

Village Business

Vanilla Room new edge to Norton St Dare to be different on dad's special day

A NEW wine bar opened among the sea of restaurants in Norton St last month, bringing a fresh new face to the inner west's hottest dining strip.

Vanilla Room at 153 Norton St is the baby of 22-year-old Balmain local Beckett Tucker, with partners David Alexander and Rob Hewes (both formerly of Fundamental Food).

David and Rob own Berkelouw Café in Norton St and Can't Stop Catering at Petersham.

At only 22, Beckett may be young but he brings several years of experience in the wine industry into play.

"The opportunity came up to get this place and I have known David and Rob for some time from Fundamental Food," Beckett says.

"They approached me about it (starting the business) and at first I was a bit hesitant, but the thing about it is there's nothing really in the area like this and it caters for something people want," he says.

"If we were just another restaurant we would probably get lost among the restaurants in Norton St.

"What we can offer to the locals is a completely unique and diverse experience." Vanilla Room will offer patrons a wide variety of Australian wines from the best regions and



Rob Hewes, Beckett Tucker and David Alexander ... bringing people great wines and great food.

from more obscure winemakers.

"We are mainly a wine bar, we will have two wine lists, one that's rotational, on which we can have a lot of obscure stuff and we can really use the fact that we're a small bar and talk to people about the wines.

"We don't want to make it an intimidating experience."

The bar also offers cocktails, spirits, beers and a restaurant specialising in smaller plates and antipasto-style share platters.

While travelling in Europe, Beckett visited bars and adopted the trend he saw overseas towards smaller plates and share plates instead of big meals and multiple courses.

"People can come in, have a glass of wine, a great conversation and great food."

FORGET sock and ties on September 5, try these ideas on Father's Day.

Read

If your dad prefers a book to a flowerbed there are some great new titles at Bray's Books, 268 Darling St Balmain. Fiction-wise it's hard to go past Carl Hiaasen's new offering *Skinny-Dip* (\$29.95) or for non-fiction, try Bill Clinton's *Biography My Life* (\$50).

Spa and Massage

Dads need pampering too. Balmain Spa and Natural Beauty have an Urban Retreat package that includes a half-hour back and neck massage and a one-hour facial for \$95. Phone 9810 0365

Food

Steak and chips will always have their place, but so do steaming Vietnamese soups, spicy sizzling beef and vegetables stir-fried with basil and chilli. Try Le Bich Vietnamese restaurant in Balmain. Phone 9555 1068.

Drink

If dad just wants to relax with a beer why not make it an exotic brew from the Sackville Hotel on Darling Street? The bevies include Kronenbourg from France, Japanese Asahi and Hoegaarden Blonde from Belgium.

Hardware

Gismos never fail to impress, and Brown's Hardware at 568 Darling Street Balmain has all the latest, including Big Jim's combination stool and tool box for \$38.50.

➤ RSVP

Have you got this week's hottest invitations?

- North° resort launch, Tuesday.
- Vanilla Room opening, Tuesday.
- *Suddenly 30* film premiere, Wednesday.
- Marcia Hines showcase, Thursday.
- Black & White Committee's Cartier Ball, Friday.