

brisbane grapevine

LIZZIE LOEL

BRISBANITES not buzzing about **Howard Smith Wharves** development, a 3.2ha (when complete), riverfront development in the CBD over the Christmas were thin on the ground.

The mammoth restoration and redevelopment of the precinct under the iconic Story Bridge, which has a maritime history dating back to the 1930s, will see many of the original buildings retained in the vast entertainment and parkland development.

Opening in stages, **Felon's Brewing Co** was first to open late last year and from day one became the go-to venue for millennials who flock there in droves. Ditto **Mr Percival's**, which occupies a rotunda in the centre of the development overlooking a wide reach of the river towards the city and Kangaroo Point cliffs.

Lagers, IPAs and cider is all brewed on site at Felon's, so named after an errant four "felons" who were blown off course and found themselves shipwrecked on nearby Moreton Island. They eventually found their way to the Brisbane River, claiming to be among the first "discoverers" of the snaking river that so defines the city.

The menu won't set any creative high notes - think burgers, fish and chips, wood fired pizzas and the like but the quality is good and it

marries well with the casual surrounds and the frothy ale. 5 Boundary St, Brisbane phone (07) 3188 9090.

Mr Percival's is a little more upscale, inspired by the beach clubs of Europe that founder **Adam Flaskas** visited while conceiving the project. The octagonal building sits over the river and sports a whimsical interior design by Brisbane favourite Anna Spiro. There are raw and cured sections to the menu followed by small dishes like crab stuffed zucchini flowers, crispy fried school prawns and whipped cod roe on warm baguette.

There are shared cocktails of elderflower, apple and saffron or a classic Pimm's with ginger syrup, or patrons can choose from an inspired range of summery combinations as well as a nicely comprised wine list that offers up some great home grown, NZ and European drops. 5 Boundary St, Brisbane, phone (07) 3188 9090.

Next up is **Greca**, a fourth venue for Greek maestro, Sydney-based restaurateur **Jonathan Barthelmess** (Apollo in Sydney and Tokyo, and Cho Cho San in Sydney) who was seduced by the warmth and vitality of the city as well as the sheer potential of the precinct. So in the space of about a month, the city starved of great Greek dining suddenly has two hot new choices - **Greca** and **Hellenika** in the **Calile Hotel** in Fortitude Valley. Both venues serve a similar menu and both follow the philosophy of simplicity and traditional flavours, always using quality ingredients. The Greca menu begins with dips, breads, olives and pickles, and moves into plates of honey drizzled saganaki, spanakopita, grilled octopus and dolmades. The meats and seafood come charry and fragrant, and the obligatory slow-cooked lamb shoulder falls apart at the touch of a fork alongside slow braised potatoes. All this and a smoky glass of ouzo will have you thinking you've died and gone to Paros. 3, 5 Boundary St, Brisbane; phone (07) 3839 1203.

Next to open is a boutique, six-storey

Arts Series Hotel, Fantauzzo, inspired by acclaimed Australian painter **Vincent Fantauzzo**. Opening in autumn, the hotel will boast 166 suites adorned with original art works and giclee prints throughout, complimentary art tours, in-room art channels and libraries packed with information about the artist, all with a backdrop of the striking reach of the river and the bright lights of the city and Story Bridge. There's also a rooftop pool deck and several food outlets and bars adding more choice to the already burgeoning scene. 5 Boundary St, Brisbane; phone 1300 114 131.

And as the hotel opens its stylish doors so Sydney's favourite Izakaya, **Toko**, opens a Brisbane cousin. The menu will have a similar vibe to that of the Sydney original, which has been going strong in Surry Hills under the stewardship of owner Matt Yazbek since 2007, albeit with a lighter feel and an emphasis on local seafood. 5 Boundary St, Brisbane. Stay tuned for more exciting news - **Stanley**, a 200+ seat Hong Kong-style Chinese over two floors, the **Overwater Bar**, and **ARC**, a fish-focused fine diner with Saint Peter chef **Alanna Sapwell** at the helm are scheduled to open later.

Top right: View of HSW Precinct.
Left: Seafood from Mr Percival's.
Below: Interior of Mr Percival's.

