

2 | **taste.com.au** | **EAT WELL**

Fine family dining

A trend towards child-friendly fine dining sweeps Sydney, writes **Grant Jones**

IT'S amazing how a piece of butcher's paper, subtle lighting and smart uniforms can transform a cafe into a fine diner. David Bitton is to open his cafe on Saturday nights, trading wooden tabletops for a restaurant look, turning seared tuna with roasted beetroot and salad by day into chilli oil seared tuna, pan fried foie gras and truffle mash by night. "It was purely a business decision to open Saturday night," says the Frenchman of his Alexandria cafe. "I said... the rent is paid for, the food is already in the fridge, let's maximise it". But it's more relaxed, there is more attention to detail and there are more elaborate dishes because there are only four entrees, four mains and four desserts." But that doesn't mean exorbitant prices. And there is a children's playroom, with DVD player, plus 10 high chairs. "What we are going to do is cater for the locals so, instead of them going to the

city and spending 25 bucks on a cab and getting a babysitter for a couple of hours, they can come here for a peaceful dinner with a quality product," says the father of two. The trend is taking place across Sydney. At a revived Forbes & Burton in Darlinghurst, candles, linen napkins and fancy crockery replace coffee cups and lunch wraps at night, but the toy box in the corner stays. "It's time we stepped up," says owner Mandat Lieu of a decision to employ chef Paul Pereira, who has worked at Fine Fish in Neutral Bay and Sails On Lavender Bay and has created a new evening menu. "People are expecting a cafe but what they get is the service and quality of a restaurant." It has been open at night for only a few months but diners have been keen to sample dishes including seared scallops with spiced morcilla (blood) sausage, almonds and an apple and radish salad. "We are also doing Sunday roasts," he says.



Child's play: David Bitton, from Bitton Cafe in Alexandria, is to transform his venue at night. Picture: John Fotiadis

CAFE BY DAY, DINER BY NIGHT

Bitton Gourmet Cafe
36-37A Copeland St,
Alexandria;
ph 9519 5111
Forbes & Burton
252 Forbes St, Darlinghurst;
ph 9356 8788

Cafe Beehive
Shop 4, 1A Wongala Cres,
Beecroft;
ph 9980 7853
Le Grande Bouffe
758 Darling St, Rozelle;
ph 9818 4333

Sous Le Soleil
175 Rosedale Rd, St Ives;
ph 9983 1188
High St Bistro
197 High St, Willoughby;
ph 9958 1110