

RESTAURANT Bar Barossa, 545 Queen St (cnr Adelaide & Macrossan Sts), Brisbane | **Des Houghton**



setmenu

PH 3832 3530
WEBLINK www.barbarossa.com.au
HOURS Tue-Fri 8.30am-midnight, Sat 5pm-midnight.
LIQUOR STATUS Licensed.

PRICES
 Entrées \$18, mains \$30, sides (fries, salads, beans, steamed greens) \$8, desserts \$12, cheese \$8 per 50g.
NEED TO KNOW
 Air-conditioned, street parking and nearby parking stations, all major credit cards accepted, wheelchair access and facilities.

THE VERDICT
 I see reds. And whites. and beer. And food!

High up on the wall of Bar Barossa wine bar and restaurant is a poster of a *Decanter* magazine cover featuring Max Schubert, the Barossa-born creator of Penfolds Grange. He would approve of this odd little restaurant with 1000 floor-to-ceiling vintages, from a knockout Ballandean Estate semillon sauvignon blanc for \$9 a glass to an \$80,000 6L bottle of 2004 Grange. With 25 brews to choose from, beer drinkers will be happy too.

It hasn't taken long for the culinary cognoscenti to discover Bar Barossa, tucked in that dark netherland where the city meets Fortitude Valley. I went with my hairdresser mate and his glamorous blonde girlfriend, and two wine collectors/snobs – one an investor and the other an overachieving accountant.

But the collectors had a big hole in their wine knowledge. Neither had visited the Granite Belt recently and both looked askance when I ordered each of us a glass of a Ravens Croft chardonnay from Stanthorpe. It was an instant hit, the accountant asking: "Are you sure this is from Stanthorpe?"

Bar Barossa is no chilly temple to wine gastronomy where customers are expected to genuflect or gush as each dish arrives. Here, people were enjoying themselves. The four entrées and four mains called "Hearty Plates" formed a crisply efficient menu with sensible prices. Starters of oysters, salt and pepper quail, seafood pasta and a gorgeous slow-roasted tomato and basil tartlet were

followed by mains of Atlantic salmon on celeriac mash, free-range Barossa chicken breast with coriander and coconut broth, Hereford Gold eye fillet with potato bake, onion rings and shitake cream, and braised lamb shank pie on mash with green pea purée and shiraz jus.

There was nothing but applause from my guests, each scoring their plates eight or nine out of ten. The accountant is a hard marker, but he described his chicken as outstanding. I could only say the same about my lamb pie.

We drank exceptional Tassie pinot noir

courtesy of Dalrymple Estate and Spring Vale, and finished with Rockford cabernet from the Barossa. If I had any quarrel with the menu it's that it was safe, with no wild cards. Where was the venison, goat or roo that teams so well with wine?

The pudding menu, too, was light-on with petit fours, an apple and rhubarb crumble and a cheesecake. Where was the chocolate? There were six cheeses to choose from but no Roquefort, a dreadful omission for a wine room restaurant. In the broad sweep of a great meal, however, these were minor quibbles.

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