

Snoopin' around



Wok will they think of next!

By Roland Rocchiccioli

Imagine your next party or wedding reception catered by giant woks brimming with delicious, Asian-style food stirred with shovels

I remember as a child eating pink and grey galahs with polenta. I know it is illegal now, but it was a very tasty stew. The meat is dark red and with a wonderful gamish flavour.

Whenever I travel, which sadly seems to be much less these days, I eat food off the street.

In China, when I went to the last town on the road to Mongolia, beyond which there seemed to be a vast expanse of nothingness, I ate some of the tastiest food ever. I can still taste those handmade noodles.

I know a lot of people are anxious about eating off the street, but I figure if it doesn't kill the locals, there's no reason it should kill me.

I have never suffered from a delicate constitution, and I am certainly no blue blood!

And you meet such interesting people. In many places where there was only one chair, it was always given to me regardless. Locals were unceremoniously dumped.

It is hardly surprising, given my love of food, that I found Anton's Flying Woks of more than passing interest. I am always fascinated when someone gets off their derriere and gives something a real go.

Anton used to be an apprentice chef, but found the prospect of being in a kitchen when he was an old man far too daunting. Instead, he studied accountancy and almost bored himself to extinction.

So Anton hired a yacht and with a group of friends went to some truly exotic locations.

A lack of funds eventually forced him back to work and circumstances and determination provided him with an opportunity. An electric wok on the cover of a David Jones catalogue set his mind to racing. He was working for an engineering company and he took advantage of its facilities to build a giant wok.

Anton explains: "I managed to get hold of one of those primus-type stoves that Italians seem to favour and it became the source of heat to fire the wok.

"I had friends around for a barbecue at the place where I was living and the wok-cooked food was such a success it set me to thinking.

"It became a matter of trial and error. I did a couple of functions and friends hired me to cook at their parties. The word spread. In fact, it became so successful that in 2000, after a couple of years of part-time work, I decided to give it a go."

The rest, as they say in the classics, is history. Anton's Flying Woks now employs five chefs and 20 part-time wok waiters.

"I love food, but I think it should also be good fun," Anton says. "We have turned our cooking into a theatrical show.

"The woks are so large, we actually use



Anton (left) and assistant Ben and their "Asian fusion food".

shovels to stir the food! We also allow the host, if they so choose, to be part of the show and help with the cooking of the food."

Anton's Flying Woks caters for weddings, birthdays or just about any celebration.

Offering a combination of Asian, Malaysian, Thai, Chinese and Indonesian cuisine, Anton calls it "Asian fusion food".

The selection is enormous and can be three or four, or as many courses as you want, including exotic desserts. Prices depend on the numbers, but generally range from \$12.50 to \$30 per head.

Anton's Flying Woks is situated in Greville Street, Prahran, or call him on 0411 641 701.



Roland Rocchiccioli