

# Turkish delight

If you want to sample traditional Turkish cuisine with a modern twist, look no further than Efendy on Sydney's Balmain peninsula, as Larry Schlesinger discovers

**Efendy stands on the corner of Darling and Elliot Streets** just across the road from the Cat & Fiddle pub – a well-known venue for live music – and a host of trendy antique shops.

The restaurant itself is rather imposing, being a converted house incorporating an outdoor patio dining area, a separate cocktail bar and ground and upper floors.

The interior is decorated with classical and contemporary design, incorporating modern Turkish art as well as black-and-white photographs depicting the architecture of the country.

We ate indoors and despite it being a large space, owner Somer Sivrioglu has managed, through a combination of lighting, music and tasteful decor, to create a warm sense of intimacy.

To begin, our well-informed waiter encouraged us to try the meze platters. These are traditional in Istanbul's

'meyhanes' – local pubs and eateries. The platters are designed to be shared by two, with six items chosen from a selection of hot and cold dishes.

Among the dishes we tried were haloumi cheese, delicately fried and topped with lemon; pastirma – asparagus wrapped in the Turkish equivalent of prosciutto; enginarli fava – a dish made of broad fava beans and marinated baby artichoke; and ordek gozleme – homemade thin pastry filled with shredded duck and pomegranate.

Be warned, the meze platters are quite filling, but impossible to resist as each dish offers different tastes, smells and textures. I particularly recommend the homemade gozleme.

For mains, I had the 'Kuzu Sis', which is a marinated lamb skewer with warm hummus and pastirma, while my companion went with the 'Kilic Baligi' or chargrilled swordfish fillet, with roasted Mediterranean vegetables.

Both were elegantly presented – head chef Christien Darvall has done a great job of presentation – and full of flavour. And the spices seem to ooze out with each bite.

For dessert I went for traditional Turkish coffee served with home-made Turkish delight while my partner tried 'Keskul' – a traditional pistachio and almond pudding with pomegranate reduction (very rich, with a 'sweet/sour' taste complemented by crunchy pomegranate seeds sprinkled on top). If there was room I would undoubtedly have tried the chocolate baklava with salep ice-cream and port-spiked sour cherries.

Upon leaving, I remembered that 'efendy' means 'gentleman' in Turkish... and that was certainly how I was made to feel throughout the evening. ■



**Restaurant:** Efendy  
**Cuisine:** Turkish  
**Entrees:** (Mezes) \$30 for two people for selection of six  
**Mains:** \$28–34  
**Location:** 79 Elliott St, Balmain, NSW  
**To make a booking:** (02) 9810 5466 ([www.efendy.com.au](http://www.efendy.com.au))  
**Corporate:** For anyone looking to hold a business lunch, dinner or meeting, Efendy has several private rooms and can host up to 100 people

## Aggregators to share Challenger back office

**From page 1** FAST managing director Steve Kane told members that the aggregator would also benefit from the consolidation of back-end services despite the fact that it is not controlled by Challenger.

"Although Challenger's interest in FAST is only at 19%, we recognise there are significant scale benefits to be realised," he wrote in a member communiqué. "Through centralising back-end services across the three businesses, we believe we can create greater operational efficiencies and improve the value proposition we offer."

Kane said that by September, shared services and operations would be provided from two sites – Osbourne Park in Perth and Bourke Street in Melbourne. CBSS will provide services to 5,400 brokers across the country.

Challenger bought Choice in September before announcing that it would increase its stake in PLAN from 15% to 100% by September 2008. The moves, along with the purchase of a stake in FAST, gave the non-bank lender a strong foothold in aggregation. ■

## Fortus: an organisation in turmoil

**From page 1** In July last year Fortus hired and paid a CEO with a focus on doing media PR. "In hindsight it was the wrong thing to do because we didn't have a lot of ownership about what was going on," Budreika admitted.

However, despite being a controversial move, Budreika said the fallout from the decision was now firmly behind the organisation. "We're going forward; we have a clear mandate now from the members who are remaining and we will over time create an image of the reverse mortgage market that is more positive."

Originally boasting 43 members nationally, Fortus is sure to lose a large proportion of these over the coming months, with Budreika admitting the number could drop to between 25 and 30.

The result seems unsurprising given Budreika's admission that both he and a

majority of the existing members believe the organisation so far has failed to deliver value for money to its members.

The situation is so dire, according to the source, that the organisation might be better off ending and re-launching.

"I don't think many consumers know about it," the source said. "If consumers don't know about it then where is the value going to be in that?"

The source also noted that many members were 'so burnt' by their experience in the organisation they would leave it in the near future.

For Budreika however, the future remains bright, largely due to his belief in the importance of the reverse mortgage product itself. He said there was plenty of scope for Fortus to fulfil its original purpose as a vehicle for building consumer trust around the product. ■

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