



Riverstone Kitchen



1431 SH1, RD5H, Oamaru,
 ph: 03-431 3505, riverstonekitchen.co.nz
 Thurs-Mon 9am-5pm, Thurs-Sun
 6pm to late

That Riverstone Kitchen won both this category and was named Supreme Winner is an outstanding achievement for a restaurant from well beyond the urban borders.

Bevan and Monique Smith and their team succeed on every level. Having moved back to New Zealand around six years ago (Bevan was head chef at acclaimed Brisbane bistro e'cco), they set out to make wholesome meals with great taste and wide appeal. They have achieved so much more than that.

Riverstone Kitchen is a more casual café by day before morphing into a relaxed yet focused evening restaurant.

Bevan's beautifully cooked food is sophisticatedly simple, with subtle rubs and well-thought-out combinations of flavours - no fussy garnishes here.

The short, uncluttered menu focuses on local ingredients, with much of the produce from the family's gardens. It is a wonderful showcase for what makes New Zealand cuisine special. As one judge put it: "Everything was so beautifully cooked and composed, it was just a joy."

The staff, overseen by Monique, are engaging and personable, while at all times efficient and professional.

There is no tension at Riverstone Kitchen, no airs and graces, no promises that cannot be delivered and the attention to the smallest detail by all the staff is remarkable.

And, amidst all the care and attention, there is a great deal of fun present at Riverstone Kitchen, a place where the kids have their own special area, where fires warm in winter and al fresco dining is encouraged in warmer months. It really is the total package.

"There was a graciousness to the whole experience," said guest judge Simon Thomsen. "You can't help but leave with a glow."

