

MASON.



MASON TAKES A HANDS-ON APPROACH TO DINING IN CANGGU, BALI

The beachside village of Canggu, along Bali's west coast, is now home to Mason—a new restaurant dedicated to the timeless craft of using carefully sourced, quality ingredients to make good food from scratch, by hand.

Mason is the latest offering from Brett Hospitality Group, the team behind the acclaimed debut of Fishbone Local earlier this year. Owners Dominique Brett, Isabella Rowell, Brant Bauer and Ben Cross have welcomed Australian chef Nathan Sasi into the fold, following stints at some of Sydney's most esteemed eateries like Nomad and Mercado.

Nomad's kitchen is where Sasi honed his hands-on approach to cooking, exploring ancient processes of pickling, curing and fermenting, and perfecting traditional techniques like cheesemaking and whole-animal butchery. He brings the same artisanal point of view to his new menu at Mason which, like the craft of masonry itself, is squarely focused on creations built from the ground up. Only the finest raw materials are sourced—locally and organically, wherever possible—and a pared-back approach is taken from start to finish, employing ageless cooking methods like smoking and wood-fire grilling to coax maximum flavour from minimal ingredients.

A long afternoon lunch might find the table covered in a variety of snacks ranging from wood-fired flat bread with taramasalata or brown butter and chilli-spiked hummus to snapper croquettes served with tangy lemon mayonnaise or a selection of house-made cheeses and smallgoods from the in-house butcher, such as wagyu beef pastrami, truffled mortadella and Catalan-style chorizo. Dinner, meanwhile, might see more substantial starters like spiced calamari with romesco and radicchio or fried cauliflower paired with pine nuts and pomegranate followed by mains along the lines of wood-fired fillets of barramundi spiced with cardamom and smoked tomato, or slow-cooked lamb shoulder slathered in a classic salsa verde. Simple sides like a salad of chopped broccoli with mint and almonds, or beer-battered onion rings complete the picture, and seasonal tarts and sorbets make for a light, fitting finish.

The handcrafted aesthetic applies as much to the mood of the 100-seat restaurant as it does to the menu. Designer Kelvin Ho has created a minimal, elegant space using concrete, stone, steel and wood—elements that convey relaxed sophistication and allow the open kitchen to be the centre of attention. A hand-chiseled concrete bar makes a handsome addition, as does the terracotta strip that leads the eye across the dining room floor and into an open-air, string-lit courtyard, the perfect spot for a cold beer, glass of wine or cocktail from the concise list of no-nonsense takes on classics like sours, Martinis and Negronis.

It's a fundamental respect for the art of craft and a hands-on attitude that defines the Mason experience, from the informed and attentive service down to the custom-made glassware and ceramics that grace the tables. Open seven days for both lunch and dinner, it's a refreshing change of pace in Bali—one that looks to time-honoured techniques of the past for feel and flavour, but rewards the curious and discriminating palates of the here and now.