

**ALR's guide**  
to what's on,  
where to  
see it,  
where  
to eat,  
where to  
buy it ...

Eating out in Melbourne's most interesting and cosmopolitan byside suburb, St Kilda, is an increasingly costly business. Like other inner-suburban communities, St Kilda is being gentrified. Rents are soaring, driving out many of the original low-income residents. As the trendies move in, many of the more modest cafes and restaurants are closing and being replaced by ritzy establishments like **Caffe Maximus** and **Di Stasio's**.

Luckily for residents of more modest means, as well as the tourists who flock (like seagulls?) to St Kilda at night and on weekends, some good eating places survive. Two of the most popular places for the younger set (and the young at heart) are the **Stardust** and the **Galleon Cafe**.

At opposite ends of St Kilda, they both provide cheap, imaginative food in interesting surrounds.

The **Stardust**, its name holding out so much romance, is the more upmarket. Its fare ranges from deli-type food like **creole drumsticks, spinach and salmon roulade, vegetable croquettes, chicken winglets, Thai chicken salad** and the infamous **Stardust veggie burger** to more conventional meals like **chicken Tandoori**. Salads are fresh and varied. Desserts feature brandy

snaps and a chocolate mousse voted by my friends the best in town. The **Stardust** also serves 'real fruit malts' which rival a meal. The potted palms, blackboard art and wooden furniture create a friendly atmosphere.

You can't help but notice the **Galleon Cafe's** decor. It's the best (or worst, depending on your taste) of **1950s tack** — laminex tables, red, blue and yellow vinyl chairs and lurid walls — thrown in with a model galleon, pictures of the Virgin Mary and hundreds of posters advertising cultural and political events. The **Galleon** is named after a St Kilda bohemian cafe of the Thirties, and it certainly lives up to its name. Artists, lefties, feminists, punks and other fringe dwellers frequent the cafe, which is just around the corner from the famous restaurant and deli section of Acland Street.

The food tends towards snacks and light meals, — soups, pasta, bratwurst, spiders, coffee, teas . . . My favourites are the tangy **tomato and basil soup** and the **chicken and leek pie**. The service is a bit slow, but that doesn't seem to worry most of the clientele, who are happy to suck on their cappuccinos, chat to friends, peruse the cafe's newspapers and magazines for hours on end, or just watch the world go by. A couple of years ago the **Galleon** struggled for its existence above a shop in Acland St. In its new location it thrives, and gives heart that the St Kilda of the Nineties won't necessarily be dominated by snooty joints like **Cafe Maximus** . . .

Carmel Shute

**January is festival time** in sweltering Sydney, with that curious mixture of avant-garde dance and martial band music which is the Festival of Sydney. Highlights for the impecunious, as usual, are the **Opera and Symphony in the Park** (on Sat 14 and 21 Jan respectively, in the Domain at 8pm). Entrance, is, of course, for nix. This year's opera is Puccini's sensual and exciting **Tosca**, described floridly by the Festival promoters as 'a gripping

tale of murder and intrigue amid the splendours of nineteenth century Rome'. The 'Symphony' night, as is also customary, is a more bitty affair, with populist jabs via **Gershwin's An American in Paris** and **Saint-Saen's Carnival of the Animals**, among others, and the pyrotechnic extravagance of the **1812 Overture** in finale. The Domain won't have been so crowded since the NSW government drew 100,000 with its **Education Cuts Fiasco** in one Act, last August . . .

Among the dramatic offerings of the festival (none, alas, free) are Montreal-based contemporary dance troupe **La La La Human Steps, Knucklebusters: The Jewels of Edith Sitwell** by Sydney actor Kerry Walter, and **David Williamson's** latest, **Top Silk**. For more (recorded) info, ring 00-555-0552, any time.

David Burchell

**Prahran market** could provide one of the few areas of respite this summer for Melbourne followers of Australia's cricketing Eleven. As attendances at Test matches fall in rough proportion to the declining average of Australia's batsmen, resolute Melbourne supporters seem to deserve both the sustenance and diversion the market offers. Before trundling off to the MCG on Saturday mornings to lend vocal support for the locals, the voice as indeed the stomach could be fortified with a strong Greek coffee, a **spanakopita** and then perhaps a pastry or two. Should you expect the Test to last into the afternoon (and only the most unpatriotic would not) then an ample picnic can be prepared from any one of the numerous Greek delicatessens.

**However the reality of the West Indies** superiority is never more than a quick tram ride down Chapel Street, that is, unless you decide to opt for that side of Australian cricket which is succeeding internationally. In that case a quick nip across town to Thornbury, where some of Australia's **womens cricket Eleven** are playing, is more the order of the day.

Peter McNiece