



city soul

Thames' stylish Cafe Melbourne honours its namesake with great coffee and top food.

Many a weary pilgrim has passed through Thames on the way to or from the Coromandel, in search of a good coffee and something to eat. The town seems worlds away from the bustling metropolis of Melbourne, but the good news for hungry travellers (and locals, of course) is that there's an homage to the Australian city on the main street. The story of how it came to be is writ large (literally) on a wall inside Cafe Melbourne - "Thames guy meets Melbourne gal..."

"Thames guy" is chef Russell Kidd, the man behind Cafe Melbourne's top-notch menu, while "Melbourne gal" is his wife Kim, a transplant from Melbourne to Thames who was yearning for a taste of her hometown.

The cafe's home is the Depot - a new development in Thames' old bus depot, at the Grahamstown end of the main drag.

The tale of two cities continues inside, where Kim and Russell have warmed up the stripped-back brick space with Melbourne-inspired artwork and latticed partitioning. The homage to Thames is more

subtle: when placing your order take note of the antique counter - it was once the Thames library checkout desk. And around the corner in the cafe's meeting room, the table is made from doors salvaged from the town's old medical centre.

The Melbourne flair of the cafe is evident in the excellent coffee and delicious, polished food - think zingy fish curry with coconut and lime or lamb cutlets with smoked chipotle aioli, as well as daily sliders and a sumptuous cabinet selection.

As for what's ahead, there's live music planned for Friday nights, but mostly Kim and Russell are still settling into the rhythm of cafe ownership. "Everyone said it would slow down, but it just hasn't yet!" cafemelbourne.co.nz **AMY STEWART**

DOUBLE LEMON TARTS

MAKES 12

cooking oil spray
500g sweet shortcrust pastry
4 large eggs
200g caster sugar
zest of 3 lemons

juice of 4 lemons
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup flour, sifted
lemon curd, icing sugar, cream or yoghurt and berry coulis to serve

Spray a 12-hole muffin tin with oil. Roll out the pastry on a floured surface then cut out 8cm-diameter rounds. Use to line the muffin holes then put in the freezer for 20-30 minutes to firm up.

Whisk the eggs and sugar in a bowl until thick and pale (don't over-beat; you don't want it to be frothy). Fold in the lemon zest and juice (you may want a little more or less juice than specified, as different lemon varieties vary in acidity). Slowly whisk in the flour.

Preheat the oven to 170°C. Line the pastry cases with baking paper and fill with baking beans or raw rice. Bake for 5-7 minutes or until light golden.

Remove from the oven and reduce the temperature to 150°C. Allow the tart cases to cool for a few minutes then fill with the lemon mixture. Bake for 20-30 minutes or until set and light golden.

Allow to cool in the tin for 10 minutes then remove and top with lemon curd. Serve dusted with icing sugar, with cream or yoghurt and berry coulis on the side.

If you'd like to suggest a cafe to be profiled, email editorial@cuisine.co.nz

TONY NYBERG



Opposite page, from far left: Cafe Melbourne's meeting table; Kim and Russell Kidd; Melbourne-inspired artworks