

## FLAVOUR OF THE MONTH

Fashion shapes our lives...Even if you're not one to purchase every copy of Vogue and religiously adorn yourself with this season's key pieces, and 'must have' accessories, there's no doubt that trends and fads do dictate how you'll be looking in 2009. You might not be draping yourself in designer labels, but nevertheless, even if you shop at Target (I'm told it's the new hot shopping destination), you will find it hard not to make a purchase which somehow involves an interpretation or mimic of a current fashion trend. Even the most fashion resistant of us – encompassing every age-group and both sexes, will find ourselves sporting a look which says 'now' and not '20' years ago. You only have to look at an old photo of yourself to see how the moment in history it was taken has defined your appearance. And I don't just mean that you were a younger and fresher version of your current self, but that you were a product of the fashions of that time – your clothes, shoes, hair, makeup (if female, or possibly male if referring to the 80's).

Fashion is an insidious thing which permeates both our conscious and sub-conscious minds. It twists, turns, reverses itself (all tendencies to retro) and re-invents itself. It can be ironic, tongue-in-cheek and political. As a purely aesthetic entity, it has enormous power. It defines who looks cool, who doesn't, what is hot and what is not- humans are visual animals, and the power of first impressions can never be underestimated.

It is a ruthless, unforgiving beast...it might have been up to the minute yesterday, but today it's so over....

The thing though, with fashion –is that it just doesn't encompass clothes and hair and stuff, but it exists in every area involving choice in our lives. Take furniture for instance, interior design and architecture – all based on trends, albeit lasting a little longer than a season. Then there's health and wellbeing – vitamin supplements, diets, detoxes, alternative therapies – the list goes on, all fashionable one day and over the next. Fashion even affects what part of town we choose to live in – the gentrification of areas mean that previously unsavoury areas become the new desirable postcodes overnight.

And you can take a punt where I'm going with this... you guessed it...food fashion! Back in the 80's in Canada, and I'm told it was similar here, going out for a Chinese was the thing to do. A bottle of Black Tower or Asti Spumante was the drop of choice. A dinner party was not complete without volauvants and prawn cocktails. Here in Australia every home was armed with the Margaret Fulton cookbook (and probably still is!) where waldorf salad, veal cordon bleu and cheese soufflé reigned supreme. Back in the 70's and 80's French cuisine heavily influenced our cooking and eating habits. Gallic fare was seen as the

epitome of class, style and sophistication – superior to other cultures. Not to mention wine – back in those days it was all Burgundy and Claret (Bourdethank you very much-And out of a 5 litre cask to boot! I can only imagine the joys of ripping the bladder out of the cardboard and squeezing it dry (very regretful to have missed this Aussie drinking initiation).

It took until the early 90's for things to change – Australia's multicultural population finally got to showcase it's culinary delights in the form of the ever popular Thai, as well as Vietnamese. Eventually Japanese took off – and a nation of meat and three veg, with sweet and sour pork on a Saturday is now dipping their raw fish on rice into soy and wasabi.

Ever on the search for new and exciting international flavours Spanish became the new Italian (dare I comment on this blasphemy?) – with Tapas currently being the flavour of the day. Small sharing plates to be enjoyed casually with a nice glass of wine reflect an ever more sophisticated dining population wanting a plethora of tastes and textures enjoyed in an atmosphere where it's ok to have a little or a lot.

It's not just cuisine itself influenced by fashion in the food world, but design and fit -outs of restaurants themselves. Groovy menus, single bulb lighting, banquette seating and communal tables all say 'now'. And features such as these are not just in your local place to be, but down at your local Maccas and Bowling club too (remember Target?).

So the pressure's on for Restaurants.... The dining public is fickle and fashion conscious..... Although, hang on a minute – I think prawn cocktails are back in fashion...forget about the renos and the menu updates, if you stay as you are you'll eventually make it back the future!!!