

FOODIES' DIARY: SILLY SEASON SURVIVAL GUIDE

As the year rumbles to a close I'd like to thank you for following my rambling journey from plate to plate. Since you'll be without my dining guidance for the next couple of weeks I thought I would end my year with some tips for surviving the silly season. See you on the other side!



The Italian Kitchen & Bar

STAY HYDRATED

The best way to stay hydrated is by drinking cocktails, and the best way to drink cocktails is when they're free! So pop on down to The Italian Kitchen & Bar and spend \$20 on their awesome food (like Salt & Pepper Calamari and Eggplant Involtini) and they'll give you a free cocktail

until the 31st January, 2011. www.theitaliankitchenandbar.com.au

2 AVOID TRAFFIC CHAOS

Avoid the traffic chaos and queues at the fish markets by using Martins Seafoods in Rozelle. Pick up your Australian prawns, Sydney rock oysters, lobsters, smoked salmon and Moreton Bay bugs this side of the Anzac Bridge. In terms of quality, these are the people who supply Quay; and they'll be open for sales on Thursday 23rd December 7am-2pm and Friday 24th December 7am-1pm. www.martinsseafoods.com.au

3 PLAN AHEAD

Nothing screws up your New Year's Eve like wandering aimlessly looking for action. I'd much rather be sitting at one of these coveted events getting fed and lubricated for the later festivities:

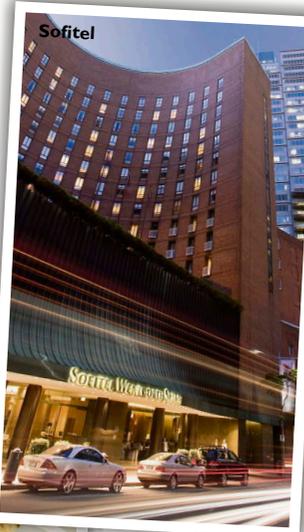
MANLY PAVILION (MANLY - BOXING DAY)

This glorious



Manly Pavilion

cuttlefish and fennel salad is just a hint at the delights offered by Jonathan Barthelme at his Italian BBQ between 11am-4pm. Watch the super yachts depart! \$200/head (incl. champagne/ premium beverages) (02) 9949 9011 www.manlypavilion.com.au



SOFITEL SYDNEY WENTWORTH (CITY - NYE)

The Sofitel adds French finesse to a bounty of Australian produce. Your six-course

degustation will include Coffin Bay scallops; foie gras; cured ocean trout with caviar cream; prawn ravioli with champagne veloute; duck terrine; Wagyu beef and rich Valrhona chocolate. Dine early and wander down for the midnight fireworks, or watch them on the screen in the cushioned surrounds of the lounge. \$199/head (incl. wines) (02) 9228 9179

www.sofitelsydney.com.au

RIPPLES SYDNEY WHARF (PYRMONT - NYE)

Obviously on NYE the place to be is by the water. The Aqua Group venues occupy some of the most coveted spots. While their Milsons Point venue is already sold out, there are still seats available at Ripples Sydney Wharf for a degustation with matched wines. \$295/head (wines included) (02) 9571 1999

www.ripplescafe.com.au

THE VILLAGE (DARLINGHURST - NYE)

What could be more Darlo than NYE on a rooftop? Panoramic city views and a seven-course degustation hopefully featuring the summery Peas, Ham & Eggs I ate there recently. Depending upon whether you choose dining room or rooftop you'll also get either matched wines or welcome drinks, canapés, DJs and countdown bubbles. \$150/head (wines included) (02) 9331 5457

www.thevillagehotel.com.au



Champagne Jayne



Baroque Bistro

the dedicated Francophiles "you really can't go past amazing value grower champagne Pierre Gimmonnet. It's a racy fresh and fruity blanc de blancs (100% chardonnay) from a small village called Cuis in the heart of champagne (at only \$40 per bottle when you buy 12 from Vintage Cellars)." Why not check out her new website and videos online, or share a sensory champagne journey with her in 2011? www.champagnejayne.com

5 EAT AND SLEEP WELL

After the big events, be kind to yourselves. While those extra serotonin receptors die off you should eat and sleep well. Baroque Bistro have a new summer menu that sounds like just the ticket, including a lovely plate of Grilled and Cured Scallops with Corn, Green Beans, Tarragon and Pine Nuts (\$32). If you're still lacking bounce, dive into their new seasonal Macaron flavours including Pistachio and Sour Cherry, and Violet Ganache with Candied Violets. www.baroquebistro.com.au

TOMISLAV (DARLINGHURST - NYE)

I was actually surprised at the bonzer view from this cute little restaurant's balcony. Take in the buzz of The Cross hovering above the riff-raff. Dine on some of Sydney's most exciting food in seven-courses of tongue-in-cheek cuisine guaranteed to surprise! \$350/head (02) 9356 4535 www.tomislav.com.au

4 SNIFF OUT A BARGAIN

Champagne is synonymous with New Year in my book, so I turned to an expert for some great recommendations under fifty bucks. Champagne Jayne suggests you "test drive sexy little rose numbers made from pinot noir like Rococo (\$22) from De Bortoli in the Yarra Valley - full of fruit yet also mineral in texture - perfect for any picnic situation, or indulge your palate with rich complex methode tasmanoise vintage classics like Clover Hill 2006 (\$35) from Tasmania - floral and citrus on the nose yet intensely rich, creamy and toffee apple like in the mouth." For