

# The Italian mob



Fratellini's new owners had big shoes to fill, and they've done it superbly  
WORDS PETRA FRIESER



Fratellini has a funky kind of individuality.

Street side on Duke St among the cluster of Sunshine Beach restaurants and cafes, its stripes and eclectic mix of colours, furniture and stylised signage create an offbeat ambience that is as endearing as it is theatrical.

Fratellini is one of those restaurants with a bit of history. The name means "little brothers" and was inspired by the Fratellini brothers, a travelling clown act that was the darling of Europe. That rich legacy is now in the hands of new owners Andrew and Cheryl Powell. After my recent visit, I am sure they will do it justice.

After being warmly greeted and seated, we perused the menu of traditional Italian fare – pizzas, pastas, risotto and a selection of spuntino (snacks) – while we contented ourselves with sparkling mineral water (\$8).

Now, Italian is not Italian without a nice bottle of vino, and we went with the recommended Margaret River Cape Mentelle 2009 Cabernet Merlot 'Trinders' (\$45). Their wine list was undergoing a bit of a revamp and this lovely, full-bodied wine was to be a new addition. It was smooth and rich flavoured; quite berry-like. Yes, we approved; it can stay.



I always want to share starters. It is convenient from the perspective I don't have to watch my dining buddy eat what I really wanted but didn't order. Fortunately we were on the same wavelength so easily narrowed it down to the arancini and bruschetta.

I absolutely loved Fratellini's quite unique take on the bruschetta (\$14.90). Take beautiful creamy goat's cheese and lightly roasted truss cherry tomatoes and douse them with a very velvety vino cotto and what you have is the makings of a very delicious dish. I thoroughly enjoyed constructing my portions with lashings

of goat's cheese piled high and then soaking up the last of the vino cotto and juices with the toasted bread. Yummo!

Arancini are balls of rice coated in breadcrumbs and deep fried. This version was combined with a creamy roast pumpkin, caramelised onions and parmesan (\$14) and came with aioli for dipping. Amazingly, the arancini were free of any of the unctuousness you would normally expect with something deep fried. They were light and crisp, smooth within and earned unanimous praise among our dinner conversation.

For mains, my tagliatelle (\$26) was particularly delicious. Thrown with some exceptionally fresh saffron prawns, wild rocket, white wine and a touch of chilli, the sauce was light and vibrant and exactly what I felt like.

My dining buddy chose the vegetarian penne (\$22.50). As a vegetarian dish, I guess there was a bit of an expectation it would be more veggie laden, but the dish was chiefly mushrooms – wild forest mushrooms, garlic, baby spinach, fresh thyme and cream. Great flavours.

There was a moment of contention over the dessert. My dining buddy claimed he was pretty full, so left dessert to me, but when the soft centred chocolate tortino with vanilla bean ice cream (\$12) arrived, there was a sudden change of heart. The plate shifted from me to him and back again before some quite intense spoon duelling. I couldn't take my eyes off the prize as I knew the warm gooey chocolate centre oozing on to the plate would be gone forever if I broke concentration or was sidetracked in conversation even for a second.

Fratellini is also open for breakfast and with the pristine Sunshine Beach sand and sea within walking distance, I won't need any extra reasons to visit again.

*Petra Frieser's visit was unannounced and she paid for her own meals and beverages*



#### FOOD FACTS

Fratellini restaurant, shop 1/36 Upper Duke St, Sunshine Beach, 5474 8080  
Open Seven days, from 7.30am to late  
Cuisine Traditional Italian  
Cost Starters \$9.50-\$19.50, mains \$22-\$26, desserts \$9-\$16  
Verdict Wonderful traditional Italian food in a great atmosphere