



Hard to get to but worth it



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FOOD CRITIC

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Eighty six years in and, thankfully, there's not much that has changed about Jonah's — the big fine-dining draw of the chic north that overlooks Sydney's Whale Beach.

There have been no rash attempts to loosen it up for the masses, no early-bird special, no buffets, no brasserie makeover. The exterior remains famously custard-yellow while inside it's all pale walls and white tablecloths — a place in which past guests like Anthony Hopkins, Joan Collins, Mick Jagger, Jerry Hall and Bono would all have no doubt felt very comfortable.

For us regular folk it's more likely a once-a-year deal — accessible via a seaplane service that rounds out at just

over \$500 per person including a three-course meal and champagne. Alternately you can just grind out the trip yourself once you've decided which poor sap has been issued their designated driver duties.

Head chef Logan Campbell, who made his name at the helm of Lucio's for more than a decade, took the reins from Peter Ridland back in January and so far has sculpted a great mix of Mediterranean classics like stuffed zucchini flowers and grilled marron with some French-influenced duck liver pate and roast suckling pig.

His stint at Lucio's is not entirely forgotten, with four

pasta dishes including a tagliatelle with sauteed spanner crab, fresh tomato, lemon zest and chilli as well as a pappardelle with lamb shoulder ragu.

The menu is divided into entrees, pasta dishes (which can be ordered as an entree or main) and main courses, though there's no sense that you can't go where the wind takes you and mix it up.

The international wine list is the thickness of a phone

book and the staff, all impeccably turned out and eager to please, explain that dishes can be split, if we like, and suggest main meals which are big enough to share.

We start with a classic entree of seared scallops wrapped in pancetta (\$29) and a serving of the baked gnocchi with asparagus, gorgonzola piccante, manuka honey and sourdough crumb (\$32).

The scallops come in a serving of three and are fat, juicy, perfectly seared, topped with a dainty sprig of roast fennel and nestled in a puddle of delicious saffron citronette.

The gnocchi offers something a little heavier for carb nuts — pan-seared pillows of pasta and sliced asparagus baked in a mix of three cheeses (gorgonzola piccante, parmigiano reggiano and milk mozzarella) and served bubbling away under a crust of thyme breadcrumbs and Manuka honey. It's crazy good.

Next is a main of line-caught snapper from New Zealand (\$49) served atop a bed of something that looks like a deconstructed ratatouille and includes chopped roast capsicum, an ingredient I can't fathom in a

stir-fry let alone under a ripper piece of fish like this that is a dollar shy of a fiddy.

The exquisite 500g dry-rubbed aged beef rib eye, served with whole roasted garlic cloves and salsa verde, makes for a better deal.

Yes, it comes in at a grand total of \$74, but Campbell has

produced a cut more than big enough for two people to share and it comes served with a mountain of french fries and a jug of glossy beef sauce that is by itself worth the trek from the CBD.

With what room we have left we accommodate as best we can a signature dessert of honey and cinnamon crumble, served in one of those fancy stemless wine glasses and layered with confit orange, orange bavarois, a mandarin sorbet and a treacly cake mix that looks like a glammed-up Eton mess and tastes like citrusy heaven. It's tempting, when dining at a restaurant of Jonah's standard, to get a little too excited that a place can hit 86 and manage to retain such a fantastic level of warmth and quality.

Better with age? You bet.

It's pricey, yes, but the food is generally marvellous, the service absolutely impeccable and the setting? As they say, come for view, stay for the food. You won't be sorry.

ALL MEALS ARE PAID FOR AND VISITS UNANNOUNCED

JONAH'S

69 Bynya Rd, Whale Beach

Phone 9974 5599

Web jonahs.com.au

Style Contemporary

European

Open Breakfast, lunch and

dinner, seven days

Highlight The rib eye and the majestic Whale Beach azure

Lowlight Capsicum, be gone

Like this, then try these

• Guillaume, Paddington

• Aria, Circular Quay

• Catalina, Rose Bay





Seared scallops wrapped in pancetta.



Line-caught snapper fillet.



Manuka honey and cinnamon crumble.



**Chef Logan Campbell
at Jonah's in Whale
Beach. Pictures:
Martin Lange**