Boom**, a giant 250-seat bar, one of the largest in the city. It's the brainchild of **Ghanem Group** which also owns the popular riverfront locale, **Blackbird** in *Eagle St*. Ex *Spice Temple* Melbourne head chef **Jason Margaritis** will head up the kitchen and **Shawn Gomes**, ex *Il Centro* alum will become the general manager. Sommelier **Penny Grant** will oversee all libations at both *Blackbird* and *Donna Chang*. Corner *George* and *Elizabeth* streets, Brisbane.

Top left: Market fish (salmon), crushed new potatoes, globe artichokes, parmesan cream, sorrel.
Top right: Rannoch Farm quail, prosciutto, witlof, parmesan, orange gastrique.
Below: Interior of *Drum Dining* Restaurant.

