

Sittin' on the dock of the bay...

THERE'S nothing like sitting on the water's edge (perhaps with your toes dipping in), munching on fresh, takeaway fish and chips. Think it's still a bit chilly for that? Well, at the south coast, where it's several degrees warmer than in Canberra, it is possible to enjoy the experience.

Tuross Heads – where the lake meets the sea – is a nice hidey-hole, with O'Briens Boatshed, the Pickled Octopus and, if you are not fussed with fresh fish, Red Box Pizza all nestled on Trafalgar Road. While not exactly a "gourmet strip", these three eateries offer "honest food" with a great position right on the lake with beautiful views and all-day sun. It is a perfect spot to watch fishing boats, amazing sunsets, and the dolphins trapped in the lake because of a king tide, which has closed off the mouth of the Tuross River.

We dined at Pickled Octopus, with takeaway available on the wooden lower deck and a "fancier" licensed seafood café on the upper deck, both with 180-degree views. It is owned by Greg Ferguson, a local character who works hard to offer the freshest fish available from the abundant supply in Tuross

DINING

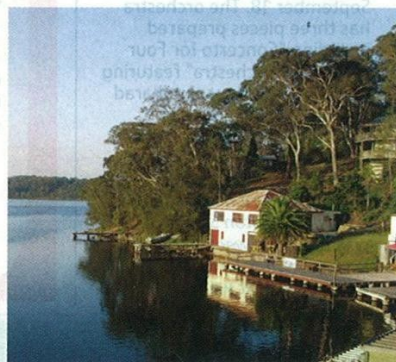
By Wendy Johnson



Lake and surrounding coastal areas. This sees him regularly having a line or two out himself and filleting on the premises.

The line-caught local fish, barbequed outdoors on the upper deck and served with creamy béarnaise sauce (\$28) was succulent and, to be honest, did not need anything more than a squirt or two of lemon to set it off.

However, you don't have to "go fishy". The Pickled Octopus' set menu and specials board include plenty of other dishes. The char-grilled scotch fillet (\$28) was tender and the oysters fresh and creamy. The only "ho-hum" item was the entrée – a generous serve of crumbed mushrooms stuffed with Camembert and served with red wine jelly (\$15). The execution was pedestrian and the mushrooms watery. Still, the scenery made up for it.



Tuross Heads... where the lake meets the sea.

The kids' menu includes fish and chips or calamari and chips for \$8. Desserts are inexpensive (\$9) and included pecan pie and a brandy snap basket.

After lunch, we wandered next door to Red Box Pizza. The wood-fired oven was going full blast cooking up an extensive range of pizzas – traditional, specialty and bianco (garlic and olive oil base), with plenty of options for vegetarians. Small pizzas start at \$12.90 and the large top off at \$24.90. It is byo (no corkage) and you can eat in or take away.

If you'd rather be on the lake, simply rent a tinny from O'Brien's Boatshed and grab a pretty decent coffee while getting organised.

The Pickled Octopus, 93D Trafalgar Road, Tuross Heads, 4473 6804.