

dining

Pedestrian wine list and catch-all menu don't measure up to Vintropolis's standards

Bardot suffers identity crisis

By Tim Pawsey

WHEN KITSILANO'S Vintropolis announced they'd secured the former Quay Space for a second location, Bardot (1137 Marinaside Cres., 604-683-5335), we were relieved... and a tad apprehensive.

The short-lived Quay was a bust. What could have been a gem of a room was marred by poor design—the False Creek views were blocked by oddly arranged dark wood screens, and the menu was “fresh and seasonally” confused in that uniquely West Coast kind of way.

At least Vintropolis, having cut its teeth in a West Side backwater, might be ready to hit the boardwalk with a bang. Or so we thought.

Why the name Bardot? It must be a south of France thing. After all, seasoned Provence Marinaside is right next door. Squint and you could be in Cannes—except for the loudmouth who doesn't know how to hold a fork, and thinks it's cool to fill beer from the bottle.

Whatever this newbie's identity's supposed to be, it's not Vintropolis Two. The wine list is surprisingly pedestrian (no flights, and almost Riesling deprived), much like the typo-terrorized menu that's a kind of catch-all showing up all too often nowadays.

Sometimes we wonder if chefs actually taste their dishes before they hit the table. Our baby squid may have been spiced up just right with a suitable chili quotient, but bombed on its inexcusably over-salted white wine sauce. No won-



Bardot needs more than attentive staff, like the helpful Sarah, for it to take off.

photo Tim Pawsey

der we steered away from cod cakes, not to mention mains like a Yaletown priced half rack of lamb for \$39.

A shared Caesar salad was tasty enough while, a safe bet, the Margarita (sic) pizza was pleasantly crusty with adequate toppings of roasted tomato and mozzarella. But overall, this menu left us cold.

The better news? The room's been smartly opened up and almost every seat in the place is arranged to make the most of the panorama and passing scene. In short, the front of house is fine, buoyed by attentive staff

Strategy Inc.) has a knack for convincing people to do crazy things with their company identities—and gaining them instant notoriety.

The brains behind Lotus Land, Stone's Throw, Blasted Church, Laughing Stock and other designs, Beauregard is gaining some notoriety of his own. Those wineries scooped four of the five double gold label design awards at the San Francisco International Wine Competition. Not too shabby, considering Tantalus, Dirty Laundry, another from Blasted Church, along with his first overseas effort, for Earth's End in Central Otago, NZ., won four of seven silvers.

Chances are Brandever, which grabbed about a third of all the wines handed out, is going to be even busier now—all of which helps to spread the good news about B.C. wine.

As Beauregard says, “In the design media, they're all asking, “Is there wine up there?”

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Book in now for what will surely be one of the best and most worthwhile events of the coming eating and drinking season: Passions is the third annual evening to benefit the Dr. Peter Centre and people living with HIV/AIDS (Sept. 17, 6-9 p.m. at Dr. Peter Centre.)

Early bird tickets (\$175 to Aug. 31) get you an evening of superlative tastes from restos Blue Water, Chambar, Crave, Elixir, Hamilton Street Grill, La Terrazza, MIX, Morton's, Provence, Quattro, The Observatory, Tojo's and West, plus wines to match. Call 604-331-3452 for tickets.

who make all the difference, including Sarah—by coincidence a youthful Bardot look-alike who rates as one of the most engaging servers encountered in some time.

As far as Bardot's concerned, we think—at least for now—it's a case of style over substance, which may explain the name after all.

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We know it may be tough for non-weenies to get excited about wine labels, but one Vancouver company has been turning things on its ear for some time now. Bernie Hadley Beauregard (otherwise known as Brandever