

special report

good living

focus on darlinghurst

We've got it assorted

Variety is the norm on these inner-city streets – and menus – writes **Lucy Barbour**.

The pedestrians on Darlinghurst's streets are a mixed crowd. There are men in suits, ladies (and lads) in stilettos, mums with prams, grey-haired couples, empty-nesters, film stars, sports nuts, wannabe actors and more.

This eclectic nature is also what makes Darlinghurst's dining scene tick, says chef Mitch Orr of Duke Bistro, which opened above the Flinders Hotel late last year. "It's a really young crowd but there are still different age groups from all walks of life and it's very easygoing," he says.

Orr (ex-Sepia) and business partner Thomas Lim (ex-Tetsuya's) are enthusiastic Gen Y chefs, not afraid to have fun with food. They've created an unpretentious

Darlinghurst, dining becomes more multicultural. There's the elegant French bistro Tastevin, on Victoria Street, with crisp tablecloths and the comforts of pan-fried fish in a butter and caper sauce. Two doors along, the heat is on at Spice I Am, or travel further to Boca, an Argentinian grill-house specialising in coal-grilled meats. Enthusiastic carnivores can tuck into a platter of skirt steak, rump, sirloin, blood sausage or tongue.

Not all restaurants survive Darlinghurst's upbeat crowd. "Three strikes and you're out," the chef and owner of A Tavola, Eugenio Maiale, says. "But I think generally if you're good, people will keep coming back and if something goes wrong they'll give you a second chance. It's a very loyal community."



FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD

Duke Bistro 65 Flinders Street, 9332 3180.

Tastevin 1/292-294 Victoria Street, 9356 3429.

Spice I Am 296-300 Victoria Street, 9332 2445.

Boca 308 Liverpool Street,

Lucio's Pizzeria 248 Palmer Street, 9332 3766.

Universal Republic 2 Courtyard, Palmer Street, 9331 0709.

Tomislav 2/13 Kirketon Road, 9356 4535.

Sushi Yachiyo 1/13 Kirketon Road,

Selling point ... the suburb's busy street life. Photo: Domino Postiglione

who taught him some signature dishes. There are school prawns fried and served with a pinegashima stock, made from dashi, soy vinegar, onion and leek, which brews for four days. Yashio is particularly proud of the wagyu beef. "It's slow-braised with tofu