

Sweet ART

*Finding a great spot in
Queensland to take tea and
treats is a piece of cake,
writes Alison Cotes*

'SHOULD I, after tea and cake and ices, have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?" mused T.S. Eliot's Prufrock.

If he'd been eating the kind of cakes you can find in Queensland, he'd have the strength to do anything: laden with real cream, Belgian chocolate, fresh eggs and the purest flavourings...

Just imagine cakes even better than your grandmother used to make – cakes totally free of synthetic flavours and colours, stabilisers, additives and MSG. Real ingredients, real food, real freshness – in short, a real treat.

Europeans have long known the appeal of coffee and cake – the konditorei in Germany, Hungary and especially Austria provide a refuge for locals and tourists alike.

Vienna's famous Sachertorte, created by Franz Sacher in 1832, sets the standard: three layers of extremely rich chocolate cake filled with apricot jam and robed in a creamy-rich chocolate glaze, it's traditionally served with billows of the whipped cream called Schlagobers, which Austrians swear is calorie-free, just like their chocolate and butter.

Vienna and Budapest, the home of elegant cake-and-coffee shops, are not cities for calorie-counters, but everyone knows that all cakes lose their calories once they've been cut.

And in a city where some dress shops carry the slogan "Moellig ist schoen" (plump is beautiful), and where plump

people are called "vollschlank" (full-slim), who cares anyway?

In Brisbane, the *creme de la creme* of cake shops is a new venture in Coorparoo, Cream Patisserie, which offers a standard of cakes and pastries that I have never before seen in this city.

Tony Smith, formerly food and beverage manager at the exclusive Lizard Island resort in far north Queensland, and his wife Sam, an apprentice chef there, finally got together with Dutch pastry chef Saskia Kleijn to create their dream-cream establishment, and opened in Cavendish Road three months ago.

The interior is clean and spacious, unlike the elaborate clutter of European konditerei, but the cakes are every bit as good – and better than many I've tasted in some of Europe's more famous establishments, some of which, like Budapest's legendary Gerbeaud Cukraszda, seem to be living off their reputations. The last time I ate there, my apple marzipan cake was stale.

But at Cream Patisserie everything is hand-made from fresh ingredients. Callebaut chocolate from Belgium, and pure double cream.

At least three of the just-baked cakes are gluten-free – cherry cream meringues; a flourless chocolate cake with almond and coffee; and a coconut-crusted, deep-fried milk chocolate ice cream with rum anglaise are always on the menu, so cellacs can gorge here with a clear conscience.

Basically, there are six categories. Choose from individual pastries

(Saskia's tiramisu with amoretto and chocolate liqueur is worth an award in itself, and you won't find those fat Dutch profiteroles called borsche bol anywhere else in Brisbane); slices of whole cakes such as espresso apple tea cake or mango bavaois topped with fresh berries; a so-called dry cupboard with gingerbread sandwiches, cinnamon pretzels and butter biscuits; desserts ranging from lemon bavaois with bitter chocolate ganache to Dutch apple pie with cinnamon cream; hand-made chocolate, vanilla and marzipan truffles; and a range of gelati and sorbet including yoghurt with lemongrass, banana and cinnamon, champagne and raspberry with mint.

And prices are surprisingly low – mini eclairs are \$2.30, biscuits start at 40¢, and desserts are \$3.

So you can have coffee and cake for under \$6, and even the richest dessert accompanied by a caramelised mango smoothie will give you change from \$12.

Tony, Sam and Saskia are hoping to open up other shops soon at Hastings Street in Noosa and Tedder Avenue on the Gold Coast, and they're thinking about supplying a few very select coffee shops, but for the moment, sweet-tooth heaven is only in Coorparoo.

Hand-dipped seasonal fruits and some white chocolate baked cheese-cake? Come on! One piece won't hurt.

Cream Patisserie, Shop 3 Cavendish Central, 380 Cavendish Road, Coorparoo. (07) 3324 2713



TASTY temptation from Cream Patisserie.

Picture: Derek Moore