



MX - Melbourne

Tuesday 3/06/2014

Page: 17
Section: General News
Region: Melbourne, AU
Circulation: 79779
Type: Capital City Daily
Size: 248.00 sq.cms.



slice
CUT STRAIGHT TO YOUR NEWS

press clip

Cosy by the beach

MARDI ANDERSON

The Yarra's a big deal in Melbourne. You're from one side or the other and you don't really cross it unless you have to. However, sometimes it's actually pretty good to see how the other half live. My sister and I cross from the northside for a weekend in St Kilda and discover the fun of being a tourist in our own city. We decide to make no decisions at all, leaving our experience in the hands of the locals. It's pouring and the wind feels fresh from the south pole, so we scurry into Veludo, pictured below, a 12-year veteran of the St Kilda dining scene, for a spot in front of a roaring fire. St Kilda has a huge backpacker scene so foreign accents abound on both sides of the bar. We turn every "What would you like?" into "What do you recommend?" so there are elderflower and cucumber cocktails, a jug of A Pirate's Life For Me rum, ginger and fruit concoction, then the Feed Me selection of six small dishes, which aren't really that small at all and feature calamari, meatballs and fab chicken tacos.

Great spot

After a tip from an insider, we head down a lane into Cicciolina's back room. Here we find an ancient booth in a cosy bar for an enormous nightcap before heading back to our base for the night, a studio apartment at the Cosmopolitan Hotel, tucked just around the corner from all the action in

Acland St. It's a great spot, and even has free wi-fi.

Next morning there's a buffet brekkie at the hotel's Chalk Cafe, before we don multiple layers to head out to explore. There are a few chain stores in Acland St, but most are independent boutiques stocking stuff you may not find elsewhere. Like the perfect red boots.

And there's a fun game you can play in Acland Cellars – ask the staff about an obscure foreign drink, wait a few beats, then watch in awe as they point it out. The Esplanade market, stretching its 100-plus stalls along the street above the beach, features lovely handcrafted artwork, jewellery and gourmet food but only the hardiest souls are out.

And sorry, Luna Park, Botanical Gardens and penguins near the pier, you don't stand a chance in the sideways rain.

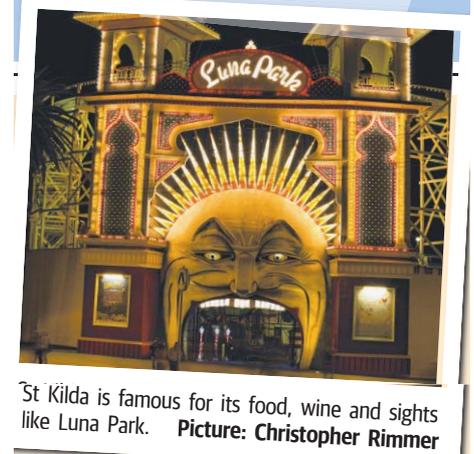
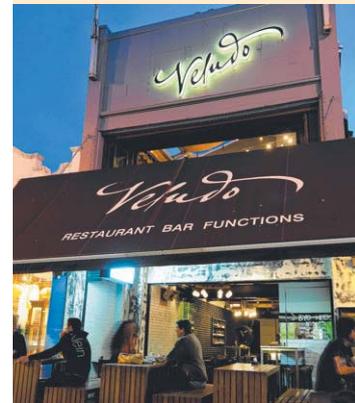
Instead we hide away in Metropol, a just-opened Argentinian grill in Fitzroy St, where the chef is particularly proud of the quality meat and is happy to take choice out of our hands and bring delicious cheese empanadas and burnt carrot salad to go with the excellent beef.

A pomegranate and blood orange cocktail becomes a new favourite.

Martini magic

It's still foul outside and we are flagging, but the staff at St Kilda Branch perk us up with espresso martinis as live music cranks up for the Sunday session. Five dollar pizzas seem popular, but we're done. It's back to the northside for us, with fond memories of how the other half live.

Staying there: Cosmopolitan Hotel, 2-8 Carlisle St, 8hotels.com
Playing there: Veludo, 175 Acland St, veludo.com.au; Cicciolina, 130 Acland St, cicciolinastkilda.com.au; Metropol, 5/60 Fitzroy St, metropolstkilda.com.au; The St Kilda Branch, 204 Barkly St, thestkildabranch.com.au



St Kilda is famous for its food, wine and sights like Luna Park. **Picture: Christopher Rimmer**