

FLIP SIDE

The antithesis of fine dining, these three new Sydney restaurants offer funky design, an edgy atmosphere and inventive food.



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RECIPES **MS.G'S, DUKE BISTRO & THE WINERY**
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In nearby Darlinghurst, the team at Duke Bistro has stamped its eccentric style on the upstairs space of the once-grungy Flinders Hotel. James Wirth, Gus Gruzman, Paul Wilson and Nick Mathers are the hip owners behind the hot new space that evokes a dishevelled country-house feel and serves a delicious menu of 'dude food'.

James collaborated with friend Mike Delaney on the quirky interior. "When we did the bar downstairs (at The Flinders) Mike did the whole thing. But with Duke it was all the owners plus Mike.

"It seemed that Sydney places were either fun and interesting or had good food, but not many places had both, and were relaxed and open late," says James.

The food at Duke speaks for itself. There aren't many young chefs who have as much freedom in the kitchen as last year's *Sydney Morning Herald* Young Chef of the Year Mitch Orr and ex-Tetsuya's chef Thomas Lim. "We're just two dudes in the kitchen and we cook what we like to eat," says Mitch. Their signature dish is fried chicken wings with coleslaw milk and hot sauce, while other favourites include XO lettuce, scallops and cauliflower. With a full house every night and a busy bar downstairs that also serves food, these casual young guys step up when the pressure is on.

James and Mike had a picture in their heads for the redecoration: "A quirky colonial hotel opium den – what we imagined a duke's eccentric holiday house would be like." The result is billiard table-green rooms with tapestry-upholstered banquettes and kooky lighting. Details from colonial hotels include painted Chinese hats, old birdcages and champagne bottles rigged up as lights. A Chinoiserie cabinet, inherited from the previous owners, was given new life as the bar. "You don't always have to spend loads of money to do an interior," says James.

Over in Surry Hills at The Winery, three friends have launched a winning formula. Like Ms. G's and Duke, it is based on the style of decor they like,

XO LETTUCE, SCALLOPS & CAULIFLOWER

SERVES 4

12 large scallops (about 25g each)

2 baby gem lettuce, halved

Grapeseed oil

XO sauce (recipe below)

Cauliflower puree (recipe below)

Snowpea shoots, to garnish

1 Allow scallops to come to room temperature. Heat a char-grill pan on high and lightly char-grill lettuce halves on both sides. Set aside.

2 Heat a frying pan over a high heat. Drizzle grapeseed oil over scallops and season with sea salt. Put scallops in pan, reduce heat slightly and cook for 2 minutes each side.

3 Slice lettuce and place in a bowl. Add 80ml ($\frac{1}{3}$ cup) of XO sauce and toss to combine.

4 To serve, spread 1 tablespoon of cauliflower puree on 4 plates, and a neat line of lettuce, perpendicular to the cauliflower. Halve scallops and place 6 on top of the lettuce on each plate. Garnish with snowpea shoots.

XO SAUCE

100g dried scallop

100g dried shrimp

100ml shaoshing cooking wine

200ml grapeseed oil

8 cloves garlic, crushed

2 long red chillies, sliced

1 large brown onion, finely chopped

100ml soy sauce

50g caster sugar

20g salt

1 Place scallops in a bowl, cover with warm water and set aside to soak overnight. Place shrimp in a second

bowl, cover with shaoshing wine, and set aside to soak overnight.

2 Next day, remove scallops from liquid, shred, then return to soak.

Heat oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat. Add remaining

ingredients, bring to the boil, then reduce heat to low and cook for

1 hour or until reduced and thick. Remove from heat, set aside to cool.

CAULIFLOWER PUREE

1 small head cauliflower, trimmed, cut into florets

50g unsalted butter

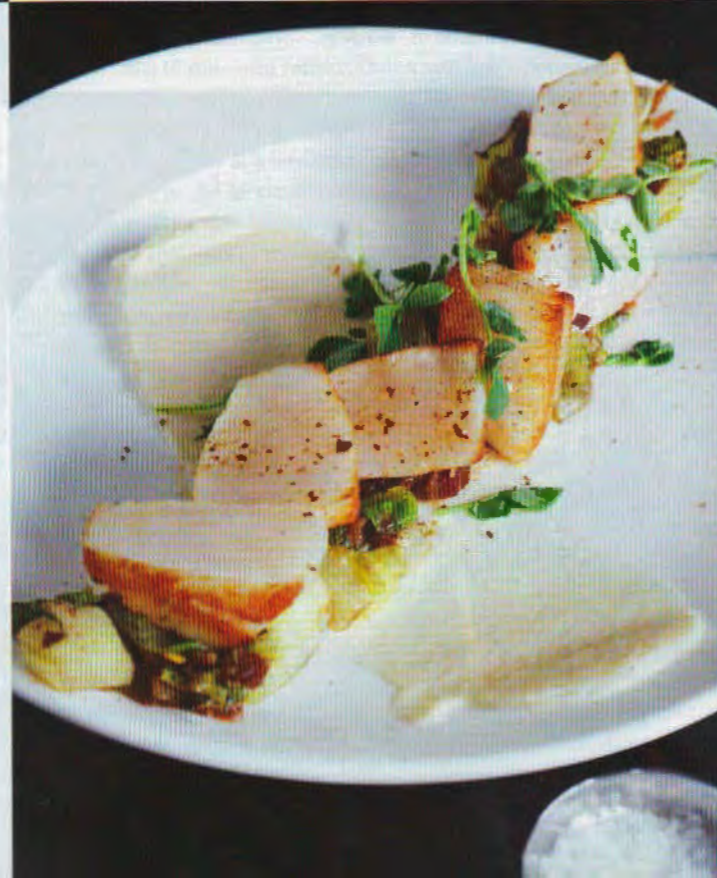
100ml thin cream

1 Place cauliflower in a saucepan, cover with water and bring to the

boil. Simmer until all the water has evaporated, about 40 minutes. Add

butter and cream, then blend with a stick blender until smooth.

DUKE BISTRO



DUKE RESEMBLES "A QUIRKY COLONIAL HOTEL OPIUM DEN – WHAT WE IMAGINED A DUKE'S ECCENTRIC HOLIDAY HOUSE WOULD BE LIKE."

THIS PAGE Tapestry-upholstered banquettes line the walls at Duke. OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP FROM LEFT Duke chef Mitch Orr; owner James Wirth and chef Thomas Lim.