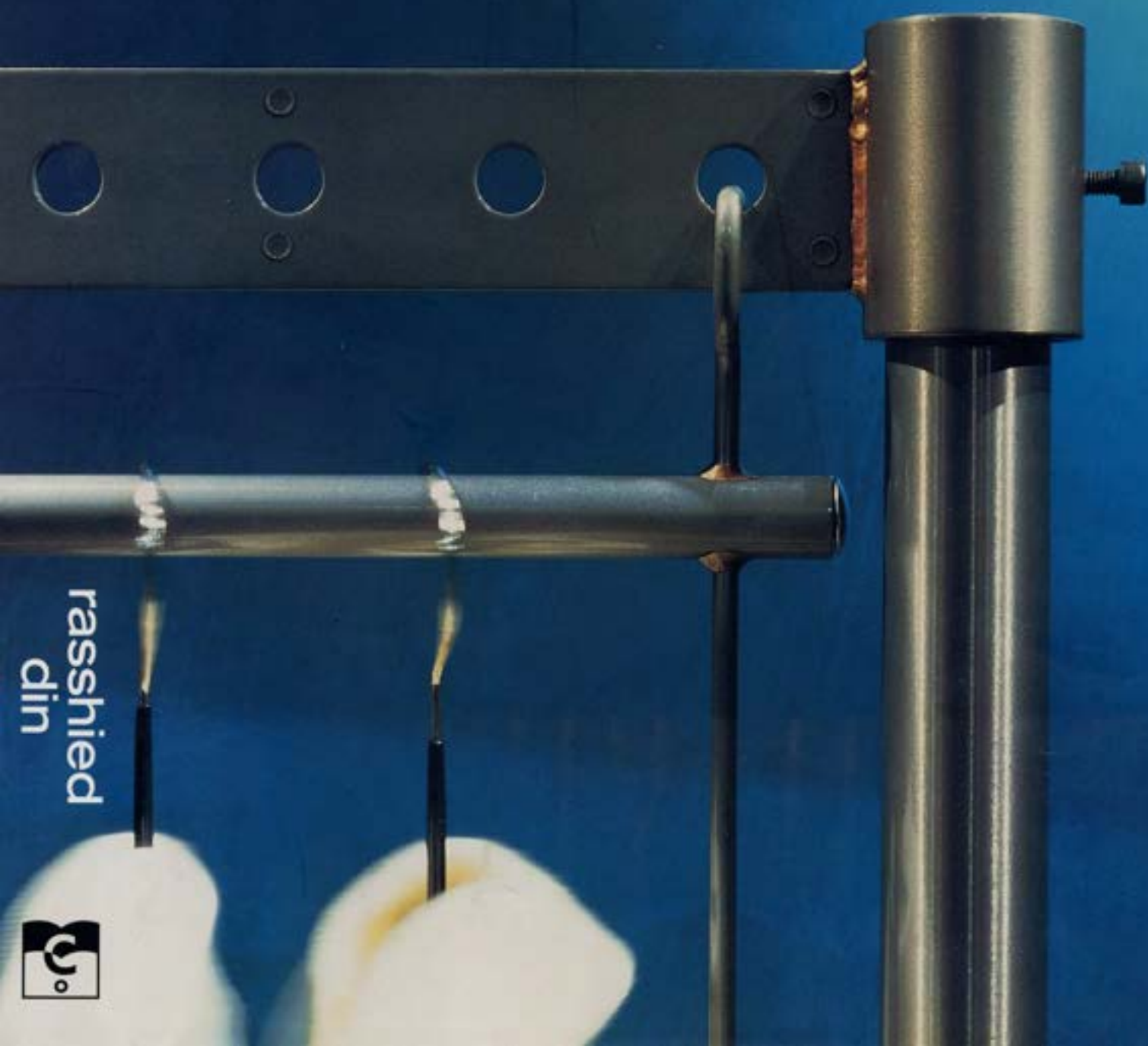


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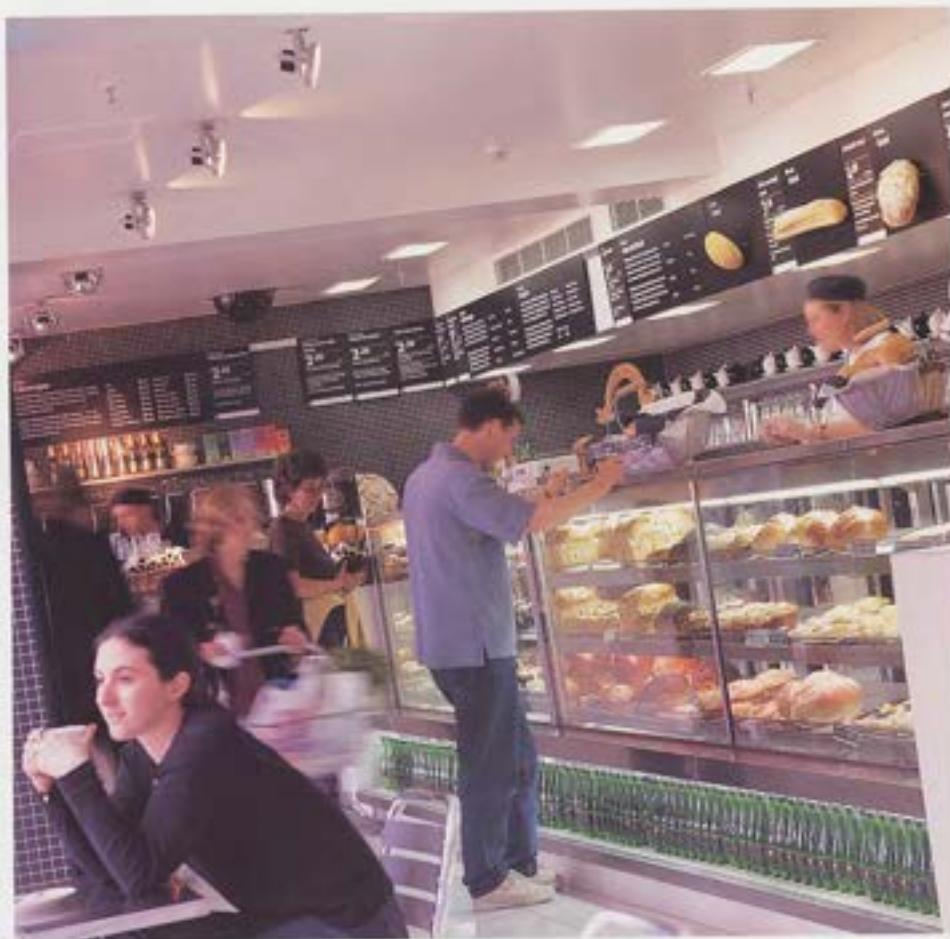


Let's Eat

Melbourne, Australia

Opposite The fresh produce section presents varieties of fruits and vegetables beautifully in baskets, with central displays of tropical flowers.

Below Customers can relax with a coffee whilst waiting for their meals to be cooked for them or alternatively cruise around the aisle shopping for ingredients. All levels are fully utilised to sell products; note here the raised levels behind the counters.



Growing demands on our time have increased the importance of convenience, and the use of partially or fully prepared meals has made meal preparation easier.

A report, 'Food in Focus', looking at eating habits, social trends and food preferences, was commissioned in 1996 by Murdoch Magazines, Australia. It identified, not surprisingly, an increased demand for fresh food and discovered some food statistics which confirmed the changes affecting eating habits. The report showed that 97 per cent of the population had modified their diet in recent years. There was a marked increase in enjoyment of food and its emergence as a lifestyle interest.

This lifestyle aspect is now reflected in the advent of a 'Café Society' with a large increase in cafés, restaurants and speciality food outlets. Researchers noted that eating out and going to restaurants with friends is, to a degree, replacing home entertainment. Although cooking at home is decreasing, the gender distinction is blurring with one third of men claiming to be the main cook and six out of ten saying they are involved in cooking at home. A surprising 33 per cent claim to be the main grocery buyer. The report concludes that traditional cooking skills are being replaced by meal assemblage skills.

Let's Eat is a food and wine emporium, tailor-made for the time-poor professional with high expectations, or the adventurous housewife looking for something special. It is not a new idea but one which has increased in popularity within a specific market, which needs convenience without compromise to quality. H.M.R. (Home Meal Replacement) is today's jargon for ready-made meals but Let's Eat has developed the idea into a unique experience.

Let's Eat offers a selection of full or partially prepared meals using fresh ingredients, to take away or to eat within the store. It is located within a market area of Melbourne called Prahran Market and it is estimated that the market has 52,000 visitors each day. The emphasis in the store is on fresh food and wine integration says architect Mark Landini. Service is informed and welcoming, and imbues the store with a market atmosphere. Customers are encouraged to experiment with regular tastings and the chance to match meals and wine from around the world.

The concept is owned by the Coles Myers Group, a leading food supplier in Australia. Managing director Alan Williams said "The project aims to see top chefs in action, customer interaction, speciality foods and wines, delicious aromas, taste sensations, innovation and technology."

A large team of specialists was needed to produce this concept from its original idea. Each stage, in terms of products, packaging design and layout was reviewed by the design team which closely monitored each phase. The project has taken two years to develop.

PROFILE

CLIENT: Coles, Myers Group

FUNCTION: Food

CONSULTANTS: Landini Associates



Above This view from the check-outs up to the mezzanine floor shows the demonstration and cookery school in the background. The specialist chocolate counter and refrigerated units are stocked to the brim with produce.

At the heart of the store is an open-plan kitchen, where 60 chefs are employed to prepare customers' meals. Customers can select from a choice of 1,600 meal suggestions displayed on computer terminals around the store, or select from the daily specials cooked to order. All meals are prepared daily and are displayed in 100 linear metres (330 linear feet) of specially designed display cases, using only ingredients from the store shelves, all of which can be purchased by the customer.

The library is located on the mezzanine where cooking demonstrations and tastings are conducted. This space can also be booked for parties or functions. Meals can be ordered through their web-site and delivered to your home.

The store is 1,400 square metres (15,000 square feet) and is built on two floors. The shop circulation is kept tight, to create interest and the sense of a market place. Landini says that customers like finding things and this is encouraged. Walls of merchandise are presented for maximum impact. Landini Associates have designed all the units to be raised off the ground so that wine and other product

suggestions can be juxtaposed next to the main ingredients. The materials used throughout are white marble, stainless steel and an industrial polished concrete floor tile by Sadler.

A special point-of-sale system informs each purchase with a serving suggestion or recommendation of complimentary wines or desserts. The whole process is educational as one purchase informs another. Four interactive screens provide information on meals and cooking instructions or printouts of ingredients. Videos are also available free of charge to help with your food preparations.

There are over 1,300 product lines. The store is at once a fresh food market, florist, bakery, chocolatier, sushi bar, delicatessen, cheesemonger, butcher, greengrocer, classic wine cellar, wine bar, café, snack bar, kitchenware shop, cooking school, cookbook shop and general place to hang out. It has everything for the food enthusiast, even a home economist available for food and dietary advice.

Customers can eat in or take away and the store is fully licensed so you can drink a glass of wine whilst browsing. Your chosen ingredients can be handed to a chef and

cooked in front of you, or, if you prefer, whilst you are shopping or resting – they can bleep you when your meal is ready to collect. Most of the meals are fully cooked during the week when customers are time pressured, but at weekends many more are partially prepared, and more ingredient shopping takes place when people have more time to cook their own meals.

Staff were recruited from the world of theatre, leisure and retail. The main criteria for employment had to be a real passion for food. Most of the staff successfully transmit this to the customers and with their various skills are able to help and assist sales. The store employs 150 people, including chefs, bakers, butchers and a fishmonger. The chefs are drawn from all over the world: Japan, Thailand, China, Morocco, Russia and India, each with his or her own specialization.

Staff are all fully trained and customer focused. They are flexible and multi-skilled to ensure customers receive excellent service and to make sure they make the most of the Let's Eat experience.

The overall effect is efficient and exciting, and certainly fulfils the client brief beyond expectation.



Above The whole store is licensed for alcohol, so customers can drink from the bar, or even wander round the store with their glass of wine.



Left This shows the cookery school demonstration area. In the foreground is the cookery library with a refectory table. This area can also be used for tastings or eating whilst reading.