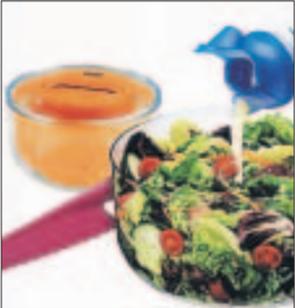


# mX Nosh



## TASTY MORSELS



### THE COOL TOOLS

Kitchen utensils are in full bloom with the Zyliss range of spring-coloured tools. A salad-dressing shaker costs \$10.95, or pick up a sunset pink ice-cream scoop for \$17.95.

### CHEESY DOES IT

King Island Dairy's Black Label Double Brie won Grand Champion Cheese at the 2006 Australian Specialist Cheese Show last week. Judges sampled 150 specialist cheeses. Phew.

### IN GOOD TASTE

On the third Sunday of each month – yes this weekend – sample gourmet cheese, bread, meats, fruit, chocolate, oils, spices, eggs, coffee and fish at Yarra Valley Farmers' Market. Yering Station Winery, 38 Melba Highway, Yarra Glen. Ph: 9513 0677.

### ITALIAN FLAVOUR

Prince Wine Store in South Melbourne will hold Vicitally, this Sunday at Carousel on Albert Park Lake, Aughtie Drive, Albert Park. The Italian wine, food and lifestyle showcase starts at 10am. Entry \$30. All guests receive a Zerutti tasting glass to try more than 100 varietals.

### IN SEASON NOW

Avocados start to come down in price at this time of year. They contain 14 minerals and vitamins and contain fat that is monounsaturated – good for the cholesterol levels. To test ripeness, squeeze at the top and bottom – it should yield slightly when pressed. Great in a salad with fennel and thin-sliced button mushrooms.



## BLUESTONE RESTAURANT 349 Flinders La, City Ph: 9620 4060

Bluestone is both bar and restaurant over two levels, with the latter protected from the bar's night noise.

The room, as the name suggests, is a bluestone manor-style dining room: soft carpet, well-spaced crisp white lined tables and heavy, quality tableware.

It's quiet and rather corporate and much of the luncheon trade is business doing business with the comfort of not being overheard.

It is rather formal, but quickly achieves a sense of comfort and relaxation.

### ■ Classic touches

The menu reads with a touch of classic Euro-dining.

The house specialty is parmesan-crusted scallops with a small tomato tile under the crust.

The fresh, fleshy scallops are cooked perfectly translucent, but I'm not sure the "beany" of cheese crust suited the subtle flavour of the seafood.

A goats' cheese soufflé was lightly textured with a gentle goaty flavour, but sadly arrived tepid to cold.

The mains lifted the act with the duo of duck a good leg confit coupled with pink breast – a French-style dish on braised lentils with a subtly zesty sauce.

### ■ Simply, well rested

The Angus steak was well-aged beef well rested before serving, the red wine sauce rich with mushroom and bone marrow.

Simple, but rarely done so well.

There was only a small selection of sweets, but necessity of choice was eliminated by the mixed sweets plate covering the three individual offerings.

All were rich and warming.

The ingredients are of high quality and sourced locally and seasonally.

Cooking respects the product.

Traditional dishes perform well, but a fresher approach and lighter touch would transform others.

### ■ In goods hands

The wine list is balanced with mostly major labels and there is a good choice of wine by the glass. The pricing is on the high side for Melbourne, but not completely out

of kilter with restaurants of this style. A lot of care is taken with their customers. From the moment of entry until departure there is attention to your comfort, a tangible sense of hospitality and care for your enjoyment.

### ■ In summary

Bluestone is all about comfortable dining – lots of space and comfort, finely dressed tables and all the trappings for a special lunch or dinner out.

This makes it popular with a serious corporate crowd, but it has more to offer for the finer diner, especially among so many casual eateries.

The bar downstairs is a popular after-work venue with a stylish crowd enjoying themselves, the buzzy vibe not intruding on the restaurant.

Price is \$65 a person for three courses plus coffee.

Visit [www.bluestonerestaurantbar.com.au](http://www.bluestonerestaurantbar.com.au)

**CHRISTOPHER HAYES**  
Christopher Hayes is principal of Australia's food and wine guide, Eat & Drink, [www.eatanddrink.com.au](http://www.eatanddrink.com.au)

## LEFT OVERS

TAKE THESE HOME FOR LATER



## DR BOOZE

For those always on the hunt for a bargain, here are a couple of beauties to visit. This weekend, head to the Pyrenees wine region. Mount Avoca wines will hold the annual Warehouse wine sale. Choose from back vintages, magnums or just overstocked lines. Wine prices start from \$3 per bottle. Doors open 10am. Go to [www.mountavoca.com](http://www.mountavoca.com) for directions and more information. And if your idea of heaven is to know which watering hole is holding a happy hour at any given time, then let your fingers do the hard work and go to [www.thehappiesthour.com](http://www.thehappiesthour.com) for an up-to-date list of where to drink suburb by suburb.

**HENRY LIVINGSTONE**  
sommelier

## CHEF CHAT

When you cook for a living it is easy to forget that some things are not as easy as they seem. It drives me bonkers when the roles are reversed – the ever cheerful celebrity handy man knocks up a billiard table punctuated with comments such as "simply saw five planks of wood into equal lengths, dove tail and join" – yeah, right.

At a friend's place recently, they could not wait to present their piece de resistance – Osso Bucco Milaniase – the vegetables were diced perfectly, the wine, the fresh herbs, it looked and smelled fantastic . . . but it was virtually raw. A slow-cooked dish is not as easy as it seems. It's complicated and requires technique, patience and an understanding of a process.

So where do you find recipes that work – the coffee table books may be glossy and aspirational, but can set you up for failure. Try Stephanie Alexander's *Cook's Companion* or Jacques Pepin's *Complete Techniques*. All the *River Caf* series from Rose Gray & Ruth Rogers are brilliant and Gary Rhodes or Rich Stein write easy to duplicate dishes. Good luck – hopefully, you won't need it.

**GARY MEHIGAN**  
chef, proprietor  
Fenix, The Boathouse

## WHAT'S IN

Chef extraordinaire George Calombaris (2004 Young Chef of the Year) is on the cusp of opening his new restaurant, The Press Club, at the revamped Herald and Weekly Times building. George is well known for his TV appearances on *Ready Steady Cook*, but in professional and foodie circles is admired for creative and often out there combinations of texture, flavour and temperature – he says his new venture will capitalise on his Greek and Italian heritage, his love of soul food as well as a few whimsical surprises – looking forward to October, George.

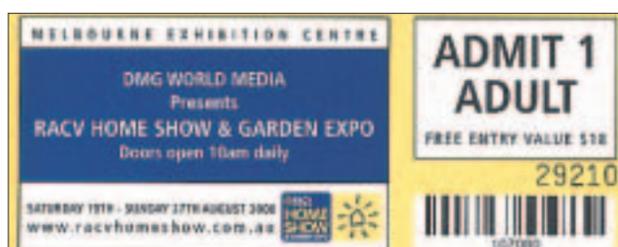
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## FREE TICKETS

This week mX will give away 40 free tickets to the RACV Home Show and Garden Expo at the Melbourne Exhibition Centre.

To win, just SMS 1994 4000 with the catchline RACV, plus your name, address, phone number and answer to this question:

"Which company sponsors the Cooking Stage at the RACV Home Show for 2006?" The expo starts this Saturday and runs for a week, ending on Sunday, August 27. Doors open daily at 10am. For details, check [www.racvhomeshow.com.au](http://www.racvhomeshow.com.au)



## PROPPING UP THE BAR

Curve Bar, The Arts Centre. Ph: 9281 8317

The latest contemporary bar to light up the city is Curve.

And when we say latest, we mean it opens this week.

As of Wednesday, August 23, Curve will open its doors to the general public – just perfect for drinks before or after a performance at The Arts Centre.

Curve is elegant with a funky fit-out and is licensed to hold 306 people, so there's plenty of room to move.

Located in the theatre building under the spire, Curve will offer a complete range of share plates, boutique beers

(both on tap and bottled), wines, spirits and a range of cocktails.

Curve will open Monday to Thursday 4pm-1am and Friday to Saturday 4pm-3am, just in time for after-work drinks.

Under the guide of owner/manager Michael Burke, the former owner of The Brandon Hotel in North Carlton, Curve offers "a relaxed sophisticated atmosphere".

Better still, the DJs keep a cool blend of world music spinning.