



tabletalk

NEW LEASE OF LIFE

Relocating is tiresome at the best of times, but imagine wrapping 500 antique tea sets as well as umpteen cake stands and sets of silver cutlery. That's the tedious task Kathy Heath faces after deciding to close her multi-award-winning High Societea in Clayfield. Kathy's lease is up and the new lease terms are untenable, she says, so the hunt is on for a fresh location. Meanwhile, she is continuing her off-site catering and event business – there's a tea party for Lord Wedgwood in March. "The worst part of this process has been calling people with advance bookings and letting them know the bad news," says Kathy. "We have a reputation for delivering personal service of the highest standard, so it is especially painful to let people down. However, many clients who'd booked for groups of 20 or more are opting for us to cater in their homes."

FRESH ON THE PLATE

Seasoned chef Mark Maric (Tanbah, Lure, The Dining Room), now ensconced in the kitchens at Cloudland, launches a new menu this week, and it's a tempting line-up – think spanner crab with coriander and peanut pesto, asparagus and crab dumplings (\$24.90) and roast spatchcock with grilled zucchini, tapenade and Tuscan bean salad (\$28.90). On Valentine's Day, Cloudland's third-floor Rainbow Room will be the spot for lovers, with a \$75 set menu that includes spiced duck Maryland with shitake mushrooms and bok choy, and white chocolate parfait with figs. Ph: 3872 6600.

LOVE IS IN THE AIR

Here are a few other noteworthy ways to mark Valentine's Day: the fabulous Gusto da Gianni at Portside has an \$89pp set menu for lunch or dinner, comprising favourites such as ricotta and spinach ravioli, organic eye fillet with wild mushrooms and truffle mash, and mango semifreddo. There are three choices for main course, and there's a complimentary flute of Domaine Chandon Brut. Gusto da Gianni

has also kicked off a weekday lunch special – a main course and glass of wine for \$25. Ph: 3868 2011; www.gustodagianni.com. The opulent Sigg's, in the Stamford Plaza Brisbane, has a \$140pp, five-course degustation – seared scallops with sweet capsicum and salted cod mousse, and lamb rack with pecan and lavender crust, honey-glazed figs and pommes William – and you can always get a room. The hotel has Valentine's Day packages from \$275, including a half-bottle of French bubbles and buffet breakfast. Ph: 3221 1999. And if you're flying solo, don't despair. Enter Rouge, a cocktail party for 500 singles at Gianni Events, Portside. It's on Saturday (Feb 13), with canapes and a five-hour beverage package plus live entertainment from 7pm. Dress in red and black. Book your \$129 ticket on 3868 3600 or check the website, www.giannisportside.com

BUBBLING UP

As corks set to pop on Valentine's Day, the range of champagne at our fingertips is greater than ever. As well as the big names such as Moet et Chandon, Bollinger, Pol Roger and Louis Roederer, there are plenty of more affordable labels. Cattier is one of my favourites, and Pol Gessner seems to be extremely popular given its \$35 price tag, but it's Nicolas Feuillatte that's popping up in all the right places, including charity events and an increasing number of restaurants. I had lunch with Nicolas Feuillatte a few years ago, at Milton's Joseph Alexanders, and he didn't need to travel far – Nicolas spends six months of the year in Sydney. The label he founded 33 years ago is now apparently the top selling non-vintage champagne in France, and when it made its debut in New York in the 1970s it was embraced by style icons such as Jackie Onassis and Sophia Loren. Find it here for about \$60 a bottle.

CONTACT US at brisbanenews@qnp.newsltd.com.au