

by Katy Scott

Stroll along THE AVENUE

LIVING ON ONE of the numbered avenues in Inglewood has a few perks. There are ATMs everywhere, for a start. Not to mention two video shops and four bottle shops. But the biggest perk of living around here is that I can count Avenue Nine as my local cafe.

It's not yet three years old, but it's already part of the staple diet of those who live in the area. After almost 30 years in the hospitality industry, Mark Zoccoli opened Avenue Nine – and the delicious blend of Mediterranean and international dishes has established it as the place to go in Inglewood.

The décor is minimalistic, and that's the way Mark likes it. He designed the whole restaurant from the initial plan on paper to the way it is today, without any architects or designers. The end result creates a relaxing, laid-back atmosphere, enhanced by the cruisy tunes that aren't too loud to inhibit lazy conversation.

Avenue Nine has a range of breakfasts available before 11.30am and a massive amount of options if you're eating after that. Takeaway is also available. Or if you're just after coffee or a dessert you're welcome any time. Try the Honeycomb Affogatto, with icecream, coffee, honey and choc honeycomb pieces – I inhaled it gleefully and I don't even like coffee.

Tiffany and I visited Avenue Nine on a warm summery day and were greeted straight away by waitresses who clearly put no stock in that bizarre "make them wait" creed adopted by so many cafes. Instead, it was great service all the way.

First up was the A9 Mixed Plate, created by head chef Shane Del Nero. The Mixed Plate was a large array of

grilled chicken tenderloins, home made spring rolls, arrancini, roasted olives, sausage, crusty panini, mixed salad and a delicious-looking pile of calamari that I rather rudely barged into with my fork and started scoffing.

And delicious it was. The calamari was lightly crumbed and cooked, not too crunchy, and with a subtle flavour with no strings attached. Literally. There was no annoying stringy texture at all.

The panini was soft and crunchy at the same time, with a light sprinkling of herbs. The chicken was juicy with flavour, and the spring rolls were light, crispy, and filled with summery shredded vegetables.

Shane gave us a few slices of vegetarian pizza on the side, as I couldn't visit Avenue Nine without tasting my favourite dish. It's a collection of delicious vegetarian ingredients tumbled onto a base that's not too thin and not too thick, though I have to admit my bias because anyone who puts fetta and char grilled pumpkin on a pizza is a friend of mine.

If Goldilocks lived in Inglewood, you'd find her feasting on Avenue Nine's Boneless Baby Chicken. The dish is not too heavy, not too light and not too small, but definitely tasty enough to suit all of that fussy little blonde's needs.

The Marinated Baby Chicken, topped with a colourful array of vegetables, is big



enough to fill you up but doesn't leave you with that just-eaten-a-minivan heavy feeling. It's perfect if you want some tasty chicken, but feel like a light and refreshing salad on the side.

I have literally never had pasta like the completely-homemade Fettucine Marco. To share some insight into my snobby pasta view, I never buy pasta at a restaurant because I (rather condescendingly) don't think it can top the stuff I make at home.

I was wrong. The Fettucine Marco slipped into my mouth disguised as normal-looking pasta, then proceeded to light the candles, put some tunes on the stereo and have a soulful, sexy party on my tongue. It's soft, lightly creamy, and completely delicious, and I have concluded that I was wrong about my own pasta, because the Fettucine Marco has swooped in and taken number one on the pasta charts.

With food to die for and a large selection of wines and beers, you can't go past Avenue Nine for quality food and surroundings, whether you're after breakfast, lunch, dinner or just a coffee. To top it off they have just put in brand new fully refrigerated air conditioning for summer. It's definitely the top of the list of perks of living in Inglewood – or, for that matter, living anywhere in Perth at all.

Avenue Nine

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