

lunch spots

By Hilary Doyle, Deacons

It happens quite regularly. You have one hour for lunch and invariably you find yourself still waiting for your meal at 1:45, leaving you little time to taste the food, yet alone contemplate a coffee.

While most of us have our favourites, there are probably a few places that you've wandered past and dismissed that may actually be worth a try. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list and no guarantees can ever be given to protect lunch time diners from delays due to an act of god (ie spills on suit or 'business casual' as the case may be). But, the restaurants and eateries below do endeavour to have us back at our desks at 2pm, even if some of us would prefer that extra coffee or dessert!

Tried and True

Although there are a few places that have been able to keep entire generations of lawyers sated, younger lawyers may not have discovered these old favourites. For those who haven't, we recommend you try the pasta special at Campari Bistro Café (Hardware Street), a coffee and meal at Illia (180 William St), the house wine and garlic bread at The Waiter's Restaurant (Myers Place) and a lunch time soup from Café Segovia (33 Block Arcade).

Reliable Lunch Areas

As a rule, Hardware Street caters for the lunch time crowd. Unfortunately, crowd can be the operative word, especially during summer and the first few warmer days after winter when most of us crave light and fresh air. Once seated, service in most, if not all, of these eateries is without delay. Fresh Express, Miro, Segafredo and Khokolata are all worth a try. Block Arcade is good for a quick turn-around, provided you make a booking.

Y2K1 Lunch

Over the past 18 months, Flinders Lane has found itself host to a variety of new and innovative city restaurants. Zukini remains at the top of the vegetable draw. It caters for non-meat/non-dairy eaters, whilst still providing a good selection for those who are partial to such things. Not on Flinders Lane, but close by, is Degraives Street. Its namesake, Degraives, is the place for an informal bite and good coffee. Try Tempo, too. This part of the CBD is changing daily, and there are other places constantly opening nearby which are definitely worth a try.

Around King Street, Hydra (Rear 480 Collins St & Church Lane) and Saluti (Rialto) keep many people content. The one hour limit poses no problem for either of these reliable places. In Little Collins Street Primopiatto (390 Lt Collins) and Syracuse (23 Bank Place) have the atmosphere required for a good lunch. In the Federal Court Building try Helvetica and near by, on Queen St, try the Republic Bar.

Another good option closer to the 'Paris' end of Collins St is Epsilon (cnr Flinders Lane & Russell). Also try Café K (35 Lt Bourke), Box (189 Collins St), Il Solito Posto (113 Collins St) and Kuni's (56 Lt Bourke St), as they all provide excellent lunch time service and food, although not necessarily for the lowest price. Hairy Canary (212 Lt Collins St) should not be forgotten, their gnocchi is favoured by many and their service during peak lunch hours is always good.

Coffee & Cake

Depending on your coffee preferences, here are a few places to have coffee in the CBD at lunch time. There are the obvious favourites such as Segafredo and Hudsons (everywhere). And it is worth remembering that they do offer

more than just coffee. For cake, one of the best options at the moment is Decoy in Little Collins Street. When the best of the treats are couriered in from Babka Bakery in Brunswick Street you know that you should not miss out. Gust (Queen St) and Donato's (472 Bourke St) are also excellent for coffee and should not be overlooked when needing something more substantial. For a good "no one at the office will be able to spot me here" option, try three.9t (390 Lt Collins).

End of Pay Packet options.

Invariably some young lawyers face lunching budgetary constraints. Eating lunch in the city can place a certain degree of fiscal pressure on funds towards the end of a pay packet. Consequently, here are a few dollar savers that do not include anything too swish but are very good for filling the gap. Fresh Express / Soupanatural, Café Max (Hardware Street) and Don Dons (Lt Lonsdale) are all places to visit when dollars are scarce. The Victoria Market is an often forgotten world of food. Wander around and pick some favourites, or get a sandwich made up for under \$3.00. The old reliable pizza slices, fresh bread and the compulsory pies and pasties are always there.

Other Alternatives.

When the Melbourne Food Festival is on, make sure you avail yourself of the festival lunch time offers and eat at some of the most well known restaurants in the CBD for a fraction of the normal cost. And finally, when you don't have the luxury of an hour, the following are reliable for their food quality and constant supply – David Jones Foodhall, C&B (Block Arcade), Laurent (Lt Collins), Blue Bag (Collins St and Little Bourke), Bite and MYO (various locations) and Café Sumo (265 Little Collins St).