



Eons ago, when I was in primary school, there were these two American boys who ate peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. That's what they called them, but to the rest of the class the filling was peanut butter with jam. No one wanted to swap with them and the idea, almost four decades on, still leaves me squeamish.

Garnish Bistro has a dessert that seems to have been inspired by the peanut butter and jelly sandwich. It's called a peanut butter fondant with cinnamon brioche, raspberry jelly and vanilla fairy floss (\$13.50), and it's delectable in an odd sort of way. The peanut butter is trapped as a sauce inside a pudding with the raspberry jelly pooled round the extremities. I ordered it for its quirk, but ate it for its allure.

It is the most left-of-centre offering on the Garnish menu. The rest is classic, following a European path but interpreted with imagination and constructed with quite a bit of thought.

There's plenty of game and some inventive dishes as well as a core of solid staples. The "bistro" tag is probably doing the kitchen an injustice – not so the wine list, which is Euro-inspired and 100 per cent bistro in terms of content and price.

My entree of smoked eel, salmon carpaccio, baby beets and sheep's cheese (\$16.50) was an exercise in contrasts – textures, flavours and colours – beautifully presented, simple, fresh and delicious.

Coq au vin is a simple dish but, like many of the simplest things, it needs care if it's to be done properly. Traditionally, the dish calls for older birds whereas the Garnish version (\$29) uses spatchcock. The result was a flavoursome, modern interpretation that didn't quite get the marinade time required to infuse the flesh with wine, but was a success nonetheless. Garnish Bistro looks

great – its appearance hasn't changed a great deal since its previous incarnation as Butter Bistro. It's a maze of rooms, lots of subtly coloured soft furnishings, smoked mirrors and a nice flow between inside and outside seating.

Staff members are expertly drilled but work with warmth and friendliness; if anything the team was, at times, a little over-effusive. Given its position at the foot of several thousand Kangaroo Point apartments, Garnish Bistro probably doesn't need my endorsement to do well. But it still has it. A lot of effort has been put into making it a stylish, interesting place to dine, when it could have had easier success selling coffee and cakes. Bravo!



GARNISH BISTRO

Cnr Rotherham & Goodwin Sts, Kangaroo Point. Ph: 3891 7005.

Chef: Lachlan Cashman.

Owners: John Gamsworthy & Michael Berger. Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner, Tue-Sun. Licensed. Major credit cards & Eftpos. Wheelchair access. On-street parking.

FOOD // 8 WINE // 6.5
SERVICE // 8 AMBIENCE // 8

10: perfect; 9: excellent; 8: very good; 7: good; 6: passable; 5: disappointing; 1-4: woeful

Classic thriller

An inventive approach to Europe's traditional fare sparks a round of applause from **Tony Harper**