



## tabletalk

### C'est Bon

Review Alison Walsh

Acting the part of the French sophisticate is all in a day's work for new Woolloongabba restaurant C'est Bon. Wedged between a down-to-earth pub and a butcher's shop in the inner southern Brisbane suburb, the restaurant is as long and slender as a baguette and puts on the chic with three glittering chandeliers, a row of mirrors down one wall and come-hither low lighting.

The understated elegance of the new Gallic hangout is aided by meticulous service from the calm young Frenchwoman running the floor, as well as the quiet wall colours and ladder-backed chairs pulled up at paper-topped, white-clothed tables in the freshly renovated shopfront. Tables along one wall that are broken into small groups by privacy screens are the prime real estate, with the rest of the small room filled with cheek-by-jowl tables in the style of a bustling bistro.

Doing some meeting and greeting as well as overseeing the kitchen is owner Michel Bonnet, whose daughter Amelie runs a bistro by the same name, with a very similar menu, in Melbourne. The

pair had previously run a restaurant in Cairns and the amiable Bonnet has been a name on Queensland's restaurant scene for decades, at various times owning establishments in Brisbane, on the Gold Coast and in Townsville. This time around he's imported Celine Damour from his French home town of Dijon to run the front of house and her partner, chef Morgan Buisse, to run the kitchen. The menu of more than a dozen entrées, a dozen mains and eight desserts is populated by a French culinary greatest hits list including French onion soup, chicken liver mousse, snails, coq au vin, cassoulet and duck à l'orange.

We settled on starters of tomato tarte tatin, which was pleasant and light, and a mixed seafood soufflé topped with a lobster cognac sauce, which turned on the glamour and was undeniably delicious. My main of a fillet of sea bass perched on a small omelette with a lovely caper and butter sauce was a dish I'd be happy to eat again, while the *côte de bœuf*, a 300g marbled rib-eye with the bone intact that arrived topped with a disc of Roquefort butter, French fries and salad, drew grunts of masculine approval on the other side of the table.

Such robust food needs good wine and the list is up to the task, offering an interesting mix with plenty of French favourites, a surprisingly strong emphasis on Queensland wines and a healthy range of aperitifs and digestifs. We finished with a very decent plain crème caramel and apple tarte tatin served just warm with vanilla ice-cream.

C'est Bon is unashamedly traditional, with simply presented food, smart service on the relatively quiet night of our visit and a welcoming atmosphere. All in all, it's a French lesson in hospitality and the art of freshly offering the tried and true.

**SCORES** 1-9 STAY HOME 10-11 NEEDS HELP 12 OK 13 BIT OF ALRIGHT 14 GOOD 15 VERY GOOD 16 CAPABLE OF GREATNESS 17 RUSHING BACK 18 VERY FLASH 19 UNIQUE AND MEMORABLE 20 AS GOOD AS IT GETS

### SET MENU.

**ADDRESS** 609 Stanley St, Woolloongabba  
**PH** 3891 2008

**HOURS** Lunch Tue-Fri, noon-2pm; dinner Tue-Sat, 6-9pm.

**LIQUOR STATUS**  
Licensed.

**PRICES** Entrées \$12.90-37.90, mains \$29.90-33.90, desserts \$12.90-27.90.

**NEED TO KNOW**  
Off-street parking at rear at night, air-conditioned, wheelchair access, all major credit cards except Diners.

**FOOD** 15

**WINE** 16

**SERVICE** 16

**AMBIENCE** 15

**THE SCORE** 15.5