



Crepe sensation

Narelle Muller takes a French lesson

The Sweet Bistrot

Shop 16, The Conservatory,
9-15 Abbott St. Ph: 4041 7872.

Food // 8 Service // 9 Ambience // 7

Ratings 10 perfect, 9 very good, 8 good, 7 worth a visit, 6 OK, 5 disappointing, 4-1 poor.

I have never understood people who refrain from eating food cooked with garlic, reasoning it will "make them smelly".

When confronted, however, with a dish bearing an entire garlic bulb, not just a clove, I realise it could be pushing things to expect much in the affection department for the rest of the day. That said, the choice between a plump savoury crepe with a lusciously roasted bulb of garlic perched on it like a top hat or the possibility (outside at that) of a warm embrace and it's no contest.

Tucking into the vegetarian crepe (\$14.50) at The Sweet Bistrot its a revelation. Roast a whole garlic in its skin and pop it on to a plate alongside other food as a divine accompaniment. What could be simpler or pack more flavour?

I know it's not new and it's been done on television cooking shows but for some reason it hasn't been on my culinary radar in this form before. The crepe itself is excellent, light and perfect, stuffed with tomato, onion, lashings of wilted spinach, herbs, cheese, sour cream (and is that melted butter on top?) – the words "waistline" and "watch" aren't exactly at the forefront of my mind. The ooh-la-la factor has kicked in and I'm scouring the menu for what I might sample next visit. No, there's no real possibility of devouring both sweet and savoury in one sitting, considering the portion sizes. The Sweet Bistrot is dancing to a different tune and that can only be a good thing in terms of eating out in the city.

Opening from 5am to 5pm weekdays and 7am to 2pm on

Saturdays, it is concentrating on breakfast dishes, wonderfully fresh pastries, salads, quiche, sandwiches and crepes. Light-filled with french doors leading on to pavement seating, it's a cool, modern café that serves good coffee and a few surprises. Try the After 8 crepe, if you dare, an indulgence of chocolate, vanilla ice cream and creme de menthe (\$10.50).

Tucked away at the wharf-end of Abbott St, clientele at this stage appear to consist of guests from nearby hotels and residents of luxury apartments in the neighborhood. But it's only a matter of time until word gets out and the masses begin to pour in from the suburbs.

Melbourne has its legendary "Parisend" of Collins St. It seems only fair we claim our own little culinary arrondissement.

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