

Schmid's dream

An established chef plays his part in Dominion Rd rejuvenation

YOU WILL," Jude said, "have to eat your words," which is an unappetising meal for someone who does this job.

We were across the table at two fifteen, Jeremy Schmid's new bar and bistro, and she was reminding me about a recent column in which I'd wittered — oh, all right, ranted — that it was deuced difficult to find a decent, mid-priced bistro these days.

You will find two fifteen — and if you have had one of those days at work, and don't feel like cooking, and happen to live in those parts, you probably should — at the Valley Rd shops, two doors up from the big blue stereo shop that isn't there anymore, over the road from the Dominion, that used to be GPK and is closed for renovation, and not too many steps from Meredith's, where you'll have to wait three weeks for a table.

It has been converted from the fantastical Pho and Vietnamese sandwich shop, Banh Mi Bale, now in Lorne St, and still highly recommended. (See The Dish, page 12.)

You may recognise the chef-part-owner's name in the second paragraph. As in, or previously in, the kitchens at Gault's On Quay, Euro, Vinnies, Red, the George, Palazzo Roma and Orbit on top of the big concrete spike. As in Hell's Kitchen, the 2003 Lewisham Award for most innovative chef, Culinary Fare medals, yada yada. And the brains of Little Boys sausages, which won a skinful of awards.

Schmid quit Orbit a year ago to hang with the crew who own Degree, Basalt, Garrison and more. All the while he was looking for a site: he found it a quarter-way down Dominion Rd.

"I wanted to start a place from scratch, a place where we in the kitchen could make everything we serve. Like the cold smoked salmon, bread, sausages and stocks. That the customers could come in and have a meal, small plates and a good glass of wine in a nice setting and feel comfortable."

"I like a suburban setting.

Where I am we have parking, enough space to make a private room in the future.

"Dominion Rd, it to me seems like a place that's only getting better" (enough, Jeremy: that's two Don McGlashan references in one column).

"Meredith's is a few blocks down the road and he is catering for a higher end than me. I think there is room along here for a few more places to make it an area to go to, like Kingsland or Mt Eden Village."

In which Schmid's right. If you've driven — it's more fun on a scooter — along the Dominion boulevard of late, you may have noticed it's taking on a new character. Dare I say gentrified? No. I have too many mates there whose liberal tendencies shy from that thought. (Except when their valuations come in.)

Schmid has gathered bright young talents around him — Jean Wan, whose father is also a chef, from Meredith; Malcolm Reeve, from Palazzo Roma and Orbit. More familiar faces are front-of-house. Cameron Douglas, the master sommelier, uncorks an appropriate, approachable and stylish wine list.



PICTURE / BABICHE MARTENS

two fifteen bar and bistro

Address: 215 Dominion Rd
Phone: 09 630 6474

Open: Tues-Sun

Cuisine: Bistro

From the menu: Mussel, corn, spring onion fritter, tomato salsa \$14.50; Rosemary, apricot, cardamom-spiced lamb shank, potato puree, braise \$27.50; Pear and blackberry crumble, anise mascarpone \$13.50

Vegetarian: Own menu

Wine list: Top marques

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Honest food made interesting by neat twists. Lashings of cold smoked salmon, tasty blini, cress salad dressed with peppered creme fraiche. Soft tacos, confit duck, black bean puree, avocado, coriander and spiced tomato sauces bounce from Mexico to China and emerge as a Tex-Mex Peking duck.

Pork, fennel and cheese sausage. Wonder where that idea came from? Pleasantly peasant companions in mustard puree, lentils and slow baked tomato. The ultimate bistro treat is played with: pork loin with white beans, chorizo compote and a jus is lighter years from classic cassoulet.

Think the Engine Room or Pure, though the food is played with a touch less panache, and the word needs to get out so two fifteen has the diners to generate bistro buzz.

Under their influence

The laws surrounding wine writing in France have gone mad

THIS wine column could be a danger to your health. If it was published in France and considered to be inciting its readers to buy alcohol, it would have to be run with a health warning.

A little while back, a French court ruled that an editorial piece on Champagne in France's *Le Parisien* newspaper constituted advertising, even though it had not been paid for. Like many wine articles it simply featured a number of producer profiles and made recommendations along with prices and stockists, which the court construed as communication in favour of an alcoholic drink and said should have been accompanied by a health warning.

Wine writers around the world were up in arms at this government intrusion on the freedom of the press. This followed another controversial case some years previously when a French magazine was fined for calling Beaujolais a "vin de merde" (literally "crap wine") before having this overturned, given the public had the right to be presented with varied opinions on any subject.

Despite being a land where wine is woven into the very fabric of its culture, France has super strict advertising laws.

The grey area surrounding what can be regarded as "publicity" — which could even be merely mentioning a wine — has led to frustration throughout the country's wine industry. A few months ago winegrowers took to the streets of Bordeaux to highlight the lunacy of this legislation by sticking the word "censored" over signs bearing the name of the city, which is also the name of the region's wine. It has also been proposed that

FRENCH FANCIES

A CHEEKY DROP

ARROGANT FROG RIBET RED SHIRAZ VIN DE PAYS D'OC 2007 \$19.90

Made by Jean-Claude Mas, this dig at his fellow countrymen confounds the complexities that can characterise the wines France by presenting a modern fruit-driven drop with clear varietal labelling. It's a lighthearted wine jammed with smooth, ripe, plummy fruit, hints of chocolate, spice and an earthy note. (From Glengarry.)

SINK YOUR TEETH

BRUMONT TANNAT-MERLOT VIN DE PAYS DE COTES DE GASCOGNE 2006 \$19.95

If there's steak on the barbecue, then get some of this in your glass. An earthy meaty blend with chatty tarry notes and fresh blackberry fruit, in which the tannat grape's characteristic chewiness is offset by some softening merlot. (From www.lifestylewines.co.nz)

WHAT A SWEETIE

CHATEAU GAUDRELLE RESERVE SPECIALE VOUVRAY MOELLEUX 2005 \$19.95 (375ML) \$34.50 (750ML)

This little number from the Loire is wonderfully fresh and full of fascinating flavours from nuts, marzipan and beeswax to candied fruits. (From www.wineimporter.co.nz)



in France, free alcoholic drinks "with the intention of promotion" i.e. wine tastings, should no longer be allowed. It's something that could affect cellar doors and even the Bordeaux en primeur tastings at the centre of the region's fine wine trade, if these remain gratis.

In New Zealand, we have our own Group Against Liquor Advertising (GALA) that would like to see a ban on all alcohol advertising, the phasing-out of alcohol sponsorship and all forms of non-advertising alcohol marketing strictly regulated. However, thankfully, things here are far from the French extreme.

Our liquor advertising code is voluntary, with its emphasis on not glamorising alcohol or encouraging excessive consumption, and ensuring ads are not directed at minors, which is why there are no liquor ads on TV between 6am and 8.30pm.

Let's hope our lawmakers never tread the same path as the French, because if wine's sole promotion is centred on treating it like a drug, it's more likely to be used that way rather than consumed with the same respect with which many are made.

win with viva



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