



Hot spots ... Balmain's Public Dining Room; (left) Le Kiosk at Shelly Beach.

Photos: Marco Del Grande, Edwina Pickles

# Open season by the sea

A slew of new restaurant launches are due in the sunny months, writes **Scott Bolles**.

**T**he global financial crisis won't put a dent in foodies' Santa sacks this summer, with Sydney's quota of new restaurants showing no sign of waning. North Shore residents, in particular, will be licking salt-crust lips at all the action on the waterfront.

The redevelopment of the Manly Pavilion building is one of the most exciting new projects on the northside and will serve its first restaurant customers by February. Mix equal parts grand old building, dashing young designers Squillace Nicholas Architects, stir with a swizzle stick then add a dash of city flair with ex-Coast chef Jonathan Barthelme. It might prove the hot recipe for late summer.

Manly is leading the new dining charge this year. The team from

China Doll, the popular eatery on the wharf at Woolloomooloo, is joining the push with a new Manly restaurant. A spokeswoman says the new establishment will swing open its doors in January.

Miguel Maestre, a chef who has worked in some of the most exciting

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kitchens in Spain and held the head chef role at Tony Bilson's Number One Wine Bar, is creating what he believes will be "the biggest and most authentic tapas bar in the country" and he's doing it on the beachfront at Manly. El Toro Loco plans to open before Christmas.

Old is evidently new again this season at Manly, with some notable

landmarks receiving a makeover. Le Kiosk at Shelly Beach recently changed hands for the first time in 38 years, with new owners John and Kylie Hearn immediately overhauling the cafe menu and announcing plans for a small upstairs bar.

Further up the coast, the Whale Beach site where Quay chef Peter Gilmore gained attention on his journey to the top of the toque tree has been reborn as Ripples at Whale Beach. Owner Bill Drakopoulos describes the venue as "somewhere you can have a couple of drinks, eat some tapas, watch the cricket then head back to

the beach". The second stage of the Ripples project is a beach bar.

Reinvention is the buzzword at a raft of venues. A new moniker is part of the major makeover at Balmoral's Watermark restaurant, rechristened Public Dining Room. It sails into summer with a new interior and beach deck.

The old Spitlers Restaurant site at d'Albora at The Spit has been reinvented as Ormeggio (see review, page 5), close enough to the water to cast a line and with former Harbour Kitchen and Bar chef Alessandro Pavoni producing specialties from Lombardy in northern Italy.

The former site of Il Piemonte Ristorante in Terrey Hills has been reborn as Cavallino, a co-production from Giovanni Pilu from Pulu at Freshwater and Ventuno's Lido Russo. And there's

more to come for the quiet northern suburb. Dietmar Sawyere's Mai House is now slated to open at Imperial Gardens before Christmas after missing its scheduled August launch. The Berowra Waters chef-owner, who describes his Mai House concept as a "French colonial bistro", bows out with a summer swan song at his flagship city restaurant, Forty One, which closes in April.

Neutral Bay is also a hot zone for opening action, with Melbourne restaurateur Mauro Marcucci - part of the early push at Melbourne's Caffè e Cucina - opening a pizzeria-cum-enoteca at the Lucca development in late summer. Enopizzeria will feature about 250 wines on its list.

Despite the bevy of new restaurants dotted up the coast to the Killcare SLSC, coastal restaurant launches south of Sydney Harbour are slimmer pickings. After the boom of previous years it's fair to say we're now on the south beach diet.

That's not to say there's nothing to whet the appetite south of the Coathanger. Paddington is flush with projects on the simmer for summer. The Cipri brothers, who cut their teeth at Swordfish in Kingsford, recently snapped up the old Sugo site, where they'll open Cipri Italian next month. And the boys from Potts Point's Fratelli Paradiso have inked a deal to open a new, as yet unnamed eatery on William Street, Paddington early next year. Woollahra's Buzo Trattoria will open The Wine Library, a Bill McMahon-designed enoteca on Oxford Street in coming months.

It'll even be possible this summer to check out one of Sydney's new arrivals on the way out of town. The overdue Danks Street Depot at the Sydney Airport International Terminal finally has a lift-off date. "It opens December 14," owner Jared Ingersoll says.