

mx Nosh



TASTY MORSELS

TRY THIS



FESTIVE CAKES

The Babycakes Noel range (above) is now available at David Jones food halls. Try the Gingerbread Angel, spicy cinnamon and gingerbread biscuit with a hint of clove; or the Noel Shortbread – buttery vanilla bean shortbread letters with polka-dot icing. Visit www.babycakesbydesign.com.au.

EGG-CITING MENU

Milk & Two cafe has just released its summer menu. Choose from seven different breakfast egg dishes or try the wagyu beef for lunch. Harris St, Pyrmont. Ph: 9571 5503

BRASSERIE BAND

For a pre-Christmas lunch or dinner, Botanica Brasserie at the Sheraton on the Park offers packages from \$69pp. Ph: 9286 6000

NET HEALTH GAIN

If you buy a Nando's Peri-Peri sauce or marinade, you'll also be supporting One Net One Life, a mission to distribute mosquito nets to pregnant mothers and children in Africa to prevent the spread of malaria.

LITTLE RIPPERS

5 Nights a Week is a collection of 150 recipes including light salads, pies and tarts, pasta, risotto, seafood, barbecues, hearty soups and Thai curries by food writer Valli Little. It's a book full of midweek favourites using easy-to-find ingredients and simple techniques, priced \$39.95.

– *Something happening in Sydney food and wine? Let us know at huntm@mxnet.com.au*



Picture: BRITTA CAMPION

BAR EUROPA Basement, 82 Elizabeth St - City Ph: 9232 3377

This little bar is so hidden that we walk right past it and have to call for directions.

There's something very Melbourne about this subterranean den. Maybe it's the tea lights on the tables or the brown wood and ornate wallpaper.

There's a relaxed elegance to the place – but a paradox, too.

Think classy touches, such as fresh white flowers decorating the bar, good quality wine glasses and mirrors – with the oversight of a sticky table.

This makes us think pub, more than bar. And so we're unsure of what to expect food-wise.

■ Kebabs tapas-style

The menu has a range of pub food, with a few surprises.

Steak, sausages and a cheeseburger kick it off but kebab plates and pizzas are more up our alley.

The kebabs (\$17) are tapas style

and ideal for sharing, with toasted flatbread and pumpkin salad.

There's a choice of dukkah spiced chicken, chilli king prawns or lamb with tzatziki.

The prawn, garlic, basil, semi-dried tomato pizza (\$15) is impressive to behold.

It's a little heavy-handed on the two cheeses and a little light on the prawn topping, but the seafood pieces we do get are fresh.

It's also big enough to share and still come away reasonably full.

I've teamed the pizza with a rose from Tintilla in the Hunter Valley (\$7).

It's a great, light chilled wine with a gorgeous sweet touch.

There's a good selection of wines by the glass, starting at \$7.

■ Charmed by barman

Look out for the cocktail list too.

We like the look of the rose petal martini and the ginger and lychee version (\$16.50).

One thing of note is the excellent service.

We're told on the menu to order drinks and food at the bar but we don't have to lift a finger.

Everything is bought over by the charming barman – and we love the touch of a napkin under the glass.

■ Cushions and candles

The Thai beef salad (\$16) also presents rather well.

The meat is a little underdone for my liking but perfect for my more carnivorous companion.

The mint and chilli combine with a lovely sweetness to make for a fresh, summery dish.

It's only as we're leaving that we realise how big this bar really is.

There's a whole other section we haven't seen.

Cushions line the walls and candles light a cosy smaller room, which would be perfect for a function.

VANESSA SANTER

Left overs

Take these home for later



Dr Booze

From humble beginnings, Merv and Judy Lange have been producing wines near the Frankland River for 30 years. With similar climatic conditions as Bordeaux, vine selection has been paramount in the success of this family owned vineyard. Consistently recognised for the quality under the Black Label range, they now produce a White Label selection for the more budget conscious drinker. The 2006 semillon/sauvignon blanc blend is a well-crafted wine that sparkles in the glass like a blast of midday sun. The nose and palate are fresh and appealing with a blast of lemon zing, a hint of fruit sugars in the mid-palate and a clean, acidic finish. Drink with fresh, delicate food or simply sip chilled. RRP: \$11-\$13.

HENRY LIVINGSTONE
sommelier

To feature wines here or for more information, contact drbooze@netspace.net.au

Chef Chat

We can be easily misled when it comes to the nutritional value of our greens. For example, one would expect a fresh, crisp iceberg lettuce to be quite beneficial to our wellbeing. There is an all-purpose rule that states the greener the leaves, the more nutrition that the vegetable probably contains. Our old favourite, the iceberg, is a pallid green hue and is made up of about 90 per cent water. This ranks it among the lowest in nutritional value of our greens. Better for you than a meat pie, but as part of a balanced diet, not really a meal in itself. Don't let this turn you off. It is loved all over the world, is readily available, is easily transportable, has a long shelf life and, most importantly, has a great crisp texture. It is thought that iceberg lettuce got its name from the fact that Californian growers started shipping lettuce covered with heaps of crushed ice in the 1920s. It had previously been called crisphead lettuce and is often referred to as "rabbit food" by carnivores. Iceberg lettuce can be found in the produce section of almost every supermarket and convenience store. Look for firm, heavy heads with fresh leaves and no sign of browning or wilting. Store iceberg lettuce in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to a week.

GREG ANDERSON
chef, proprietor
Sugaroom

What's In

Make a booking at Raquel's Spanish Kitchen in Oxford St, Darlinghurst, through www.menulog.com.au and enjoy a half litre of sangria between two people. Valid until the end of December. Call 9331 6806.

Eat & Drink with CHRISTOPHER HAYES

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READ

■ Spanish food is the latest fad on Australia's dining scene. Melbourne's delightful *Mo Vida* was at the forefront of tapas and Spanish food and Frank Camorra's influence has spread to other cities. Now his food has made it to print with the help of food scribe Richard Cornish. *Mo Vida* (the book) makes a statement with its colourful garb and typeface. But the heart of this book is the warm flavours of Spain.

There's loads of information about the produce and how to handle it, with stories on the source of various dishes. Recipes are well laid out and achievable with not much trouble. A delightful cookbook and a great introduction to Spanish cuisine.

Mo Vida by Frank Camorra & Richard Cornish
\$45 Hardie Grant
www.murdochbooks.com.au

TASTES

■ Pinot Gris has become the hottest new white to drink. Both here in Australia as well as New Zealand (the land of the long white wine) news of vast plantings of the variety promise a flood in the not so distant future. Various labelled pinot gris (after the Alsatian style) or pinot grigio (for the lighter northern Italian model), more and more wines are appearing on the market. Most, but certainly not all,

Australian versions don't age all that well, so drink up in their first few years. Our cooler areas are producing the most promising wines to date. Try the 2007 Pike & Joyce Adelaide Hills Pinot Gris, www.pikesandjoyce.com.au, or the 2007 Mornington Estate Pinot Gris, www.dromanaestate.com.au, or the 2006 Bortoluzzi Pinot Grigio, www.trembathand.taylor.com.au.

EAT

■ I had a Caprese salad recently that made me all Don Quixote about seasonality – again. Despite good buffalo mozzarella, and blanching and peeling the slices of tomato, the fruit's complete absence of flavour and the coarseness of hothouse basil demoted what can be a prince of dishes to a pauper. The restaurant's summer menu was perhaps installed too early. And give me a

tomato that's been grown in dirt, not hydroponics. A tomato that has the rich taste of the earth, the warmth and flavour of the sun, and the fragrance and herbal bite of the vine it grows on. A tomato that tastes like tomato – sweet, rich, decadent.

Growers' markets
farmersmarkets.org.au
good greengrocers or
grow your own