



Picture: CHRIS PAVLICH

Stop to refuel

Go out

Petrol

9 Springfield Ave
Potts Point
Ph: 9331 5048.

Naming your restaurant after fuel can be deceptive.

Petrol conjures up somewhere blokey and clubby, but the reality couldn't be further from this image.

In a Kings Cross back street, behind the throbbing crowds at Elk, sits a hidden gem.

Our curiosity is piqued by organic wines and coffees and a gluten-free tapas menu.

Tapas can make you feel dodgy at the best of times. You're either \$100 out of pocket and still starving, or feel like you've ingested your body weight in grease.

Thankfully, there's no oil and grease change at Petrol.

The place has been open just over a year and has evolved and expanded from a cafe serving organic fare to a restaurant, with the most recent addition of a wine bar.

There's a lovely al fresco dining area with umbrellas and hanging lanterns for warm summer nights and a French

feel to the decor inside, with plush furnishings, featuring bold, ornate wallpaper, and plenty of soft candlelight.

This is definitely somewhere to take your lover to pick over delicacies and sample the vino.

A glass of the organic grenache and shiraz from the Barossa impress and while the wine list isn't huge (16 by the glass), it's well considered.

We know we're in for some seriously good food after the arrival of what's normally a simple potato dish, Patatas Bravas (\$10.50).

Chunks have been roasted in paprika and are hidden with smooth, creamy eggplant, in a thick, sweet tomato chutney. There's a fair bit of oil in the dish, but there's not a hint of that greasy after-feeling.

Garlic prawns are pretty hard to mess up, but these are magnificent. They're served plumply curled atop toasties with a touch of aioli (we ask for gluten-free bread) (\$16.50)

and simply dressed in lemon and parsley. But best of the night is a pork dish.

The lean meat has been lightly seared and sprinkled with dukkah, an Egyptian blend of spices and nuts, and wrapped in prosciutto.

The square of golden fried haloumi cheese is a creamy foil to the salty meats (\$18.50).

The Middle Eastern influence is also strong in the lamb.

The meat is covered in a slightly spicy Moroccan harissa mix. We dip the barbecued meat into nutty hummus and tahini. (\$17.50).

After what's felt like a four-course feast, we try something more modest and, again, gluten free – the flourless, almond citrus cake is a moist, dense slab of tangy goodness in runny cream (\$11.50).

The bill's a pleasant surprise too – \$85 for a decadent meal with wine in Sydney is good value.

— VANESSA SANTER