



# OUT OF THE PANTRY

MATTHEW EVANS, FOOD EDITOR

## BRISBANE'S TALKIN' TAPAS

**A**T MORE than \$1000 a kilo, the ham – Spanish jamon from old-breed, acorn-fed pigs considered by many to be the world's best – sits pride of place in a glassed-in box, floodlit in the centre of the bar.

Yes, they take their cured meats very seriously at Ortiga, Brisbane's hot new tapas bar and restaurant. Very seriously indeed. There's cured loin, a house-made, paprika-laden circular chistorra sausage, chorizo, ham...and more ham.

But it's not just meat that thrills. Piquillo peppers are filled with a sensual salt-cod puree. School prawns are flash-fried and served with garlic mayo. Sweet young lettuce hearts are drizzled with a delicate Valdeon blue-cheese dressing and a sliver of white anchovy. Deep-fried, crumbed croquettes are stuffed with a lush, creamy chicken filling.

This is easy to gobble up, well-prepared food, backed by a seriously good wine list – all courtesy of Simon Hill, the same bloke who gave Brisbane the acclaimed Isis restaurant on this very site.

Ortiga has a main restaurant on the floor below that serves more substantial meals, but it was closed at a little after 8pm on this particular Tuesday. But with tapas temptations like this at the bar, I couldn't have been happier...



Crispy lettuce balances salty anchovies; (left) cured meats



Dip in for fast-fried prawns and (right) stuffed piquillo peppers



Ortiga, 446 Brunswick St, Fortitude Valley, Brisbane (07 3852 1155)

PHOTOS: RICHARD WHITFIELD