



THEY don't often let me out at night any more, so when the food editor told me about a new dessert-only café in Rosalie, I could hardly believe that it didn't open until 7pm. Goodness me, that's almost bedtime. So, after a very sedate piano recital last week, I persuaded the friends who were driving me to go to the popular restaurant complex in Kosalie, and found Room 4 Dessert right next to Blu Grotto, on the premises where the newsagent used to be.

Now in a former life it was our family tradition, when any of the relatives came to visit, to eat in Rosalie at Tomato Bros Pizza in Nash St, where the kids could be fooled into silence by being told to find matching pieces of the broken crockery that lined the walls. After that, we'd pop next door to Freestyle Tout for Marun Duncan's evil desserts, the kids were taken to Cold Rock to let their imaginations run free, and everyone was happy.

Those days are now gone — they call it progress — and for a long time there was nowhere to go after a movie or a concert to finish off with something sweet and/or alcoholic. So it's no wonder that Room 4 Dessert has been embraced by the western suburbs set, and unless you get there early you'll probably need to book.

For where else in Brisbane can you get something called a plum and martini, which consists of a mousse made from this delicious combination of flavours sitting on a crisp shortbread of sesame and tahini, topped by a lid of crisp dark chocolate and served with a red wine reduction and espresso mousse for \$14.90?

If you want a sticky to go with that, they recommend a glass of John Forrest collection noble riesling. Each of the 21 items comes with a different suggestion in the way of dessert wine. We, however, prefer something

Cafe Alison Cotes

lighter and crisper, so contented ourselves with a very creditable Australian Blanc de Blancs (bubbles made exclusively from chardonnay grapes by the methode Champenoise), and it complemented both my opera nougat (layered ganache and nougat butter cream served on a hazelnut meringue base with almond biscotti and raspberry dipping sauce) and my friend's mikado (chocolate lattice tubes filled with flavoured mousse on a blood orange sorbet, house-made vanilla bean custard and raspberry coulis) to perfection. Both cost \$14.90.

A second visit was almost compulsory, and this time we tried an edelweige, a kind of up-market bombe Alaska with soft white meringue enclosing a raspberry/blueberry sponge served with a hazelnut sauce, but without the fiery flames, and a citrus variation, where a lemon curd tart just singing with the tang of pure lemon sat side by side with a scoop of blood orange sorbet, a lime mousse in a chocolate case, and segments of pink grapefruit. These were also \$14.90. You'll find their other desserts at www.blugrotto.com.au.

If your budget doesn't run to \$15 for dessert, you could save money if there are four of you, by sharing the crucible, a self-described mammoth combination for four to share, consisting of three kinds of ice-cream — vanilla bean, extreme chocolate and wattle seed — plus raspberry, blueberry, blood orange and mango sorbet with praline sauce, ginger glaze, red fruit coulis, marshmallows, fresh fruits, chocolate garnishes, whipped cream and red wine reduction. This is \$36.50. Don't blame me if you're up all night.



Decadence on a plate

And now I'm going to let you in on a secret. Although Room 4 Dessert is owned and managed by the Blu Grotto team, they want to establish Room 4 Dessert as a stand-alone dessert restaurant, so they don't have a full dinner or lunch menu there.

But if you get there about 7pm and want to eat proper dinner but still leave room for pudding, I suggest you book into Blu Grotto next door and sample the tapas menu, where a different chef offers little treats in the \$7-\$15 range.

Michael Li has an eclectic multicultural mix which has things such as

Thai style fish wontons with lime and chilli dipping sauce; fried whole white-bait with gremolata, lemon aioli and olive oil, and, my favourite, crumbed stuffed green olives with gorgonzola cheese sauce for \$9.95.

Then you either ask for the dessert menu or move from your Blu Grotto table to one on the same outside area at Room 4 Dessert, and have a totally different experience.

I intend to make Room 4 Dessert a regular haunt, so you can look for me there. I'll be the one with the rapidly expanding waistline. What was that

1973 movie called — *La Grande Bouffe*?



TEMPTED: Room 4 Dessert offerings include Raspberry Passion (far left), the Mikado (centre) and the Edelweige. Pictures: Kevin Bull

Room 4 Dessert

Address: 4/155 Baroona Rd, Rosalie (next to Blu Grotto)

Ph: 3876 4653

Hours: Dessert menu 6.45pm-11pm, seven days. Tapas menu from noon Thursday - Sunday, from 3pm other days

Liquor status: fully licensed, no BYO
Prices: \$11.50-\$16.50 (desserts), \$7-\$15 (tapas)

Owners: Lee-Ann and Neil Baker
Chef: dessert chef Frank Richard, tapas chef Michael Li

Parking: try the side streets
Wheelchair access, and toilets: ramp up from pavement, but no toilet access

Other: Seats about 60; table service; all credit cards except DC; Amex attracts an extra charge of 2.5 per cent; vegetarian and gluten-free; 15 per cent surcharge public holidays; air-conditioned inside, but plenty of through breezes outside; own toilets; noise level depends on the crowd

THE SCORE

Food: 17

Service: 18

Ambience: 14

Value for money: 15

ABOUT THE SCORE:

0-5 go somewhere else

6-9 major change required

10-13 reasonable, room for improvement

14-16 good

17-19 excellent

20 the pinnacle