

Gambaros Expands.

FROM LITTLE THINGS, BIG THINGS GROW, AND WHAT STARTED AS A SMALL FISH AND CHIPS SHOP IN 1950S BRISBANE HAS BECOME THE MULTI-VENUE, MULTI-GENERATIONAL GAMBARO FAMILY EMPIRE.



To this day, Gambaros remains in the strong hands of the family, helmed by second generation operators Johnny, Frank and Donny Gambaro. The first-class hospitality and emphasis on quality local produce, upon which the empire was built, remain central themes for the business.

That small fish and chips shop was eventually traded in for the famous Gambaro Seafood Restaurant in the 1980s. After running that business successfully for almost three and a half decades, the family has now diversified, and in the past two years they have added Black Hide Steakhouse and the Gambaro Hotel to their portfolio. Gambaro Hotel adjoins the seafood restaurant and Black Hide is found just across the road in Caxton Street, Petrie Terrace in Brisbane.

Despite the family's longstanding love affair with fresh seafood, they are proving equally adept with a good steak. Since opening in early 2013, Black Hide Steakhouse has been awarded Best Steak Restaurant (2014 Savour Australia Restaurant & Catering Awards for Excellence, National); Queensland's Best Steak Restaurant, and Restaurant

of the Year (Brisbane and Darling Downs) in the 2014 Savour Australia Restaurant & Catering Awards for Excellence, Queensland.

Black Hide's head chef Lukas McEwan is another of Sydney's great chefs who has made the move north. He started behind the Black Hide burners after working in Neil Perry's restaurant, Rockpool, bringing with him a formidable CV and experience in one of the country's most awarded restaurants. McEwan has been delighting patrons and critics alike with exceptional wagyu, Angus and organic cuts of beef and tapas starters, like barbecue beef short ribs and Spanish-style meatballs. It wouldn't be a Gambaro restaurant without a touch of seafood, and options like the hot smoked salmon with grilled radicchio or freshly-shucked oysters live up to standard. Offering a classically designed interior, with ranch-style timber touches and historic family photos upon the wall, plus a friendly, professional staff, it all makes for an environment which invites diners to take their time to enjoy their meals.

This classic, masculine design carries

throughout the new Gambaro Hotel. Materials used in the fitout give the hotel a 'no expenses spared' type of luxurious feel. Dark timber cabinetry, marble countertops and a dark, sophisticated colour-scheme are softened with a pillow menu and the most luxurious Sealy mattresses sold to an Australian hotel to date, according to the Gambaros. Thick walls and double-glazed glass balcony doors also make for a good night's sleep, despite overlooking one of Brisbane's main party streets.

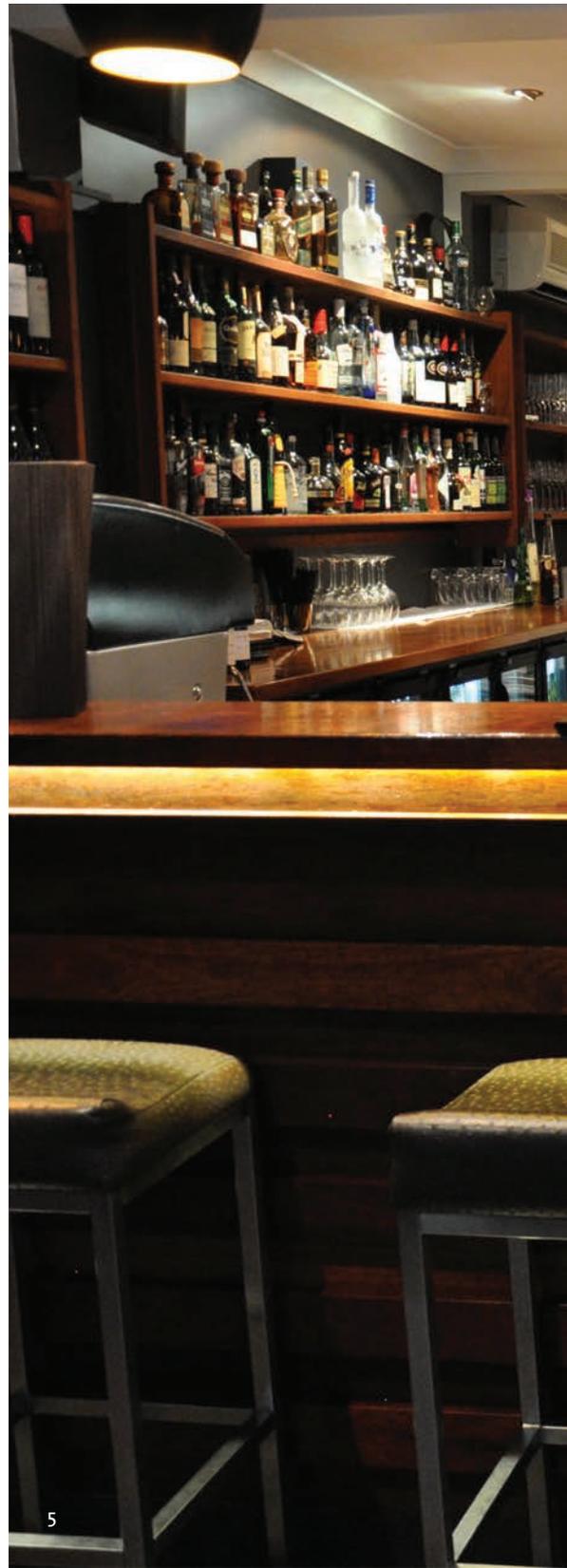
If guests decide not to venture out, private butlers are available to cater for those with a preference for making it a particularly special night in. This is just one of the reasons the hotel picked up to the award for Best New Accommodation in the 2014 QHA Awards.

Backed up with national, state and regional awards across all venues, it's good to see how far a little old-fashioned hospitality can take you. The Gambaros are certainly professionals at it.

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BY ALICE THOMPSON







1. Seafood dish, Gambaros Seafood Restaurant 2. Donny, Johnny and Frank Gambaro (image by Leah Desborough) 3. House made sausages 4. Historic family photos at Black Hide Restaurant 5. Black Hide Restaurant interior.
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