

GRAM

FOOD CULTURE. COMPILED.

MELBOURNE • ISSUE 5 • FREE



Get your cafe involved!



5 AUGUST 2011

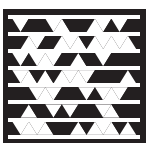
On the 5th of August participating cafés will be donating \$1 per coffee to help support grassroots homeless services.

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GRAM magazine is a monthly compilation of how a city experiences all things food and drink. It does away with traditional magazine formulas, offering instead a snapshot of articles, opinions and reviews, published online by local food bloggers. It has been created to give its readers access to varied, unbiased and unedited opinions about eating and drinking in Melbourne, from independent and local sources. It's not all about what's the latest or the coolest or the best written - just what's positive. Food and drink is everybody's domain. The food blogging community is made up of many individuals - each with their own style, skill,

character and motivation to do what they do. GRAM aims to paint the picture of the online food and drink information experience in a print format. Because sometimes it's just nicer reading on paper and all in one place.

GRAM magazine also features interactive 2D codes, which when scanned by a compatible phone, directly link readers to relevant online material - eg. Google Maps of restaurant locations or more information from the featured bloggers.

GRAM is Food Culture. Compiled.

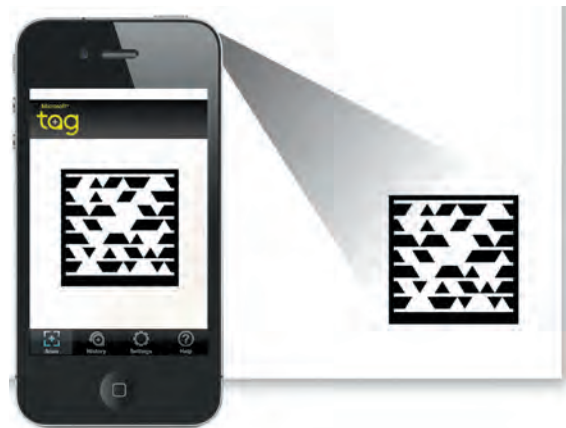
HOW TAGS WORK

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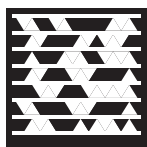
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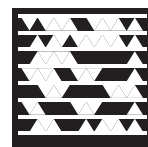
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Open the app, scan the Tag codes featured in GRAM within the camera's viewfinder. The link will then be opened in the phone's web browser.

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From time to time we'll add additional links, stories and giveaways on our Facebook and Twitter sites. Follow us and keep in touch with the odds and ends about eating and drinking in Melbourne.

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SCAN TAG FOR
MORE INFO ON
CAFE VUE
(DETAILS ON PG. 3)





CAFE VUE

MELBOURNE AIRPORT

Melbourne International Airport (T2) Melbourne. Ph. 9310 5091
Words and Photos by Penny Cai

Finally. Good drinkable coffee and pretty decent food at the Melbourne International Airport. Great for International outbound passengers. But for the domestic flights, we will still have to put up with crap coffee. I first discovered that Cafe Vue was opening up in the International Airport on our flight to Christchurch last November. I remember tweeting about it and it got many people excited. And for the first time in many years, I was excited to get to the airport earlier so that we could check in and have enough time to check out Cafe Vue, have a nice coffee and breakfast before heading for our long haul flight to San Francisco.

For travellers, you might be wondering what is so big deal about an airport cafe. This is not just any Melbourne airport cafe. Cafe Vue is owned by infamous and rockstar Melbourne chef, Shannon Bennet. He is the brainchild of three hats restaurant, Vue De Monde in Melbourne. His empire is expanding and is much loved in the industry.

Melbourne airport is also notorious for bad coffee. And so having a Cafe Vue at the International departure hall is like a big blessing to many food and coffee lovers. The signboard is loud and clear. You can't miss it once you pass the immigration and Duty Free.

The place was not too busy that morning. There was 2 floor staff and another one working behind the counter. It did take about 15 minutes before someone actually came and gave us a menu and took our coffee order. We were early and had time but what happens if you were in a hurry? Having said that, I was pretty happy with the latte. I knew that I was going to live with bad filtered airplane coffee for the next 24 hours and was not sure if I could hunt down good coffee when we hit San Francisco.

I got myself a duck egg, bacon & hollandise jaffle

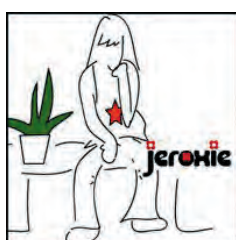
(\$12.50). I guess I was expecting something heartier when I read the menu. I was hoping for crispy bacon that sat outside the jaffle. It was a rather rich toastie with the duck egg. And I thought it was a little on the dry side. My expectation of it was all wrong and it somehow become more of a disappointment than a job. It is still better than much airport food around though. I better not complain! I rather have this than a dry muffin. Mister ordered the Croque Madame with Kurobuta ham hock (\$13). He ate the other half before I took a photo. The order did take awhile to be served so I went wandering in the book store. This is their version of croque madame. I will prefer a soft poached egg on top though. The pork was lovely and nicely salted. It was quite a hangover solution for Mister.

This place sell plane boxes. I have not tried but I rather pay a little more for a decent breakfast, lunch or dinner box that uses a variety of organic produce in the menu. The price is very affordable as well.

The pastries, cakes and viennoiseries are made fresh daily. I shall have to try it when I head for my next overseas holiday destination.

And you don't have to worry that you will miss your flight. There is an outbound flight screen inside the cafe. It is a really comfortable place to hang out while waiting for your flight.

The service might be a little slow and the food not as good as the rest of the Cafe Vue but it is definitely better than the previous airport food that we have to put up with. Slow service may be due to a staff fallen sick or something. The wait staff in this photo was not only serving the dine-in guests but also delivering take away orders to the counter staff. It just seems really under staff. Hope it is a one off and the situation is now much better.

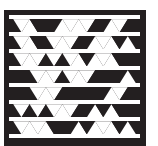


ABOUT PENNY CAI

I am Singaporean born and raised but now happily settled in Melbourne with my partner. Both of us love eating and hence started this blog as an invaluable repository for our stories, triumphs and failures in the kitchen, as well as eating and travel experiences.

WWW.JEROXIE.COM

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THIS ARTICLE
(DETAILS ON PG. 3)



SCAN TAG FOR
MORE INFO ON
AXIL COFFEE
ROASTERS
(DETAILS ON PG. 3)





AXIL COFFEE ROASTERS

322 Burwood Rd, Hawthorn. Ph. 9819 0093
Words and Photos by Aron Tzimas



Rescued the
Neighbourhood



Alternate brewing
methods available:
pour over / chemex
/ cold drip etc...



Retail coffee beans
& all things coffee
related. Maybe a t-shirt



Iron chefs. Food
here is better than
all restaurants in
Essendon put together

Coffee: Axil Coffee

Machine: La Marzocco

One of Melbourne's newest coffee roasters has opened in the good old commercial precinct of Burwood Rd, Hawthorn. Axil coffee has been the worst kept secret in the industry for a while now and this latest offering from David Makin and Zoe Delaney was already a winner before it's doors even opened. Twitter has been abuzz for a while and the fact that this area (filled to the brim with commercial office buildings and residential towers) is starving for some good coffee means that success should be a sure thing for the Axil team. And from what I saw today, I wasn't wrong. For a first day it was pretty damn busy. The first thing you will notice is that the place is massive. The canteen-like layout allows for shit loads of tables and shit loads of tables it has.

THE DESIGN IS QUITE NICE, BUT ALSO EXPECTED: POLISHED CONCRETE, PLYWOOD TABLES, HANGING CAGE LIGHTS ETC. IT TICKS ALL THE BOXES OF A MELBOURNE WAREHOUSE-STYLE CAFE.

The roaster sits in the back room, visible through a strip of glass. I like that the roaster is visible, but would have loved for it to be incorporated more into the design. (i know it's not practical, but i don't care)

The design is quite nice, but also expected: polished concrete, plywood tables, hanging cage lights etc. It ticks

all the boxes of a Melbourne warehouse-style cafe.

Now, this isn't a bad thing, as the standards for a Melbourne cafe are quite high, but I would have loved to see something a little more different. However, one thing that is different compared to most of the other roasters is that they have a huge kitchen with a big f*** off menu.

This is not just a wraps and bircher cafe. They have a kick-arse all day breakfast, lunch, rolls, cakes, you name it. And going by the chorizo and egg roll that I devoured, im guessing that every dish is as extremely delicious.

And for all you pork-belly snobs out there, yes they also have a pork belly dish on the menu.

THIS IS NOT JUST A WRAPS AND BIRCHER CAFE. THEY HAVE A KICK-ARSE ALL DAY BREAKFAST, LUNCH, ROLLS, CAKES, YOU NAME IT. AND GOING BY THE CHORIZO AND EGG ROLL THAT I DEVoured, IM GUESSING THAT EVERY DISH IS AS EXTREMELY DELICIOUS.

Now to the most important part. The coffee. Opening up a roastery in Melbourne is a big deal, and if you dont get it right, you will most certainly be chased by pitchfork wielding hipsters. So, does Axil get it right?

Well, considering that I (cruelly) came here on opening day, usually filled with Murphy's law moments, im going to say that they have got it right. I ordered a double ristretto, but was advised that the ristretto's weren't coming up too well today and that i should opt for a double espresso instead, so I did and it came to me in the form of a dark, rich extraction that was just sublime.

NEXT UP WAS A LATTE, CONSTRUCTED OF VELVETY MILK AND DARK CHOCOLATE FLAVOURS. IT WAS A VERY NICE LATTE INDEED, IN FACT I PROBABLY ENJOYED THE LATTE MORE THAN THE ESPRESSO, BUT I HAVE BEEN IN A MILKY MOOD OF LATE.

(however it did lack that depth that a double ristretto usually gives me, but considering it was opening day, ill let the no ristretto fly).

Next up was a latte, constructed of velvety milk and dark chocolate flavours. It was a very nice latte indeed, in fact I probably enjoyed the latte more than the espresso, but I have been in a milky mood of late.

Overall the coffee at Axil is very good. And considering the paint was still wet, I can only imagine that on second and third visits it is only going to keep getting better. And I will definitely be going back.

They also have what seems to me will be a very thorough retail section. Although it was not completely ready for opening day, it looks to be quite big and from what i can see will be very impressive when ready, and should cater for all your coffee needs.

If you work in the area, Axil Coffee Roasters should automatically become your default coffee choice starting now. No ifs, buts or whats.

Happy
— TO SERVE —
You.

ABOUT ARON TZIMAS
Aron Tzimas is an art director and photographer who realised that not only is it cheaper to use cafes as an office space rather than leasing his own, he can also start a coffee blog and criticise their every move as well. He enjoys double ristrettos, tan leather shoes and speaking in 3rd person.
WWW.HAPPYTOSERVEYOU.COM.AU

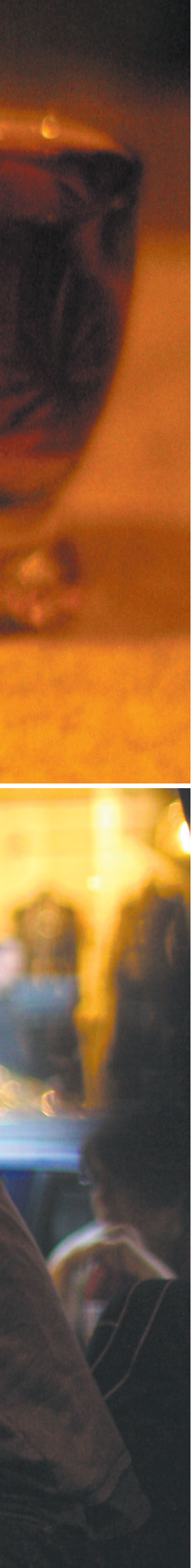
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SCAN TAG FOR
MORE INFO ON
BORSCH, VODKA & TEARS
(DETAILS ON PG. 3)





BORSCH VODKA & TEARS

173 Chapel Street Windsor. Ph. 9530 2694

Words and Photos by Libby Margo

Autumn in Melbourne can be brutal. Okay, not as brutal as a Soviet winter but when you're walking down Chapel Street juggling 10 billion shopping bags, you kinda don't want Melbourne's harsh elements to get in the way of all things fun. Or maybe I'm just a whiny brat. Whatever. After spending a few hours tearing down the South Yarra end of Chapel Street in the cold and somehow ending up at the Windsor end, BFF Marty and I stumbled across Borsch Vodka & Tears, a joint that has always been on my 'to do' list for quite some time. Vodka and borsch was never on our agenda that afternoon but Marty, the Gorbachev to my Perestroika and the Vronsky to my Anna, suddenly decided that he had a craving for borsch so in we went.

It was just after 4pm when we walked in, with a smattering of loved-up couples making their nests between empty tables with 'RESERVED' signs plonked on them. Luckily, our friendly hipster (plus the 'steez' and minus the pretentiousness) was able to locate a spare table by the bar which was lined with many, many bottles of different shapes, sizes and colours.

Mmmm vodka. With a drinks list spanning many, many pages, it was hard to narrow our choices down. I mean, we could have been courageous and opted for a set of three plum vodkas each (three for \$14.50), leaving it up to the waiter to choose a selection of vodkas but we only wanted a couple to nip on. After all, it wasn't even dark yet. Plus, we didn't want to limit ourselves to plum vodkas. In the end, Marty chose a rich and creamy advocaat (\$6.50), an eggnog creme liqueur with brandy and vanilla; and a winter romance (\$8), a spicier blend of rose petal and wild forest flower in one little shot glass. The shot glass in flames (courtesy of Marty's cigarette lighter) is my passover Slivovitz (\$11), a kosher plum vodka from Poland. Aged for 12 years and with an alcohol content of 70%, it was as strong and brutal as Simon Kolečki but was kept sweet with traces of prunes and vanilla. Not pictured was my sweet and earthy cocktail called The Cure (\$11). Consisting of piołunówka absinthe and espresso, it's

not normally a cocktail I would order (I'm more into fun, citrus-y Jessica Wakefield-type cocktails) but as it says on the menu, the cocktail is "good for what ails you" and plus, I like Robert Smith so shut up.

Eek! Flash! To soak up all the alcohol, we had food. Of course, we had food. This is a food blog, duh. Marty had the Russian borsch (\$14.50), a rich, soulful mixture of beetroot, carrots, tomatoes and beans peppered with bits of bacon, apple and a dollops of sour cream. If we could find a Soviet equivalent of a bowl of pho, this would be it. Tasty, soothing and full of flavour, he totally lapped it up and scooped the remaining dregs with the slices of rye bread provided.

Meanwhile, I had an entree-sized plate of cheese and potato pierogi (four for \$17). I must say that I felt ripped off, receiving only four dumplings for seventeen-frucking-dollars. I mean, I know that pierogi ain't cheap for dumplings, but at Court Jester, they charged something like \$7.50 for six pieces so what the fruck, dudes? Still, I was too hungry and too tipsy to care (after all, that plum vodka was SCULLED, baby) so I eagerly dug into my crispy cocoons of cheesy, potato-ey (with a bit of fried onion-y) goodness along with the rocket salad that came with it. Not bad, but not worth the price.

Had we been a little hungrier and had our tables not been reserved for another party, we would have probably stayed for a proper meal – perhaps some Polish sausages or some salmon and steak. Sadly, it was time to leave the Eastern Bloc and time to head back to the city for more shenanigans. I can see myself coming back for more as it's the perfect place for a drink and a light feed on a cold Winter's night. Just stay away from the pierogi if you're looking for value for money.

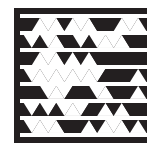


ABOUT LIBBY MARGO

"Libby is a lover of all things nice (foie gras, truffles and Dr Loosen Riesling) and all things downright nasty (chicken-flavoured potato chips, Costco hot dogs and Stella Artois). When she is not thinking of, blogging about and eating food, she is working as an office clerk, studying law, wasting time on Supercoach and dreaming about sojourns to Echo Beach (Daylesford is usually fine by her though)."

WWW.THEVERYVERYHUNGRYCATERPILLAR.COM

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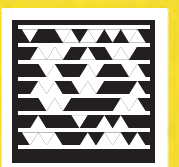


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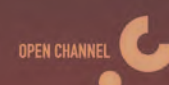
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EMBRASSE RESTAURANT
(DETAILS ON PG. 3)





EMBRASSE RESTAURANT

312 Drummond Street, Carlton. Ph. 9347 3312
Words and Photos by Fatbooo

They've always held a dream-like and bewitching quality to them, especially when they're shaped this way. The mushroom that I hold here in my hand isn't real. It's stalk is made of droolsome meringue, and its cap is made from a piece of choc-dusted chocolate parfait. Thus began the start and end of a heartachingly magical meal at Embrasse in Carlton.

I'm a bad food-blogger. I wander around tasting Melbourne intuitively and meanderingly with my belly-compass as a whimsical guide. But I don't actively read up and find out about the food industry, its big names, or which restaurants are run by what chefs. What I know about food, chefs and restaurants comes randomly, in tidbits, almost by osmosis. Via twitter, from workmates, friends, through fellow bloggers and maybe that frantic quick google search just before I start weaving a story around a restaurant. I know, right? Terribleboo... D_D

THIS WAS AN ABSOLUTELY GORGEOUS COLOUR DISPLAY OF GARDEN VEGETABLES, SITTING ON AN ARTFUL BACKDROP OF VARIOUS WONDERFULLY COLOURED PURÉES. SUCH PURITY.

Cousin trouble + geek hubby are owners of an edgy, casual contemporary restaurant in Singapore called The Disgruntled Chef. Now I've eaten there and really enjoyed it, but never got the courage to up and write about the place because it feels somewhat awkward blogging about your cousin's livelihood. What if I say the wrong thing? lol. But I speak of this detail because it tells us how food-motivated cousin trouble + geek hubby are, and where their allegiances lie. That is, with Western food.

I was stressing a fair bit about finding good restaurants for us to dine at. I didn't want them to have a gastronomically disappointing holiday, especially when they're here

specifically to eat! I was pulling out places from wisp memories that I felt might be good eats and then sent them a list in a text message. Cousin trouble would then start researching about the places, its chefs, and see if she likes them. She tells me this is what I should try to do if I really want to 'get' somewhere as a food-blogger: know the industry. Awww, cousin trouble always looking out for me and even thinking of my (food-related) future. ;-)

So one morning while I was at work, I received trouble's text message telling me that the one restaurant that "really sparked my interest is Embrasse, by chef Nicolas Poelaert. It is French and I really like the philosophy behind his food. Can you help book dinner for 3 tonight at Embrasse?". My initial impression of Embrasse before that visit was: it sounds like a tight-lipped place serving stuffy French food. Terrible, right? Judging a restaurant by its name...! But if my cousin wants to eat there, we sure will!

We dined at Embrasse on a Wednesday night, it wasn't too busy. To me, the place felt contemporary-formal with thick, white pressed tablecloths and dark wooden furniture bathed in incandescence. Friendly, dignified waiters complete the atmosphere. I felt a little uncomfortable, lol. How many of you get that slightly uneasy feeling when you're at a posh place? Do you start wondering if you're dressed nice enough? Yup, I sometimes can still be that insecure little boy. :)

We had a choice of olive, sourdough and smoked bread. The three of us chose smoked bread without hesitation. With milky Lescure butter slathered on, the whole combination almost reminded me of eating good cheese.

I've forgotten what was in the amuse bouche. The thing about degustation-style meals is some of the dish descriptions aren't found anywhere aside for the brief 5 seconds the waiter takes to tell you about the dish. And more often than not, the dish is described so exquisitely that it sounds like the title for a food thesis.

Isn't it pretty how they're arranged on curved-in tablespoons? You're meant to put everything in your mouth at one go. The one on the right, from the notes I've jotted down, tasted of soft milky goats cheese with a sudden almost under-ripe hazelnut crunch as you bite into it. On the left, we uncovered crisp radish in a sea of spinach purée with a slow olive aftertaste. Geek hubby says that both dishes' flavours comes alive once you spoon it into your mouth.

This was an absolutely gorgeous colour display of garden vegetables, sitting on an artful backdrop of various wonderfully coloured purées. Such purity. Simply simply beautiful, and incredibly tasty at that! Geek hubby points out that it is the diner that chooses what goes with what. You eat into the plate from whichever angle or start-point you feel like. So each of us will come up with a different garden journey of flavours. I hate sounding too gushy, but I truly loved it.

*HE GIVES US STRAIGHT FOOD
WITH A MINDFUL EAR TOWARDS
THE SEASONS AND A FOCUS ON
SIMPLICITY.*

Cousin trouble poetically quips that it's like seeing God on a plate. You're seeing vegetables exactly as they were made. It's like you are skipping down the woods picking all of these beauties and putting them in your mouth. In all honesty, I think it's great that a chef can make people get so excited about vegetables. Wonderful dish, chef Nicolas.

Oh dear, squid-ink covered fish served on a black plate - my internal cameraman nearly fainted. I apologise for the ghastly pictures. Unless you concentrate, you might even not notice the piece of inked-up Dory sitting there underneath the wilted spinach. But just cut into the fish and suddenly you see the whites of its succulent flesh, bringing light into the dish. We enjoyed how this dish played with our minds again, and it was yummy too!

The fruit arrived chilled and I ate it with my hands. I remember Singlishboo querying "it's just a freaking peach but how come so nice?!??"

I'm glad geek hubby managed to capture a good picture of this dish. Sometimes dishes like these, you don't want

to eat, because they're so pretty... What I remember best about this delicious dish was, the blushing pink lamb was ever so gently covered by a sheet of soft and velvety beetroot. Like a child's blanket. The beetroot dust around the lamb made cousin trouble think of culinary rouge. Is she being poetic again or is there really such a thing? This dish tasted on the sweet side.

Beautiful name... forest floor. Not only did this dessert dish look whimsically surreal and faerie-like, but Nicolas has actually managed to make it taste amazing! The chocolate hazelnut parfait 'mushroom cap' was softly yummy and even the meringue stalk had moistness to it. You know how I don't like things overly sweet? In this case all that mushroomy sweetness was perfectly offset by the mint granita.

"Over there" being France... All that said, I'm personally not too familiar with cheeses, nor the odd ritual of eating cheese after you're already stuffed from a meal. But it came with the degustation menu and we still managed to polish everything off the board. I think the fruit-stippled accompanying crisp breads helped. From the bottom, we got a hard French cheese that I didn't catch the name of. In the middle is French Pont-l'Évêque. On top, we got Black Savourine goat's cheese from Yarra Valley.

A heartachingly magical meal. Cousin trouble tells me Chef Nicolas has been called the avant garde gardener. He gives us straight food with a mindful ear towards the seasons and a focus on simplicity. A potato can still look like a potato, yet his plating makes the ordinary potato look beautiful. This was a meal where, in cousin trouble's words, you can see "the chef's passion, right there on your plate".

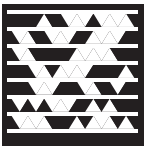


ABOUT FATBOOO

I'm an inquisitive foodie with an Asian palate. I love how food brings people together. There is a story behind every meal and I'm constantly trying to find it. Please join my Melbourne-based food journey and let's get fat together.

WWW.FATBOOO.BLOGSPOT.COM

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MORE INFO ON
ROCKPOOL BAR & GRILL
(DETAILS ON PG. 3)



LEGEND

BURGER:

From the menu, which one we ordered.

SERVETTES:

How sloppy and juicy the burger is.

DRESS CODE:

What's the venue like?

PRICE:

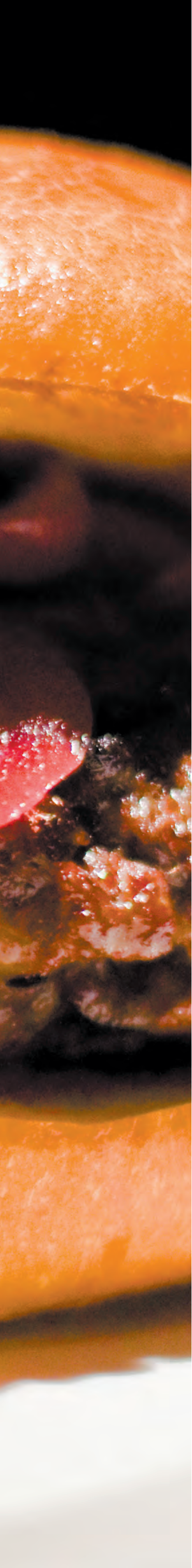
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SLEEPINESS:

For how long were we drowsy after the burger.

WOULD WE RECOMMEND:

*Go Now! • Definitely • If you're in the area •
Don't expect much • Don't bother*



BURGER REVIEW: ROCKPOOL BAR & GRILL

Crown Casino, 8 Whiteman St, Southbank, Ph. 8648 1900
Words and Photo by The Burger Adventure

BURGER:	SERVIETTES:	DRESS CODE:	SLEEPINESS:	WOULD WE RECOMMEND:	PRICE:
David Blackmore's Mishima Burger	3	Formal	21 Minutes	Go Now!	\$24 each

SUMMARY

If someone were to ask you where they should go for a good steak in Melbourne, chances are Neil Perry's famous Rockpool Bar & Grill will be at the top of that list. Having made it to our very own Top 10 for 2010 with his David Blackmore's Full Blood Wagyu Hamburger, we were very eager to sink our teeth into another one their renowned beef burgers. This time opting to use a Mishima beef pattie instead of the much loved David Blackmore Wagyu beef. What's Mishima beef you may ask? Mishima is a Japanese produced beef that is regarded as rarer and pricier than the well known Kobe beef. Best described by David Blackmore as the "Original Native Japanese Cattle," Mishima cows are thoroughbred in Japan and aren't ever crossed with European breeds. The island on which they graze exists in relative isolation, whereas Wagyu beef is the result of crossbreeding these Mishima cattle with European Angus. With the addition of the new beef nothing else has really changed in the burger. It came on a toasted brioche bun with peppery onions, zuni pickles and tomato and lettuce on the side. Now before you go rushing into Rockpool be sure to check their website or our Facebook for updates- the Mishima Burger is incredibly rare and only appears on the bar menu approximately 4 to 5 times a year.

COMMENTS

B - "You really can't go wrong when heading to Rockpool for a meal. Although this was basically a simple pattie change on the renowned and delicious David Blackmore Wagyu Burger, this rare and almost unknown Japanese beef gives the burger a completely new life. The Mishima beef pattie was something new and different to anything I have tried before, with a more rustic style coarsely ground beef consistency. Perfectly cooked and juicy, this pattie has a real meaty dominate flavour about it. Although the pattie is the only change from the Blackmore burger they really seem like two completely different burgers. One isn't better than the other, I guess it comes down to what you prefer. Another win for Mr Perry."

D - "Just an outstanding and meticulously orchestrated burger. I opted to leave out the lettuce and tomato in order to concentrate on the distinct flavours that the beef, chutney, pickle and onion all offer. The beef was a large, thick patty that oozed juice and flavour that was in perfect ratio to the acidic pickle and spicy onions. The bottom of the bun had dissolved by the end of it but I couldnt care less; it's just the price you have to pay for all that juice!"

G - "I was so happy that we came back again. I was a bit curious to see if they could deliver a better burger than their Wagyu version- keeping in mind this was in my top ten from last year. The burger was fantastic; a thicker pattie meaning more meat, more intense flavours and the pickles and onion, in true Rockpool fashion, were great. I don't think this burger is better than the David Blackmore's Wagyu Burger, in retrospect I think they are just two different types of burgers. This one just has more meatiness about it. Its a bigger burger for a bigger appetite and in some ways dominates over the all the other flavours inside, whereas the Wagyu Burger is a bit more delicate and is not as filling. Either way the winner is the Rockpool for creating such a good burger. Loved it."

Z - "The thing that stood out to me in the burger - as it should have - was the meat. The beef was incredibly flavoursome, juicy and ground quite coarsely without it all falling apart (meaning they've cut the mince properly with the grain). The spicy onions were the second thing that stood out, but not in the best way. Normally I would've eaten this kind of burger without the side of tomato and lettuce (and I did). But in this case I actually think that they might have helped to balance out all those really intense flavours of onions, pickles and beef. Or... I'd probably chuck the whole lot and just devour the amazing beef and bun on their own. The David Blackmore's Mishima burger is a truly special experience that every serious burger lover should endeavour to sink their teeth into."



ABOUT THE BURGER ADVENTURE
The Burger Adventure is a blog that reviews the best burgers from Australia and around the world. Created by four guys with a passion for beef, buns, cheese, lettuce, tomato, onion, egg, bacon & sauce.
Authors: Brendan Kennedy, David Silcock, George Vafeas & Zenon Predecki.
WWW.THEBURGERADVENTURE.COM

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THE LOCAL TAPHOUSE
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EVENT REVIEW:

GOOD BEER WEEK: KIWI SPECTAPULAR

The Local Taphouse. 184 Carlisle Street, St Kilda East. Ph. 9537 2633
Words and Photo by Gem and Tristan

Full to the brim with good cheer, great beer and even better company (though sad at missing Yeastie Boy Stu's breakdancing in quail blue trousers), it was time to jet off to the Kiwi SpecTAPular at the Local Taphouse.

SpecTAPulars normally mean there are twenty special beers on tap, a bell is rung once a keg is drained and there is an opportunity to taste all the beers on offer in paddles of five. Me, Tiff (fellow #beergirlrager), Tristan and bestie K had decided on our gameplan very early – we'd all buy paddles of all twenty beers and each have a sip of every beer.

OF THE 20 OR SO SPECTAPULARS WE'VE HELD ACROSS BOTH TAPHOUSES, THERE HAVE BEEN SOME BIG ONES BUT THE KIWI SPECTAPULAR WAS THE BIGGEST YET IN BOTH VENUES.

After being spoilt rotten at the beermen.tv Hair of the Breakfast, it seemed like the logical and responsible thing to do.

If the idea of twenty beers to choose from seems very daunting, fear not! The Local always have a 'passport' to make your journey a good one – not only does it have a list of all the beers, but notes and general advice on beer tasting.

Steve, the owner of The Local Taphouse, and I directly quote, was very heartened by the success of the day: Of the 20 or so SpecTAPulars we've held across both Taphouses, there have been some big ones but the Kiwi SpecTAPular was the biggest yet in both venues.

Quite an achievement! I remember the last one I was able to attend, the Aussie SpecTAPular had punters lining up at the doors pre-hour of establishment's open.

But onto the beers, eh? I suspect I might've had palate fatigue but my personal highlights were the second half of the beer listed in the passport – from Yeastie Boys' Rex Attitude (which you guys already know I love from previous post at the breakfast) onwards.

There were oddities, like my palate preferring Renaissance Stonecutter in the bottle over it in the keg?! Sacrilege, I know. 8 Wired's Hopwired couldn't displease if it wore its dirtiest underwear – that was fab.

The Three Boys Oyster Stout and Mike's Imperial Porter absolutely hit the spot for the weather (though it was nice and toasty inside the Local given the amount of punters). One of the earlier beers sampled that I liked though advertised as hoppy, I preferred its maltier characteristics – the Moa Five Hop. Again, could be my palate crack talking.

Every one of these SpecTAPulars is an absolute treat to attend. The staff do a phenomenal job, the patrons are always so polite and you end up exchanging tasting notes with absolute strangers and on top of that, it's a great way to sample beer from a specialised place – in this case New Zealand.

I didn't see him at the Local in costume but co-owner Steve got into the sheepish spirit of things too. Till next SpecTAPular...see you at the next one?



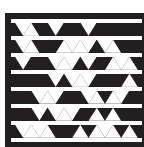
ABOUT GEM AND TRISTAN

Gem and Tristan are the two Melburnians behind food and beer blog eat, drink, stagger. When not blogging, Gem enacts treasurer duties for the Australian Beer Writers' Guild, writes poetry and plays unusual musical instruments. Tristan works as a web developer, rides ridiculous distances on his bike around Melbourne and practises obscure but impressive martial art styles.
WWW.EATDRINKSTAGGER.COM

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LEROY'S

5-7 Mason St Newport. Ph. 9391 9009
Words and Photo by Jolie Morello

Opening Hours: Daily 7am-4pm
Payment Options: Cash Eft Visa Master
Transport available: Train
Parking: Free 2 Hour Limit

RATING:

Excellent cafe to take the family with room for the kids roam and play

REVIEW:

Well it's "bad bad Leroy Brown - the baddest man in the whole damn town..." Well no not really but that song was kind of catchy and it's the song that rings through my ears whenever I hear people speaking about this new child friendly cafe in Newport. Leroy's isn't at all bad - in fact it's great - well it's better than great - it's a heaven for parents who like to combine good food, coffee and kids.

Situated in Newport, Leroy's cafe sits in the perfect location. It's right next to a lovely little local park complete with playground, an Op Shop (for all you vintage junkies) and of course a stone's throw from the train station (for all you greenies without cars)

LEROY'S HAS A SANDPIT COMPLETE WITH TOYS, FAKE GRASS TO PLAY ON, A MINI SLIDE, HOP SCOTCH, A MINI RACE TRACK AND LARGE CHALK BOARD. KIDS ARE WELCOME TO ROAM WHILE PARENTS ENJOY A COFFEE.

It's a welcomed new-comer to the west side and believe me the mothers of the WEST were screaming for such a place to open, and Leroy's has obviously been hearing their requests. Are you ready to hear about all the kid friendly features - time for me to take a breath.

First of all there is ample room for prams - there is a front door and side door entrance and getting the "three wheeler" through the door is a breeze. Parents can opt to sit either to the side of the cafe overlooking the local park, inside the cafe to watch the hustle and bustle OR (my personal favourite) head on out to the enclosed courtyard to the mini kiddie heaven.

To entertain the kids Leroy's has a sandpit complete with toys, fake grass to play on, a mini slide, hop scotch, a mini race track and large chalk board. Kids are welcome to roam while parents enjoy a coffee. Once the kids are all worn out and hungry they can pull up a highchair and snack on toasted granola, fruit toast or eggs for breakfast. And for lunch they can have veal meatballs, fish and chips or crumbed chicken strips - just to name a few. The kids menu at Leroy's is exceptional and has lots of variety which will satisfy the fussiest toddler.

For dirty bottoms Leroy's has a separate change room for the bubbas and also provide plastic cutlery and cups for meal times.

With all these great kid friendly touches you'd think a mum had come in and designed this wonderful cafe, well you'd be right in thinking that. Kate and Sally, who run Leroy's, also run very busy families at home - so they know how to cater for the baby crowd. It's a must to visit! Need I say more?

****Mothers Group Booking Available****

****Kids Parties****

****Community Garden Coming Soon!!****



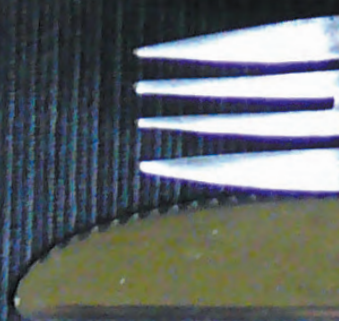
ABOUT JOLIE MORELLO

Hey Bambini is a comprehensive guide to find Melbourne's best Baby, Toddler, Child & Family Friendly Cafes & Restaurants. Jolie Morello is the founder and creator of Hey Bambini which was launched in 2008. Jolie reviews and lists cafes that have facilities especially for children such as highchairs, babycinos, room for the pram, changing facilities, kid's menus and kid's activities.

WWW.HEYBAMBINI.COM.AU

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RECIPE: SALSICCIA AL FORNO

Recipe and Photos by The Pink Leopard

I've done some pretty radical things in my life – scaled volcano craters, sled (sledded? slayed?) across the wilds of the North Pole on the back of 12 huskies (not literally on their backs...) eaten haggis in mountains of Northern Scotland, but yesterdays outing far outweighs all of these experiences. I went to Ikea.

I parked the car at the far end of Victoria Gardens car park, so as to make a hasty escape. Let's just say I wasn't in my Sunday finest so I wanted to get in and out unnoticed like a slinky black cat. I was on the hunt for some china, it gets boring photographing the same old plates and bowls and I know that Ikea can deliver the goods at a rock bottom price. Details later. But there in lies the problem. I know the Market Place section of Ikea is right by the checkouts. Did I really want to get sucked into the vortex that is the 'one way only' walkways of this Swedish labyrinth and spat out the other end with 24 things that I have no need for; a new kitchen, a lounge suite, dining table or enormous stuffed crocodiles so in a fit a madness I decided to buck the system and go through Ikea BACKWARDS! I knew in an instant that this was going to be a trepidatious expedition. It was 12.30pm and the Swedish meatball counter was pumping - 2 dollar hotdogs! Who can blame them! My first 'base camp' was getting through the barriers at the checkout – obviously there were plenty of nervous looking dudes with enormous brown cardboard boxes – nervous because their entire household is in that box and when they get home they know that they will spend every waking hour of the next 4 weeks putting it all together. I snuck through unnoticed. Hurrah!

I skated through the self-serve furniture area, still channeling my black cat mentality. When I peered down each of the aisles there were multiple couples arguing, women crying, men laughing like a crazed Max Cady. When I hit the gardening section this is where it all went

horribly wrong. It was crowded, like really crowded.

I was pushing my way through an army of fresh faced uni students, all buying 50c tea towels, through rivers of pregnant women and their unsuspecting partners – the same nervous ones back at the counter, cute gay couples balancing their bulk buy Klinderkaadenfurgelsteppen light bulbs and little Gen Z'ers pushing (actually make that ramming) trolleys into unsuspecting passers-by , sometimes with multiple siblings attached to either side. Why do parents let their children push trolleys through Ikea?? It's not cute and it's not teaching them a single thing. My mother almost had me bound and gagged whenever we were in a 5km radius of shop with breakables (unbreakables too, come to think of it). Each and every one of these people gave me the most filthiest of looks and glared; me, to the arrow on the floor and back to me with terrifying fire in their eyes. I turned a corner and could see beds.

Oh My God, I'm lost! How could this happen? Where's some staff – where's the bloody Staff! Turns out there are three people working at Ikea on Sunday – the other 47 are glued to the wall in the lunch room, too terrified to step onto the selling floor in fear of being harangued by immaculate 30 something's demanding to know where the Klippan sofas have gone (having no clue that their chocolate covered darlings Jeremiah and Louisa are sprawling across them way back down 14 arrows away).

"Sorry, can I just...sorry, I just need to get past the ... sorry, excuse me, thanks... ..sorry...". Sweating, exhausted - I made it! I discovered a secret tunnel through the curtain section which deposited me smack bang in the middle of glassware. I totally need a stiff drink. Does the café sell Swedish vodka? I gathered myself together and found some really gorgeous creamy coloured plates called

‘Arv’ and a glass called ‘Herderlig’- all for the princely sum of 10 bucks. RESULT! Plus, I am going to call my next pet Hederlig, I think.

The next thing I knew I was back at the checkout – a bad dream. Obviously I slipped into a coma and was carried along by the crowds to the exit point. Some woman with a trolley L.O.A.D.E.D with picture frames and preserving jars was before me. Now if the situation was in reverse I would have said “please! you go first with your paltry purchase of three items” but this broad wasn’t having any of it and I was stuck behind her for hours. On the upside, they don’t do bags at Ikea anymore so she would have got to the barrier and had to balance her goods all the way to her Porsche Cayenne with acrobatic precision. Sucker! Had she let me through, I would have hung around and helped her. Karma, my friend. Karma.

I ran to my car and didn’t look back. A lesson to be learnt: Ikea + Sunday = Psych Ward for 2 weeks.

Thankfully, this Sausage al forno I made when I got home was so quick to make and so scrumptious that the whole experience was forgotten by the time we finished eating. And I am well happy with my dishes. I found this recipe in Gourmet Traveller and adapted it a little. It is cheap, quick and easy. Perfect mid week meal that I think you could do with lamb, pork – even fish. Yum

Enjoy!

METHOD:

Preheat oven to 200°C. Place oil in baking and put in the oven to get your oil nice and hot (3 – 4 minutes) once oil is hot, throw in onions and garlic and let cook away for about 5 minutes until just starting to brown. Meanwhile, brown your sausages in a pan until they are lovely and golden. Remove baking tray from oven and add sausages, tomatoes, vinegar and thyme to garlic and onions. Return to oven and bake for about 25 minutes. Serve with creamy mash or parmesan polenta. Delish.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 onions, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed (with skin left on)
- 8 Italian Sausages
- 1 tin Cherry Tomatoes – 400gms
- 2 tablespoons of balsamic vinegar
- Fresh thyme sprigs
- Salt and pepper



ABOUT THE PINK LEOPARD

The Pink Leopard is an heroic, moral cat with pink fur and the manners of an English aristocrat. She only becomes flustered or angry at obtuse or offensive humans who try to disrupt her existence, or at troublesome gadgets, rodents, or insects. In most of her life, she stumbles into a difficult situation and stoically endeavours to make the best of it. All the while cooking. WWW.THEPINKLEOPARD.NET

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2006 RESERVE CHARDONNAY

GOVAT

YARRA VALLEY

750ml



WINE REVIEWS

Words and Photo By Krystina Menegazzo

TOOLANGI Reserve Chardonnay 2006 **Yarra Valley, Victoria. RRP \$72**

People often harp on about Rick Kinzbrunner of Beechworth's Giaconda winery and his ability to weave magic with a number of varieties. There is justification in such ramblings when a wine is put forth of such high quality. Mr Kinzbrunner used premium Yarra Valley fruit and made no excuse for the opulent style. Aged in oak for 18 months, it is swathed in layers of toasted pine nuts, smidgens of butterscotch and vanilla, spices and a robust mealy finish. When your winemaking ethos dictates that you will release a wine only when you are supremely proud of the result, you can be sure that Mr Kinzbrunner had no qualms when deciding whether to put his name on this bottle.

SHAW & SMITH Pinot Noir 2008 **Adelaide Hills, South Australia. RRP \$49**

The 2008 vintage had a near perfect growing season before the mad rush to pick when a heatwave burst through the area in early March. The modest alcohol of 13% though is a pretty good indication that the Shaw & Smith team managed to shine through what was for some, a difficult harvest. The most distinctive feature of this wine is the generous palate weight, attributed to their miniscule yields. The palate has an appealing brightness surrounded by bold, red fruits like fresh cherries and blood plums. Time has been kind to this wine and allowed additional layers to gradually build in this punchy but silky Pinot Noir.

CHALMERS Nero d'Avola 2009 **Mildura, Victoria. \$29**

This is a wine of mid-burgundy hue with dusty pink tones that made me seriously want to watch 'Pretty in Pink' because I kept picturing Molly Ringwald's character fabulously suited up for her prom in that garish pink.

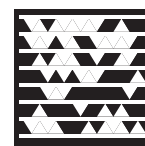
I think cured meat must be on my brain after spending last weekend making salami and capocollo. I got soft flushes of clean, freshly minced meat on the nose...something that to us non-vegetarians is a highly appealing scent. Combine that with inflections of bright red fruits and you've hit the nail on the head. It's pretty and mid-weighted. I expected more guts from this wine but it turns out I was quite pleased with the bloody, juicy, good acid drop before me. There's a touch of black olive savouriness to it too and it matched perfectly well with my bistecca (steak), polenta and funghi (mushroom) dinner.



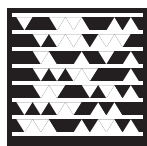
ABOUT KRYSTINA MENEGAZZO

La Donna del Vino is the pseudonym of this young lady from Melbourne who completed her winemaking degree whilst being a gypsy working vintages throughout Australia and Italy. Finally she decided to return home and sell wine instead. In her spare time she cooks, eats, drinks buon vino and is a self-confessed Neb Head (someone really into Nebbiolo).
WWW.LADONNADELVINO.COM

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GOLDEN FIELDS

157 Fitzroy St, St Kilda. Ph. 9525 4488

Words & Photo by Michael Gall

Golden Fields is McConnell's latest outpost – it's pretty much a reinterpretation of Cumulus, with a Chinese twist. In fact, it's so close to Cumulus I feel a little deflated. The food is great and the service sparkling, but it is a little too similar to what has come before it.

The menu borrows some of the very best from Cumulus and Cutler & Co. The lamb shoulder appears similar though it is spiced with cumin seeds (though I didn't actually try it). The pork buns are straight off the Cutler bar menu, they are as amazing as ever and the fried prawns and pork tail are very similar to a blend of 2 Cumulus dishes that have since been retired. The similarities don't end there, the interior design is straight from the same playbook: white tiles, big bars, open kitchens and coat hooks. It's good but not ground breaking.

The menu works well, as you'd expect. The feature of McConnell's cooking and menu construction is that each dish is simple yet effective. The way you order a variety of dishes builds all the complexity you want. The beef belly and rump was brilliant, subtle flavours and awesome textures. The shredded cabbage and Moreton Bay bug salad is so simple it's brilliant.

Don't get me wrong, I enjoyed it, the food rocks and I'll be back. I'd suggest that the menu will evolve and grow into its own skin. I hope next time, I won't just be thinking how much like Cumulus it is.

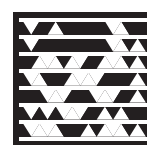


ABOUT MICHAEL GALL

Michael Gall is a coffee, food and wine loving geek who likes nothing more than a wasting the day away, doing nothing but talking crap and enjoying tasty flavours. You can read what he has to say about cafes, restaurants and other food related stuff at www.myachinghead.net or see more photos at www.morselsofdesign.com

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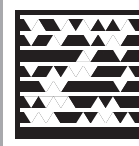
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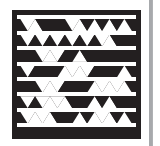
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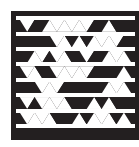


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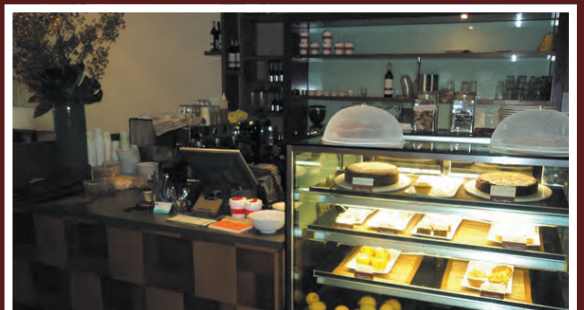
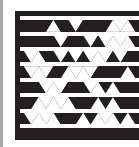


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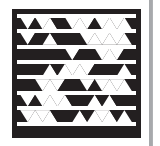


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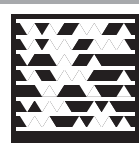


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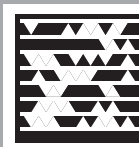


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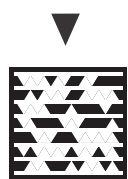


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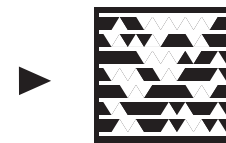


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