

**MJ:** What's this, a restaurant that offers variations to the menu? What's more, the variation is suggested by the waitress and relates to oysters, no less. Slowly Melbourne restaurants are breaking the iron-clad code of six or 12 oysters.

And what oysters Lord Cardigan delivers. Plump morsels that literally burst with saltiness, only to be soothed with buttery spinach. The tang of lime and the popping sensation of wasabi-infused roe lingered long after the dish was whisked away.

Then came the truffles. Black Tasmanian Perigord truffles, to be precise. Lord Cardigan highlights one of the season's real treats at the beginning of the menu, and it's hard to go past.

I chose the mushroom and truffle ravioli with creamed celeriac (\$17 without truffles, \$29 for five pieces, \$41 for eight pieces). The ravioli was light and fresh, with just enough mushroom filling as to not overpower either the fresh pasta flavour or the celeriac. Sitting proudly atop were what I'd been waiting for: wafer-like shavings of black truffle. But they didn't pack the punch I'd expected. The truffles could have lifted the dish to new heights, but fell just short.

## Lord Cardigan

59 Cardigan Place, Albert Park

Call 9645 5305

Open: Tuesday, 6pm-10pm; Wednesday-Friday, noon-3pm, 6pm-10pm; Saturday, 8.30am-3pm, 6pm-10pm; Sunday, 8.30am-3pm  
www.lordcardigan.com.au

My main, the aged Angus eye fillet (\$38.50), quickly re-affirmed co-owner and head chef John Singer's prowess in the kitchen: a juicy, tender and perfectly cooked slab of meat. The accompanying savoury bread-and-butter pudding was too starchy for my liking. Dan, though, happily took care of it. I was content with the al dente green beans and rich red wine jus.

Lord Cardigan himself may have led one of the finest-suited armed forces into a losing cavalry battle against the Russians (wittily detailed on the restaurant's website) and inadvertently made himself heir to the humble cardigan. Lord Cardigan the restaurant has taken after its namesake and with its new attire continues to lead Albert Park foodies through an enjoyable evening. **mwb**



**CURRY LEAF**  
101 Brighton Road, Elwood. Call 9531 3404

## Turn over a new leaf

Applauded in *The Age Good Food Guide* and *The Age Cheap Eats*, Curry Leaf recently received another mark of approval – a highly commended for excellence in customer service by the Australian Achiever Awards. The restaurant's reputation now extends beyond its celebrated cuisine. It's little wonder that the place is full on any given night and the food is so highly regarded. Head chef and co-owner Jeet has spent more than 35 years in five-star hotels and restaurants around the world, finally bringing his expertise to Elwood. Think tender barbecued meats cooked in the tandoor and served steaming at the table with subtle spices and mixed herbs. To ward off the winter chill, try the claypot chicken, cooked with mint, coriander and infused coconut sauce. Along with exquisite food, Curry Leaf really does offer something for everyone. Bollywood nights are hosted on the first Sunday of every month. This Bollywood theme can extend to functions catered by Curry Leaf at the restaurant or another venue. Corporate lunch deliveries and take-away are also available.

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