

DINING with LISA MUXWORTHY



Alessandro Pavoni serves up ocean trout crudo (top) and the Egg on the Nest at Ormeeggio. Pictures: DAVE SWIFT

ORMEGGIO

Where: D'Albora Marinas, The Spit, Mosman

When: Dinner Tuesday to Saturday 6pm-late; lunch Tuesday to Sunday noon-3pm

Bookings: 9969 4088

A NIGHT at Ormeeggio is a real treat, and not just because the meals are at the hands of Italian chef Alessandro Pavoni.

The restaurant is set on a pier, with windows opened wide to boats bobbing on the water and the night lights across The Spit and those Seaforth homes.

It is quite charming and sets the scene for a memorable evening.

Pavoni, who hails from Brescia, opened the restaurant late last year and has already

been honoured with a coveted chef's hat in the Good Food Awards.

Ormeeggio was also recognised as having the best views of any restaurant in Sydney.

On Pavoni's recommendation, my dining partner and I sat down to the Tastes of Ormeeggio, a six-course degustation with matching wines (\$135 per person, or \$90 without the wine).

I definitely suggest opting for the wines, not only because they are perfectly matched to the meals, but the selection (an appropriate bias towards the wines of northern Italy) is as unique as what is served on the plates.

We started with an antipasto of ocean trout crudo and caviar, squid ink mayonnaise and crispy mandarin, which – apart from being delicious – was art on a plate. Also on the menu was agnolotti, stuffed with mozzarella, and a delicious roasted duck breast (the latter came served



with a sangiovese from Toscana which I'm determined to now add to my wine rack).

The slow poached blue eye cod was a standout as it was served with a very unusual burnt eggplant puree. Yes, burnt; but it was so rustic and hearty that it really made the dish.

There are two desserts on the degustation menu, with the Egg on the Nest (coconut, mango, milk chocolate and fairy floss) a real masterpiece.

But the verde di capra stole the show.

Here we have goat gorgonzola, a veined Italian blue cheese, served with white chocolate and dried black olives. Surely that can't work? Well it does, beautifully, especially when matched with the delicious red (Campagnola Casotto del Merlo Recioto) from Veneto.

From service to wine to food, this was a night to remember.

WINE with RICK ALLEN

■ **Petaluma Project Co. Riesling, 2009**

OCCASIONALLY, Petaluma release a Project Co wine – an experiment with a new variety or perhaps a wine from a new region. This is a wine with high residual sugar – slightly sweet, in the German style. I loved it. It starts with lime and grapefruit then there's some mid-palate honey sweetness and a hint of cleansing acid. **\$25**

■ **Blackjack Block 6 Shiraz, 2007**

OVER the years this Bendigo winery has established an enviable reputation for medium-bodied reds – and it's only reds they do. If you like a touch of pepper and spice in your shiraz, you'll love this. Rich and fleshy flavours, with dark cherry and raspberries, then the spice takes over before finishing with very fine, lingering tannins. **\$35**

■ **David Hook Old Vines Pothana Vineyard Belford Chardonnay, 2009**

ANOTHER Hunter winery producing cracking chardonnay. It wasn't long ago that Tyrrell's and Lake's Folly were in a class of their own. Now others have stepped up . . . Scarborough, Krinklewood, Poole's Rock, Hungerford Hill. Peach, some citrus, a touch of lemon and barely noticeable oak. **\$28**

■ **Lowe merlot, 2006**

I VISITED the organic Lowe winery at Mudgee recently and their star was a superb, aged riesling from 2002. Unfortunately, they were down to their last couple of bottles and it's probably sold out by now. This is very good too (as is the shiraz). It's a fleshy, richly-textured wine with plum flavours, some vanilla and fruitcake complexity and finishing spice. **\$30**

■ **Mayfield riesling, 2008**

MAYFIELD is a high-quality Orange winery which is one of the highest and coolest in Australia. This is a single vineyard wine and if the sign of a good drink is how quickly you finish the bottle, this passed with flying colours. It has lime flavours more subdued than many with flinty mineral complexity and some refreshing acid to round it off. Hard not to like this one. **\$28**

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