



CARMEN CROMER

PARTY OF THE WEEK
Vanilla Room opening, Leichhardt



John Polley, Sarah Cutrupi and Melissa Polley.



Faye De Lanty and Natasha Zuvela.

LOWDOWN

guests The three musketeers of the social scene - Beckett Tucker (surely one of the best networking undergraduates in Sydney), Robert Hewes and David Alexander - invited a few too many friends to the opening of their cosy wine bar for a spot of supper. Mental passports were required by eastern suburbs types who rarely venture beyond Oxford Street, but once there many wondered why they hadn't made the effort earlier.

goss It was curious to note how quickly the claustrophobic crush in the wine bar turned everyone into whiners. But on the upside, it was a great shortcut to meeting one of PR guru Tiffany Farrington's guest list of hot boys - hey, there's no place for coyness when you're squashed from hips to lips against a complete stranger!

fuel Vanilla-themed cocktails and the standard Norton Street Italian fare started the night off downstairs, with the next phase adjourning upstairs to the elegant wine-tasting room, which comes complete with cool booths. All tables were set with professional tasting mats for the five wines (none over \$10 a glass) that were to be matched with the five canapes. The prompt service will be a welcome addition to Sydney's little Italy.

star attraction American actress Mckenna Jones (*The Bold And The Beautiful*) was brought to the party by up-and-coming NSW cricketer Ed Cowan and loved the bar so much that she was overheard inquiring how to score a job. Paul Mac also made an appearance, without mate Daniel Johns, who'd RSVP'd (John Brogden was also a no-show).

verdict Ambitious Sam Scambellone, of *My Restaurant Rules* fame, was so impressed he had a chat with Beckett about running the joint. And the night's MC, Katrina Bowers (lovely local, co-host at Nova 969, and food-and-wine writer) hit the nail on the head when she quipped that Vanilla Room is a haven for those who want a wine lifestyle on a VB budget.

See page 40 for the hits and misses of the week.

RSVP

Have you got this week's hottest invitations?

- SMH Good Food Guide awards, tomorrow.
- Essence restaurant launch, Tuesday.
- Orson & Blake/Sophie Seeger exhibition, Tuesday.
- Bonds Hipster Lovelies launch, Thursday.
- Sydney Cancer Foundation's Moulin Rouge fundraising dinner, Thursday.



Vanilla Room tasting plates.



Beckett Tucker, David Alexander and Rob Hewes.



Rebecca Vallance and Dan Trotter.



Ruby Smallbone and Cameron Carter.



Elena Antoniou and Will Downing.



Kerryll Bullen and Lisa Spinner.



Dan Trotter and Mark Cavanagh.



Pavarne and Mark Lambert.