

The serve

THIS WEEK: ICE-CREAM

Restaurant reviews by Dani Valent

After Movember comes the unisex ice-cream moustache of summer, brain freeze and the rescue slurp from someone else's cone. ("I had to! It was going to drip!") I'm not an ice-cream purist: even a lurid rainbow Paddle Pop tastes good when it's 35 degrees, and the nostalgic comfort derived from a tub of neapolitan fluff outguns the pinkish fakery of its "strawberry" stripe. And, mock me, but I sang in the new year with a Magnum in hand. Still, fancy ice-cream shops are big in this town and I am happy to scream for them as well.

Timi's Gelateria, 318 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, 9417 1719. Single scoop, \$2. Graziano Boscato, ex-owner of a brick-making plant, found retirement boring. The solution was to take on the first Australian franchise of Timi's, an Italian gelato company. Since opening last month, Boscato has seen alcoholic sorbets such as Campari-and-blood orange and vodka-lemon walking out the door. The alcohol content is low — about 2.8% — but the cocktail kick is big. The nut flavours are fantastic: the hazelnut and pistachio are both smooth, creamy and well-rounded with no hint of bitterness. I also like the Casanova, vanilla with chunks of dark chocolate and meringue. The bases for all these sweet treats are imported from Italy and I have a lingering hesitation about enjoying food that's travelled so far,

especially when it's pineapple or mango or something else I have in my fruit bowl at home. Still, there's no doubting this is delicious ice-cream.

Mado, Shop 157, Broadmeadows Shopping Centre, 1099 Pascoe Vale Road, Broadmeadows, 9309 2545. Single scoop, \$3. Turkish ice-cream (*dondurma*) has a gummy, elastic consistency thanks to the inclusion of salep, an orchid root extract. *Dondurma* aficionados swear it's so stretchy and strong you could use it as a skipping rope — though what a waste that would be. Mado uses ice-cream bases from Maras, the home of ice-cream in south-central Turkey. My favourites are sour cherry and maras, the mild but winning base taste of *dondurma*. The Turkish coffee ice-cream is authentic, right down to the smoky grit.

Gelobar, 74 Lygon Street, Brunswick East, 9388 1419. Single scoop, \$4. When Gelobar opened in the early 1990s, Brunswick East was a renovator's delight. The suburb has changed but the gelato hasn't. It's still made from scratch on the premises and is delicious as ever. Go for refreshing, fruit-studded raspberry or decadent and creamy Bacio. The scene is appealing with young families, old Italian couples and raven-haired studs all licking, all loving it.

Ice-Cream Shoppe, 199 Nelson Place, Williamstown, 9399 9594. Single scoop, \$3.

I'm pretty sure there's a by-law that makes it compulsory to walk Willi with ice-cream in hand. This longstanding parlour offers about 50 flavours from the old-school (pastel-coloured rainbow,

vanilla) to the new-fangled (Red Bull, chilli chocolate). The shop is drab and there's an unfriendly "No tastings" sign but the product is locally made and totally lickable. A single cone also

survived the plonk test: my two-year-old dropped hers onto the ground after the fifth lick. When it was picked up, the ice-cream stayed in the cone. Tears averted, ice-cream beard assured.

Domanni, 225 Nelson Place, Williamstown, 9397 2125. Single scoop, \$3.

Doina Poplicinel learnt how to make gelati in Italy. "She's the master of the blaster," says her husband, Mani. The family's three-year-old shop uses Vittoria-owned Gelatoria powders and pastes as a base for its creamy ices. The bright parlour is well-positioned at the beginning of the Nelson Place strip: pick up a cone and wander into the fray. The green apple flavour is zingy; the cookies and cream variety is decadence in a scoop. Other popular flavours include Mars Bar and lemon.

Lick & Sip, Shop 4, 32 Mountjoy Parade, Lorne, 5289 1193. Single scoop, \$4.50. Wes Enticott must know a thing or two about business, having opened his Fritz Gelato franchise just as the sun started warming this summer hotspot. He stocks about 30 of the smooth Fritz flavours and reckons the classics never go out of style. "Chocolate and vanilla and lemon, they're always sellers," he says. Younger Lorne layabouts often choose honeycomb or cinnamon doughnut. Sophisticated beach bunnies are loving the caramelised fig and almond.

Jock's Icecream and Sorbet, 83 Victoria Avenue, Albert Park, 9686 3838. Single scoop, \$2.95.

A kooky image of Jock Main's curls and specs adorns every tub of his ice-cream as though he's the mad scientist of frozen confection. His standard flavours are impeccably creamy and smooth, and some of his unusual ices have the air of a 3am-stroke-of-genius. Summery sensations include saucy summer pudding and fragrant Turkish delight with sticky jube chunks. After drowning in ice-cream this week, I reckon Jock's is my favourite.



Main picture: Timi's Campari and orange gelati. Above: Jock's classic creamy cones