



ONE GOOD REASON

Crown Street Grocer,
365 Crown St, Surry Hills

For lunch in a hurry, dash into this family-owned *provedore* for a proper Italian panini or a gourmet salad. Persian rice (from \$5) is our go-to dish, and we grab Iggy's Bread and Pasta Vera meals for home, too. Call (02) 8668 5326.

For maximum freshness, store whole melons at room temperature. Once cut, refrigerate and they'll keep for up to three days.

For more handy hints, visit www.taste.com.au.



GLUTTON

*Neutral Bay Bar & Dining, 132 Military Rd, Neutral Bay.
Call (02) 9953 5853 or visit www.nbbaranddining.com.au.*

Neutral Bay: it sounds like a little slice of Switzerland on the foodie front. Yet this restaurant with a sparse bar tucked into its frontage is waging war on the vibrant northside scene. Stepping inside, the sister-in-law and I are surprised at how empty the place seems. Sure, it's a Tuesday night, but where are all the people? At the tables it seems, but that only becomes apparent as we walk into the vast, high-ceilinged space filled with long benches and booths - the backs of the pods are so tall that, once we've taken our seats, it's as if the rest of the diners have disappeared into thin air. And that's a nice quality when you're trying to have a bit of quiet time (the kids' bath and bedtime is finally over). To kick off proceedings, SIL and I thoroughly enjoy the pork belly and kingfish skewer with tarragon salsa (\$22), all chunky and crispy and bursting with fresh flavour. The heavy artillery, our mains, comes in the form of super-charred yet butter-soft lamb rump piled high on white beans, eschalot and kale (\$34), and the snapper fillet with chickpea and chard drizzled with a piquant romesco sauce (\$34). The servings are filling, so we're glad we didn't go overboard on the entree front and have saved ourselves for the final stand. While the four larger desserts sound satisfyingly decadent, we're fans of good things in little packages, so opt for two of the 'small treats': the ricotta and lemonade fruit cannolo (\$4) and the walnut meringue (\$2.50), and they both hit the spot with precision. It looks like the battle for north of the bridge has just begun. **LOUISE BURTON**