

sweet surrender

Indulge in tea-time pleasures at a Coorparoo cafe specialising in mouth-watering pastries

Some traditions deserve to live on forever. Life just wouldn't be the same without hand-written thankyou notes, champagne toasts at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve, and afternoon teas.

No matter how busy our days become, occasional afternoon teas should be compulsory, and I don't mean merely breaking a Scotch Finger while catching up on e-mails.

Oh no, true afternoon teas are indulgent, involving deliberations over what to have and total abandonment of calorie counting.

And so it is at Coorparoo's Cream Patisserie. Owners Tony and Sam Smith, who set up shop last July, change the selection of classic European pastries, desserts, biscuits and chocolates daily to include 10 to 12 new items and four or five "old favourites" — all made on the premises.

We're sitting on cane outdoor chairs on a warm afternoon that really is too warm for hot drinks. Not that we're made to feel like we're missing out since the compact menu lists a selection of

milkshakes, smoothies and cold refreshments.

As good as it sounds on paper, we still aren't prepared to fall quite so hard for the Banana, cinnamon and honey smoothie (\$5.50). It's so moreish we consider ordering another since it disappears too quickly.

Like the coffee the patisserie serves, the Peach iced tea (\$2.20) is by Segafredo and comes in a tall, frosted logo glass. We haven't encountered this variety of ready-made iced tea before but will be looking for it in the future.

Having asked for a little more time to consider our order, I make the most of it by scanning the window display again, and again. Deciding what to have from the orderly rows of baby cheesecakes, lemon meringues, hummingbird cake, parfaits and butterfly cakes is almost impossible.

Taking a rational approach I narrow it down to three choices, then two and, finally, one. For my pal, there's no competition. The window may be full but he has eyes only for the apple pie on the top shelf.



Tiny treats: Cream Patisserie owners Tony and Sam Smith serve an irresistible selection of sweet delights

Once we place our order at the counter, Tony delivers starched cloth napkins and heavy cutlery, their quality hinting we are in for a treat.

My anxiety about missing out on the Holy Grail of desserts evaporates with the first taste of my Fig and pine nut tart (\$3.90). It's bliss. Each component, from the dried figs and pine nuts set in sticky sweetness to the wonderful, crumbly shell has me unable to rest my cutlery for long.

Likewise, the spicy Dutch apple pie (\$5.90 a slice) has silenced my pal. And when it's time to swap plates for a taste, we're both convinced our original choice is best.

With afternoon tea conquered, our next visit to Cream Patisserie may have to be for weekend breakfast when a handful of high-profile Brisbane chefs take turns whipping up bircher muesli, ricotta pancakes and bacon and eggs.

Although the outdoor dining area adjoins the centre's car park, the air-conditioned interior is an elegant and appropriate medley of cream and chocolate tones. There's also another hidden display cabinet holding even more delicious-looking temptations.

The cafe seats 40 (half inside and half out) and plays host to a constant stream of sweet toothed who seem to eat and run quite quickly.

Eat-in selections come with a restrained swirl of whipped cream freshly piped to the side, or take something home, perhaps to pass off as your own.

So exquisite is Cream Patisserie's fare, it is served on board the five-star *Great South Pacific Express* train — now that's my idea of the perfect afternoon tea combo.

the check

Cream Patisserie, Shop 3, Cavendish Central, 380 Cavendish Road, Coorparoo. Phone 3324 2713. Open 9am to 10pm Tuesday to Saturday and 9am to 5pm Sunday.