

the guide.

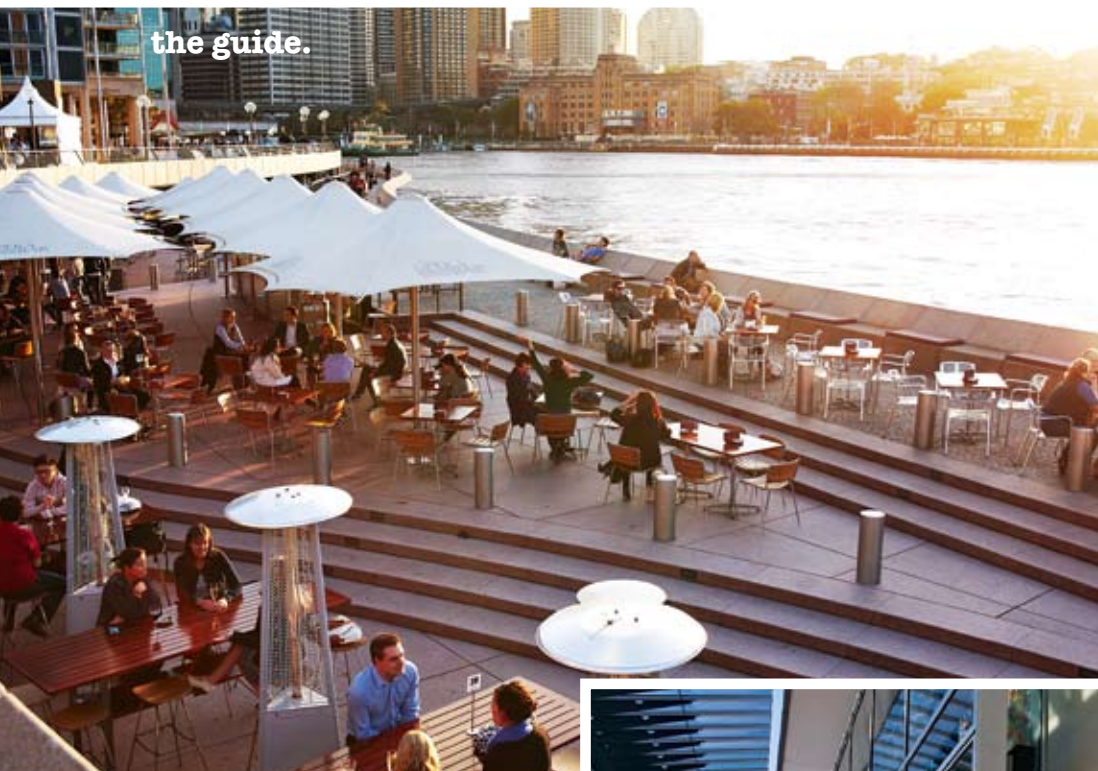
# sydney by the sea

WORDS SARAH LEWIS, ALISON PICKEL, JACQUI GAL COHEN, DANIELLE OPPERMANN & KATE SKINNER PHOTOGRAPHY NIGEL LOUGH

Sydney is renowned for its sparkling harbour, great surf beaches and world-class restaurants with views that are hard to beat. So to help you separate the gold from the glitz and make the most of your summer by the sea, here are our top picks, from Bondi to the Northern Beaches.



the guide.



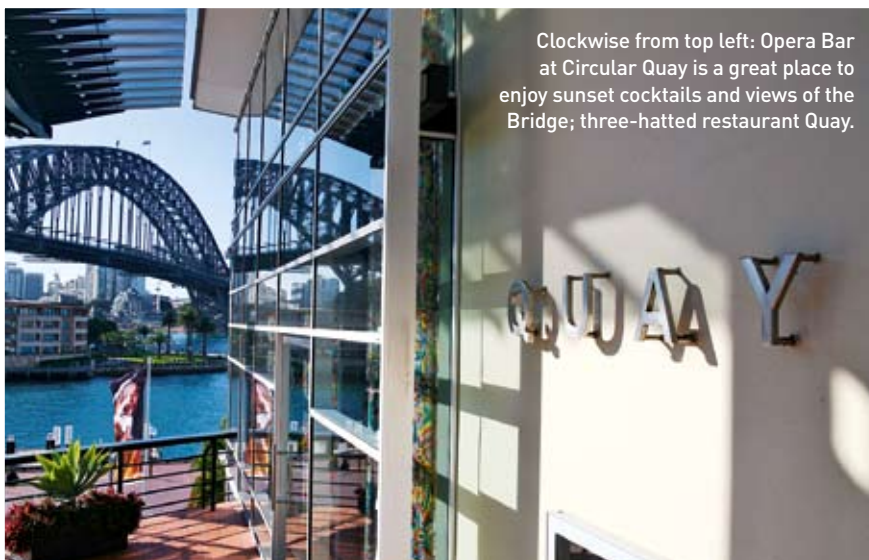
## city dining

### QUAY

From the sharp service to the unbeatable location taking in Sydney's two most famous landmarks, there's good reason for this restaurant to be ranked among the world's best. Factor in a 26-page wine list to complement Peter Gilmore's nature-inspired cuisine, and Quay hits every note. Perennial favourites include mud crab congee with palm hearts, and marron with jamon, broad beans and pea flowers. Dessert is a near-impossible choice between the ethereal snow egg and an eight-texture chocolate cake. **Overseas Passenger Terminal, The Rocks, (02) 9251 5600.**

### ARIA

Matt Moran's classy quayside restaurant is the place to go if you're out to impress. Along with jaw-dropping Bridge and Opera House vistas, you'll be treated to faultless service and outstanding dishes from one of the nation's top chefs. Iconic tastes include Peking duck consomme with abalone, and the sticky, crunchy Kurobuta pork belly. The Kitchen Table offers a different, yet no less spectacular view, as you watch Matt and his team while you savour eight sublime courses. **1 Macquarie St, East Circular Quay, (02) 9252 2555.**



Clockwise from top left: Opera Bar at Circular Quay is a great place to enjoy sunset cocktails and views of the Bridge; three-hatted restaurant Quay.



### GUILLAUME AT BENNELONG

Long before *Iron Chef* hit our screens, Guillaume Brahimi occupied his own Kitchen Stadium in this two-hatted dining room, housed within a grand wing of the Opera House. His astute French cuisine covers all bases, from elegant pre-theatre bites to a decadent degustation. Come for the basil-infused tuna, roast Barossa chook with broad beans, and the always-perfect soufflé. **Sydney Opera House, Bennelong Point, Sydney (02) 9241 1999.**

### OPERA BAR

For killer cocktails, hightail it to one of the hotly contested spots at Opera Bar. Here, at

candlelit tables that snake their way around the concourse, kick back with an Opera White Tea cocktail or a bespoke beer made exclusively by Redoak Brewery. Snacks of Sydney Rock oysters or mezze plates, and smooth live music complete this super-slick package. **Lower Concourse, Sydney Opera House, Sydney, (02) 9247 1666.**

### HARBOURKITCHEN&BAR

The Park Hyatt restaurant hasn't missed a beat since Andrew McKee – who has also worked at Hyatt hotels in Hong Kong and Japan – took the helm. The cured kingfish with espresso powder and fennel cream is oddly fantastic, and heirloom tomatoes are





Clockwise from above: Bondi's Raw Bar; the menu at Sean's Panaroma; Drift at Ravesi's; Sean's Panaroma's steamed asparagus on broad beans; Guillaume at Bennelong.



For a different harbour dining experience, hire luxury yacht **The Count** and organise mod-Oz catering care of the Aqua Dining Group (visit: [ripplescafe.com.au](http://ripplescafe.com.au)).

#### OTTO RISTORANTE

There's no better spot for a long lunch than Woolloomooloo wharf. Otto is the pick of the pier for watching the flash and sometimes famous, and for chef Richard Ptacnik's menu, which gives a fresh edge to Italian classics. Jewel-like beef carpaccio or snapper crudo are the perfect summer starters, backed up by handmade pasta and clever desserts such as deconstructed tiramisu. **Area 8, 6 Cowper Wharf Rd, Woolloomooloo, (02) 9368 7488.**

**Aki's Indian** (Area 1, (02) 9332 4600) gives Indian fare a similar twist, serving up deftly spiced seafood dishes, while **China Doll** (Area 4, (02) 9380 6744) is a favourite for mod-Asian flavours and fabulous cocktails. **Water Bar**, inside the wharf's Blue Sydney hotel (tel: (02) 8356 2553), offers a cool retreat from the waterfront, with velvet chaises to lounge on.



served with divinely delicate burrata (frustratingly, Andrew won't reveal his source). Save room for dessert – the blackcurrant bavaroi and violet profiterole encased in a purple sugar sphere is the most delicious snow globe you'll ever taste. **7 Hickson Rd, The Rocks, (02) 9256 1661.**

Around the point at Walsh Bay, you'll find the Sydney Theatre Company and a choice of chic dockside eateries and bars. At **The Wharf Restaurant** (Pier 4, Hickson Rd, (02) 9250 1761), Tim Pak Poy turns out assured modern fare, such as tea-smoked quail or seared scallops with jamon, within a cavernous space of white walls, soaring ceilings and aged wood floors.

Try **Ventuno** (21 Hickson Rd, (02) 9247 4444) for pre-theatre aperitivo, antipasti and pizza; **Firefly** (17 Hickson Rd, (02) 9241 2031) for global tapas plates and wines; or **Ottoman Cuisine** (Pier 2, 13 Hickson Rd, (02) 9252 0054) for refined Turkish.

Venture further around the harbour and you'll hit **Flying Fish** (Jones Bay Wharf, (02) 9518 6677), where Peter Kuruvita dishes up his sexy take on seafood in a breathtaking Michael McCann-designed space. Come for the signature Sri Lankan kingfish and prawn curry. Nearby, **Alira** (Shop 120, Jones Bay Wharf, (02) 9518 4884) turns out sensational cocktails and snappy plates of mezze with a Moorish accent.



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Clockwise: Icebergs' sleek bar area, Robert Marchetti and Maurice Terzini of Icebergs; Le Paris-Go is where Bondi goes for good coffee and cafe fare.



## bondi & the east

### ICEBERGS DINING ROOM AND BAR

Live like the beautiful folk at this Sydney institution. Maurice Terzini and Robert Marchetti know what makes the locals tick, dishing up smart plates of food in a bright dining room, where splashes of turquoise and cool white echo that famous stretch of South Bondi below. The Italian-accented menu may not have evolved much over the past few years, but that matters not as dishes of grilled scallops, mulloway carpaccio and flash-fried school prawns still tick all the right boxes. **1 Notts Ave, Bondi Beach, (02) 9365 9000.**

### NORTH BONDI ITALIAN FOOD

The Icebergs boys have Bondi's north and south poles covered with this ever-popular trattoria. Nab a spot on the sun-drenched terrace, then sip Campari and graze on salumi as you watch the suburb's finest strut along the beach. **118 Ramsgate Ave, North Bondi, (02) 9300 4400.**

### SEAN'S PANAROMA

Sean Moran was flying the seasonal flag long before this buzz word graced every menu in town. Sean's beachside gem is still



the place to come for simple plates of grilled mahi mahi with fennel and lemon, or bresaola from 'Farm Panaroma', matched with a stellar range of wines by the glass. **270 Campbell Pde, Bondi, (02) 9365 4924.**

### POMPEI'S

Freshly churned on site daily, the gelato at Pompei's is top-notch. Try a scoop of the creamy tiramisu, chocolate made with 70 per cent cocoa or a bright pineapple sorbet. There are also superbly thin pizzas. **126-130 Gould St, Bondi Beach, (02) 9365 1233.**

### RAW BAR

Bondi residents are onto a good thing at Raw Bar, which serves up mod Japanese in a sexy, laidback atmosphere. Head chef

Shintaro Honda whips up sushi, sashimi and a standout spice-crusted tuna tataki. Don't miss the gyoza, soft-shell crab, and your choice of sake. **Cnr Warners and Wairoa aves, Bondi, (02) 9365 7200.**

Bondi's burgeoning bar-and-bites scene includes **Speakeasy** (83 Curlewis St, Bondi, (02) 9130 2020). Offering Mediterranean-inspired fare during the day, it comes alive as a tapas bar by night. Nab a spot on the couch under the big red lantern and snack on house-marinated olives or chorizo and roasted potatoes, with a glass in hand, of course.

The original tiny bar on this strip, **The Shop & Wine Bar** (78 Curlewis St, Bondi, (02) 9365 2600) has a dedicated following of regulars who can't survive a weekend without a thick-cut BLT and their great coffee. Once you find a perch at the handful of tables, indulge in a bottle of red and a cheese board as the sun goes down.

Famous for its weekend breakfasts, **Brown Sugar** (106 Curlewis St, Bondi, (02) 9130 1566) is just as enticing at night, when the lights are lowered and chef Neil Gottheiner offers a bevy of seasonal dishes, alongside a well-curated wine list.

In the past few years, Bondi Road has seen the rise of **The Flying Squirrel** (249 Bondi Rd, Bondi, (02) 9130 1033), **The Corner House** (281 Bondi Rd, Bondi, (02) 8020 6698) and **The Rum Diaries** (288 Bondi Road, Bondi, (02) 9300 0440), all



Clockwise from left: Harry's Espresso Bar; Baker Friday pastries at Harry's; some pint-sized customers at Pompei's; Pompei's artisan gelato.



of which offer a creative take on cocktails and some very interesting food.

For a more boisterous crowd, head to the front bar at **Ravesi's** (Cnr Campbell Pde and Hall St, Bondi, (02) 9365 4422) for a cold brew and beach views, or, upstairs to **Drift**, with its million-dollar balcony, to share a cocktail carafe or punch bowl.

Come morning, literary types head straight to **Gertrude & Alice** (46 Hall St, Bondi, (02) 9130 5155), a cosy cafe lined with floor-to-ceiling shelves of second-hand books. On a sunny day, it's hard to resist the benches outside for a pot of Alice's famous chai and toasted banana bread.

**Le Paris-Go** (38 Hall St, Bondi, (02) 9130 6753) is Bondi's number one people-watching spot, serving a solid breakfast and all-day cafe fare. Meanwhile, the stools at **Harry's Espresso Bar** (136 Wairoa Ave, Bondi, (02) 9130 2180) are ideal for checking out surf conditions while sipping on single-estate coffee and enjoying Baker Friday pastries or an Iggy's bagel.

For twists on the classic breakfast, try **Jed's Food Store** (60a Warners Ave, Bondi, (02) 9365 0022). Tables all full? Pull up a seat on the nature strip instead.

While Bronte beachgoers are fighting for water view tables at popular cafes such as **Swell** (465 Bronte Rd, (02) 9386 5001) or **Caffe Salina** (479 Bronte Rd, (02) 9369 4012), locals settle in up the road at the new **Three Blue Ducks** (143 Macpherson St,

(02) 9389 0010) for housemade pastries, top brekkies and great fish and chips.

In Coogee, buzzing cafe **Barzura** (62 Carr St, (02) 9665 5546) has the best perch overlooking the beach, and Maroubra's **Pool Cafe** (94 Marine Pde, (02) 9314 0364) is the spot to refuel post-swim or surf.

## PIER

Greg Doyle may have opted for a more pared-back menu, but it's still hard to beat this Rose Bay restaurant, sitting atop sparkling waters, for a Sunday lunch. The service is crisp, though no longer white-gloved, and the food is less 'art' but still impressive – think scallops with a panna cotta-like cauliflower tofu, and a texturally delightful dessert of custard apple ice cream, granita and meringues. **594 New South Head Rd, Rose Bay, (02) 9327 6561.**

For an affordable alfresco breakfast with the same priceless views, head down the stairs to the right of Pier to the **Rose Bay Marina Kiosk** (tel: (02) 9362 3555).

With a stunning location and a reputation for excellent seafood, the hatted **Catalina**

(Lyne Park, Rose Bay, (02) 9371 0555) has been a consistent favourite since opening in 1994. Try pan-fried snapper with lemon caper butter as you gaze out over the bay.

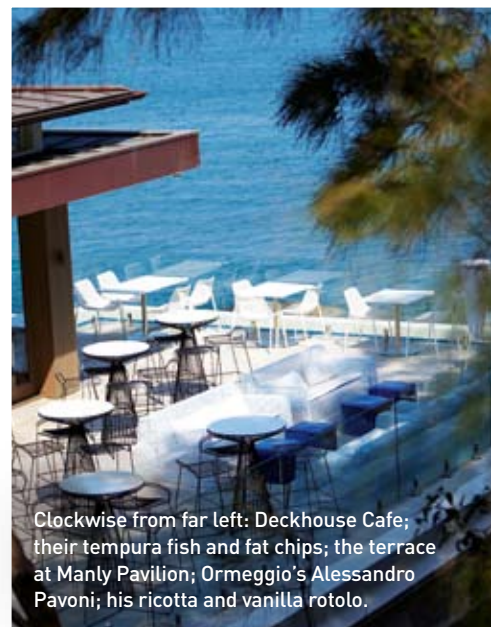
Further along the harbour, **Watsons Bay Hotel** (1 Military Rd, Watsons Bay, (02) 9337 5444), owned by the Doyles seafood dynasty, has one of the city's best-positioned beer gardens looking back towards the city, where you can soak up the sunshine and grab fish and chips to soak up the beer. Early next year, historic **Dunbar House** (9 Marine Pde, Watsons Bay, (02) 9337 1226) is due to reopen as the latest outpost of The Tea Room group, who've proven their high-tea credentials at picturesque Gunners' Barracks on the other side of the water.

## mosman & balmoral ORMEGGIO

Alessandro Pavoni has carved out a corner of northern Italy at this breezy dining room overlooking a luxe motor yacht flotilla. While the menu leans to modern Italian, the stars are the more traditional risottos, Brescian spiedo (spit roast), and tagliarini with sea urchin roe, as is the wine list that covers the full 'boot'. **D'Albora Marinas, The Spit, Mosman, (02) 9969 4088.**



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Clockwise from far left: Deckhouse Cafe; their tempura fish and fat chips; the terrace at Manly Pavilion; Ormeggio's Alessandro Pavoni; his ricotta and vanilla rotolo.



### manly MANLY PAVILION

This fine diner housed in the refurbished bathers' pavilion won best new restaurant in the 2011 *Good Food Guide* – and it's not hard to see why. Jonathan Barthelme's modern Mediterranean menu suits its slick surrounds, from the sweet scampi on celery ragu to the Campagna-sourced buffalo mozzarella warmed to give just the right amount of stretch. Stay for the petits fours – the sour jelly babies were our fave. **West Esplanade, Manly Cove, (02) 9949 9011.**

### PUBLIC DINING ROOM

New life was breathed into Balmoral's old public baths when this stunner opened in 2009. With its white Eames chairs, ash-blond floors and sweeping glass windows, it's beachside chic at its very best. Visit at lunch for exceptional oysters, steak tartare and a knockout bouillabaisse. The well-versed wine list is top-notch, too. **2a The Esplanade, Balmoral, (02) 9968 4880.**

Further along the beach is **The Bathers' Pavilion** (4 The Esplanade, Balmoral, (02) 9969 5050). This Art Deco darling offers everything from posh cafe bites to French-accented mains from Serge Dansereau.

On the other side of the road, **Billy's At Balmoral** (51 The Esplanade, Balmoral, (02) 9960 1344) may have only recently set up shop, but thanks to the antique

furnishings, canvas awnings and throng of diners, it seems as though it's been here for years. The crowd-pleasing menu of eggs Benedict and bircher muesli also boasts elderflower cordial and homemade ginger beer. At light-and-bright **Awaba** (67 The Esplanade, Balmoral, (02) 9969 2104), try buttermilk flapjacks or a summery salad.

**Burnt Orange** (1108/1109 Middle Head Rd, Mosman, (02) 9969 1120) occupies a 1930s-era golf clubhouse. Enjoy classy cafe fare – think salmon cake with a crisp apple salad – and elevated views. Inside, stock up on gourmet goods such as Miellerie honey.

Further west, **Deckhouse Cafe** (End of Clarke Rd, Woolwich Dock, (02) 9817 4394), uses sandstone and timber to create a relaxed vibe. The menu is simple but smart, with the occasional off-topic option such as cilbir (Turkish poached eggs served with garlicky yoghurt and hot paprika).

### GARFISH

For relaxed seafood by the water, Garfish is a great option – think oysters served four different ways or wood-roasted crustaceans. Don't miss their 'Iced Vo Vo' – a coconut marshmallow between two sable biscuits, served on a tart raspberry puree. **1/39 East Esplanade, Manly, (02) 9977 0707.**

### HUGOS

Hugos brings their famous pizzas (plus plenty of other drink-friendly plates) to the other side of the harbour in a sexy, dark-wood venue lit with candles in amber glasses. Their wraparound deck makes the best of its wharf location and is the perfect place to sip a cocktail at sunset. **Shop 1, Manly Wharf, (02) 8116 8555.**

Also on the wharf-side, **Manly Phoenix** (Shop 22-23, Manly Wharf, (02) 9977 2988) – from the same folks as Sky, Rhodes and



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Clockwise from below: a Manly Wine bartender mixes a giggly rose cocktail; one of Hugos' pizzas; Manly Wine's Zebra Room; China Beach chef Mai Busayarat; wharf-side Hugos.

Hilltop Phoenix – is perfect for yum cha by the sea, while **4 Pines Brewing Company** (29/43-45 East Esplanade, Manly, (02) 9976 2300) pours its award-winning handcrafted beers – try a citrusy Kolsch, which picked up gold at this year's Sydney Royal Show.

### CHINA BEACH

On the beach side of Manly, you'll find this small and colourful hotspot from the team at Woolloomooloo's China Doll. Chef Mai Busayarat delivers fab modern Asian, with highlights including wok-fried scallops with curry spice, and betel leaves with house-smoked trout and nam jim. **Shop 2, 43-45 North Steyne, Manly, (02) 9976 0050.**

### EL TORO LOCO

Chef Miguel Maestre provides the 'loco' dinner theatre at this huge tapas restaurant, as he rambunctiously claps and sings while dishing up salt cod croquetas, pig's trotters stuffed with morcilla and his signature paella. **49-53 North Steyne, Manly, (02) 9977 0999.**

For a more intimate experience, try **Jah Bar** (Shop 7, 9-15 Central Ave, Manly), a skinny, red-hued bar with a larger courtyard serving Spanish classics such as empanadas and beef cheek braised in sherry.



### BLUEWATER CAFE

This buzzy cafe is a sought-out breakfast spot for its big serves of French toast and sweet potato fritters. The decor is taverna blue-and-white, but the lunch and dinner menus skip around the globe from gnocchi to soft-shell crab with green tea noodles. **28 South Steyne, Manly, (02) 9976 2051.**

### MANLY WINE

The northern outpost of Gazebo and The Winery has all the whimsical touches of its city siblings with the added bonus of beach frontage. The garden party furnishings are just the place to sample the hefty wine list or try something shaken by funky young things (a martini-style Toy Boy, anyone?). **8-13 South Steyne, Manly, (02) 8966 9000.**

Sydney's small bar explosion hasn't been confined to the city. **In Situ** (1/18 Sydney Rd, Manly, (02) 9977 0669) is a hit with the young crowd for R&B club classics and fun cocktails, while **Miss Marley's** (32 Belgrave



St, Manly, (02) 8065 4805) channels vintage glam meets Latin America. **Das Kaffeehaus** (5b Market Ln, Manly, (02) 9976 5099) has expanded its cafe brief to include a bar, while **The Space** (7 Market Pl, Manly, 1300 713 413), which was once hidden above a day spa, is now a fully fledged piano bar.

## northern beaches

### JONAH'S

You may be early for whale-watching, but there's still much to keep the eye occupied at this hatted restaurant, from Pacific views to glossy diners in *Scarface*-style leather booths. For the full rockstar experience, arrive by sea plane, then bed down at the boutique hotel. Chef George Francisco has just left the building, so stay tuned for more news from the kitchen. **69 Bynya Rd, Whale Beach, (02) 9974 5599.**



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Clockwise: Pilu at Freshwater; Pilu's Amedei chocolate and hazelnut semifreddo; Jonah's at Whale Beach; Giovanni Pilu.

#### PILU AT FRESHWATER

Giovanni Pilu has put Freshwater on the foodie map with this stellar Sardinian restaurant. The sprawling beachhouse is the perfect place for a Sunday lunch of his famed suckling pig and other specialities such as scampi with bottarga, or crisp ricotta-filled ravioli drizzled with honey, all matched with an award-winning wine list. For a casual take, make a beeline for Pilu Kiosk, where the juicy pork comes sandwiched between slices of Sonoma bread. **Moore Rd, Harbord, (02) 9938 3331.**

#### CLAREVILLE KIOSK DINING

With fabulous food and creative plating, it's easy to see why the Kiosk was named a *Good Food Guide* 25-year "stayer". Try the beetroot-cured salmon with oyster beignet and caviar, or a smooth-as-silk cauliflower veloute. Don't miss out on a side of extra-crunchy kipfler potatoes. **27 Delecta Ave, Clareville Beach, (02) 9918 2727.**

#### BARRENJOEY HOUSE

This is a great choice for Palm Beach dining, where genial staff dish up seasonal, considered plates, such as crispy battered Hawkesbury squid with aioli or earthy roasted artichokes with goat's cheese and tomato salsa. **1108 Barrenjoey Rd, Palm Beach, (02) 9974 4001.**

#### THE HEALTHY CHEF

This organic-where-possible cafe is a fast favourite with locals. Chef and personal trainer Teresa Cutter delivers food that's "healthy", but not in a chunky, vegetarian way. For example, wheat- and sugar-free ricotta oatmeal hotcakes come with a refined honey and strawberry sauce. **17 Avalon Pde, Avalon, (02) 9973 3233.**

#### STARFISH AVALON

The food at this chic spot is equally upscale, with breakfasts including a caramelised onion and goat's cheese omelette or an elegant stack of corn fritters. Dinner is a mix of Italian and Asian, where gnocchi shares space with salt and pepper tofu. **23 Avalon Pde, Avalon, (02) 9918 2077.**

#### THE COOKS LARDER

Here you can grab an outdoor table for a croque madame or risotto at lunch, and dinner's sorted with ready-made meals and deli provisions. Cooking classes and an evening menu Thursday to Saturday complete the picture. **1/21-23 Old Barrenjoey Rd, Avalon, (02) 9973 4370.**

Adding to Avalon's food scene is **Avalons Organics** (25 Avalon Pde, Avalon, (02) 9918 3387), packed with produce and organic groceries. Meanwhile, we love **Cafe Ibiza** for all-day breakfasts and coffee roasted in-house (47 Old Barrenjoey Rd, Avalon, (02) 9918 3965). **The Boathouse Palm Beach** is a popular choice for its location and menu (Barrenjoey Boathouse, Governor Phillip Park, (02) 9974 3868). **Seasoned Cafe** (1101 Barrenjoey Rd, Palm Beach, (02) 9974 5724) has a simple, fresh menu with tempting specials, while **The Greedy Goat** (1031 Barrenjoey Rd, Palm Beach, (02) 9974 2555) has down-to-earth fare plus preserved lemons and jams made on site. For self-catering, **Palm Beach Wine Co.** (1109 Barrenjoey Rd, Palm Beach, (02) 9974 4304) is filled with foodie delights and a fine range of imported beers, rosé and bubbly.

For drinks, residents recommend **Beach Road** (1 Beach Rd, Palm Beach, (02) 9974 1159) as a great spot with jazz on Sunday afternoons, while **Newport Arms Hotel** (2 Kalinya St, Newport, (02) 9997 4900) is one of Sydney's oldest and biggest pubs, with shady tables dotted throughout the mammoth beer garden. **Park St Social Club** (6/18-20 Park St, Mona Vale, (02) 9979 3000) is an unpretentious spot for cocktails, beers and wine, with some live local music. Peckish? Staff will make you a pizza, using their compact oven behind the bar. **d.**