

# Reflect & REJOICE

YOU'LL BE SAVOURING THE TASTES LONG AFTER YOUR DINNER DATE AT THIS FINE DUBBO RESTAURANT.

Slightly food obsessed, I'm generally too hungry for dinner at eight. True to form, we arrive at Reflections restaurant in Dubbo, just on seven. Greeted by friendly staff, we are shown to a table overlooking the calming vision of a majestic pool. Keen to remain present, I turn my attention to the diners, restaurant banter and the inspiring aromas.

I'm always excited to find clever food when dining in rural Australia. In a world where reality television has made us all restaurant critics, fresh and tasty is now just a basic expectation; I want more. Give me a seductive menu and arouse my senses further with artistic plating. However, if you want my true commitment, show me the genius of a fusion flavour profile. That's where this restaurant has me.

As the entrées arrive, I start profiling the chef. I suspect female, modern and unencumbered by Australia's culinary past. At best it is a guess but I am quietly confident. The plates are deliciously designed with a distinctive feminine wisdom and styling. Colour, symmetry and bold flavours feature.

Chilli garlic lemon pepper prawns, served with tomato, olive, artichoke and grilled Turkish bread, is first. Though defined by ingredient choice as Mediterranean, the chilli sauce has an unmistakable Asian sambal characteristic and I am thrilled. A combination of sweet, sour and heat lifts the dish into another realm and fuses effortlessly with the antipasto accompaniments. Simply brilliant.

The second entrée is red pepper scallops served on potato pancakes with a pancetta vinaigrette. I enjoy the mild earthiness of this dish. The potato pancakes are as delicate as the scallops themselves and there is sophistication in the subtle use of herbs. The zip to this dish is provided by the pancetta dipping sauce, which adds a perfect salinity and acid balance. In particular, this dish is a stand-out in visual design.

Enjoying a chilled Sav Blanc, we eagerly anticipate mains. First is Sous vide lamb canon with roasted Mediterranean vegetables, served with chimichurri sauce. Sous vide, is a French cooking method that literally translates to "under vacuum". Marinated, sealed in a bag, then cooked in a water bath, this technique has the effect of locking in flavours and achieving a heavenly tenderness.

This main immediately grabs my attention. The cooking style, vegetables, protein choice and flavours are distinctly Mediterranean but the chef had chosen an Argentine chimichurri as the accompanying sauce. Usually made with basil, parsley, coriander, mint, oregano, garlic, lemon, pine nuts and Parmesan, chimichurri seems to share similarities with Italian pesto.

After some quick internet research it is starting to make sense to me. In the early to mid-19th century, a flood of Italian migrants moved to Argentina to escape the rise of Italian fascism. As often happens when people are displaced, many recipes are fused and new ones invented. Upon finally tasting the dish, there is no further need for discussion. Indisputably, the cultural fusion has worked extremely well.



A huge fan of Asian cuisine, I am immensely excited to see a whole salt and pepper barramundi set before me. Served with crispy noodles for texture and an interesting salad choice, the fish holds moisture and is well seasoned.

As I have come to expect, each dish at Reflections has its own idiosyncratic feature. In this instance, it is the chef's compelling use of wasabi. Mixed with mayonnaise and lemon, the sweet yet mild wasabi sauce complements the fish perfectly, drawing to a long and invigorating front of palate finish.

With the instruction "surprise me", a double-layered chocolate mousse and ruby port and rhubarb risotto concludes the night. The chocolate mousse would please any chocolate lover; creamy and rich. The presentation is also extremely inviting. It seems a shame to destroy such art. Desire eventually winning over, it does not disappoint!

Rhubarb, or the art of cooking it, has been an age-old nemesis of mine. Chef Arshpreet Thind explains that the trick to achieving a silky texture is cooking the rhubarb in a red wine buttery reduction. Presented on a sweet cinnamon risotto, the balance of tart and cream makes for a whole palate experience and an interesting mouthfeel.

I get the feeling that the restaurant's food style is not fusion by intention. However, their intention is clear and evident in terms of flavour profiling. Combining traditional cultural ingredients and various cooking disciplines might say as much about the restaurant's desire to be innovative and truly unique as it does anything else. This food is distinctive from that of its competitors. It comes with its own delicious stamp and if you're a foodie wanting a great dining experience, you can't go past it. CWL

Reflections Restaurant is located at Quality Inn, Dubbo. Phone (02) 6882 4777, visit [qualityinndubbo.com.au](http://qualityinndubbo.com.au) or email [reservations@qualityinndubbo.com](mailto:reservations@qualityinndubbo.com).

Words: Catherine Player Images: Zenio Lapka

## Menu

1 & 2. *Entrée* CHILLI GARLIC LEMON PEPPER PRAWNS, SERVED WITH TOMATO, OLIVE, ARTICHOKE AND GRILLED TURKISH BREAD.

RED PEPPER SCALLOPS SERVED ON POTATO PANCAKES WITH A PANCETTA VINAIGRETTE.

3 & 4. *Main* SOUS VIDE LAMB CANON WITH ROASTED MEDITERRANEAN VEGETABLES, SERVED WITH CHIMICHURRI SAUCE.

SALT AND PEPPER BARRAMUNDI SERVED WITH CRISPY NOODLES AND SALAD.

5. *Dessert* DOUBLE-LAYERED CHOCOLATE MOUSSE.