If Macrobiotic cuisine seems a contradiction in terms, the Iku take-away and restaurant in Sydney’s Glebe Pt Road might make you think again. A macrobiotic diet centres on grains and vegetables but not to the exclusion of animal food if desired. Put simply, each meal is a balance of foods categories as yin and yang. Close to Parramatta Rd, Sydney’s largest thoroughfare, Iku is perfectly placed for dropping in on your way into the city or grabbing a snack before taking a stroll up Glebe Pt Rd. You’ll have plenty of time to polish off a couple of rice balls, tofu fritters, musubi (rice wrapped in seaweed) or even a macroburger before entering the hallowed halls of Gleebooks. And no need to worry about the grease on your fingers either! But if you’re on your way back from Politics in the Pub at Glebe’s Harold Park Hotel, you might take the opportunity to sit down to a smoke-free meal.

Whether you sit down or take-away, however, don’t miss sampling an Iku desert. There’s a variety of berry parfaits, trifles and cakes (including my own favorite, Banche Tea Cake), served with lashings of a soy milk based cream. What’s more, while your taste buds are still tingling you’ll be spared that unpleasantly empty post-sugar sensation.

If by this stage, what’s popularly known as ‘health food’ has taken your fancy then you might be tempted to call in at Russell’s Health Food Store, just a hundred metres down the road. Only health food junkies, however, throw pecuniary caution to the wind and enter there. The really healthy (to the purse) alternative would have to be the Wholesale Wholefoods Community Food Store behind the EPI centre on the corner of Enmore Rd and Philip St, Enmore (opposite to the Enmore Theatre). Open on Wednesday from 5.30pm-7pm and Saturday 10am-2pm the store offers wholesale foods at cheap prices and in the quantities you want. You just need to take your own bags and jars.

Currently, the store is seeking two hundred foundation members to transform itself into a member’s co-operative trading on a full-time basis. The co-op aims to retail high quality whole foods, minimally packaged and processed, without profits in mind. For more info ring (02) 660 3839 or 558 4417.

Lyndell Fairleigh

In one of the more worthwhile celebratory occasions of 1988, Melbourne’s Lygon St Festa and Italian Arts Festival have combined to form the Melbourne Lygon Arts Festival, from October 15 till October 30. The festivities will be opened by the visiting Italian President, Mr Cossiga, and will feature dances, fashion parades, opera, street performances, painting exhibitions, sculpture and heaps of glorious food. Lygon Street itself will be transformed by canvas sets depicting Venice streetscapes (sans canal smells). A red-curtained arch will adorn the corner of Elgin and Lygon Streets, a Venetian piazzo will face Queensbury Street, there will be a gondola-armed catwalk along Lygon Street for the fashion shows; and a mediaeval fair will feature fortune tellers, minstrels, conjurers and various rustic stalls.

On the artistic side, the works of major Italian artist Remo Brindisi will be on display at the Balcony, Lygon Court until October 30. And for the politically or artistically curious the little-known paintings of the notorious right-wing political figure Gabriele D’Annuzio will be on show at the Tavern, Lygon Court, also until October 30. For more details, ring (03) 347 4465.

The US and British dance club scene (see pages 42-43) is firmly ensconced nowadays in the nightlife of Melbourne and Sydney. ALR’s dance club selection this issue is as follows:

Melbourne:

Checkpoint Charlie, 143 Commercial Road, Prahran, Tues-Sun. On Tuesday nights CC now features a new club, Harlem to Havana, with musical styles ranging from Latin to Black, and a range of food from Cuba to New Orleans. ID’s Nitespot, 132 Greville Road, Prahran, Tues-Sun, $5. The musical menu is a veritable catalogue of late ‘80s chic: Acid House, Rare Groove, Classic Groove and hip hop. On Tuesday nights in October ID’s will be celebrating launches of the summer editions of Express, Tension and Cut magazines, for the painfully postmodern crowd.

Sydney:

The Site, 171 Victoria Street, Kings Cross. Mon to Sat. $5 cover Mon, Tues, Wed, Sat. $6 cover Thurs and Fri. On Monday nights experience the revival of the Decade That Taste Forgot. The Seventies, with the Madd Club and DJ Maynard. (Time to brush up on all the old Village People poses, though with company mercifully too young to remember them from the first time around). Friday night is Junkyard with DJ Scott Pullen and an artful blend of soul, House, reggae, hip hop and African.

The Freezer, ex the Hip Hop Club, 11 Oxford Street, Paddington. Tues-Sun. $4 cover Thurs, $5 cover Fri and Sat. Sat night is hip hop night with much-vaunted DJ Pee Wee Ferris.

Spago, 238 Crown St, Darlinghurst. Wed-Sun. $5 cover Fri & Sat. A de rigeur blend of House and hip hop, with a hard edge.