Walking over the Goodwill Bridge in Brisbane’s balmy 34°C weather, Stokehouse was a salivating vision in the distance; I could almost taste the refreshing bubbles of champagne.

A modern, architectural building nestled on the banks of South Bank’s river front, Stokehouse is the perfect oasis to absorb the sweeping river and city views.

Welcomed with a warm Stokehouse smile, B and I were guided to our water’s edge table which brought with it a cooling breeze that gave us both instant relief.

Opening at midday on Saturday, we were the first to arrive for lunch. Not 30 minutes later though, and the place was fully booked. During this short time we were offered cold water, champagne and were well informed of the day’s mouth-watering specials. The Stokehouse floor staff are indeed swift, knowledgeable and know exactly what they are doing. Their team debriefing session of a morning I believe is a driving force towards this professionalism.

With an emphasis on elegant, contemporary Mediterranean cuisine, Stokehouse draw their inspiration from local and Australian produce.

Kangaroo Island oysters and a glass of cold vino to start – why yes of course. To my knowledge, I don’t recall sampling oysters from Kangaroo Island; I will however keep a keen eye out for them as they were gorgeously sea-fresh and full of ocean flavour.

Presented inside a rustic brown bag, our sourdough bread was served alongside Stokehouse ’s very own EVO. Each year, Stokehouse EVO is created by their Head Chef Richard Ousby, in conjunction with the olive oil maker, David Cockerill.

Moving onto our starter, my eyes wouldn’t steer away from the Wagyu beef Carpaccio. Served on baby gem lettuce, my delicate slices of Wagyu beef was complemented by gentle wafers of radish, watercress, crispy pillows of grissini then finished with roasted garlic dressing. Although a very light dish, I did enjoy its simplicity and freshness.

Peering at B’s starter chosen from the specials board, I was a little covetous. Hot smoked swordfish belly prepared using leek ash and served with ground-fresh Sunshine Coast baby potatoes, buttermilk, dill pickle and Oscietra Cavier. One of the world’s most prized caviar, Oscietra Caviar is obtained from the Ossetra Sturgeon fish which weighs 20-180 kg and can live up to 50 years. Indeed a luxury Caviar to have savored.

On this particularly hot day I craved fresh seafood, so I opted for the pasta special for my main. Handpicked sweet Blue Swimmer crab and WA scampi gently tossed through angel hair pasta and finished with fresh peas, fennel and lemon. The flavours here were balanced beautifully and the seafood fresh, sweet and succulent. I went for the entrée size and it was more than enough.

Moving onto the most impressive steak I have ever seen (certainly the best steak B’s sunk his teeth into) the 350g Nolans Rib Eye on the bone - this baby was huge! We loved that it was cut into segments for you too. Served with king brown mushroom, smoked bacon, onion rings and confit potatoes and finished with a generous drizzle of truffle Madeira jus, the Nolans Rib Eye was nothing short of deluxe.

We said no to dessert but were given the menu anyway. We were sold; we had to try the infamous Stokehouse Bombe. A frozen white chocolate parfait with strawberry sorbet and toasted meringue, this was a beautiful dessert to share and a perfect way to finish our dining adventure.

There’s nothing more blissful than sitting with my fiancé (still excited to say that) at a fine restaurant, eating superb food, whilst peacefully watching boats sail by. I don’t know why I waited so long to enjoy this dining experience.

Stokehouse ’s stylish, yet casual approach, offered a relaxed ambience that was nothing short of impressive. Please, do yourselves a favour and treat yourself to a long lunch and enjoy the peace of the river and sample the freshest tastes of the season yourself.