

# 9/11 runaway plane lands in Hollywood



In the world of superb plane disaster movies *United 93* flies best of all.

A really good plane disaster movie will say something about endurance, about trauma, about community and social contact, about how the individual fares against all odds. Perhaps something about the zeitgeist of the moment. And most importantly – about disaster! And it should look really good doing it too, obviously – we're up there in the clouds after all, or crashing down to earth, the way you do.

*United 93* does all of that and more. Except it's the World Trade Centre from afar, or hearing about the Pentagon as most of us did – on the news.

And it's up close and personal with the passengers, the terrorists, and the crew of the plane. It's shot in a documentary 'fly on the wall' style, in close to real-time and a shaky camera.

**Movie**  
*United 93*  
Directed by Paul Greengrass  
Released August 17  
Review by Ali Bell

Early on in the film, we follow the pilots chatting onto the plane, and this sets the emotional tone of the experience. You know what is going to happen by the end of the movie, what they may have to endure in the meantime (and you are watching the movie to find out), and you feel enormous compassion for these characters who only five years ago were real people and alive. And this includes the attackers themselves.

Some of the characters are playing themselves – in the flight control room, in the military flight control room of the US air defence, and airline employees. When you see this on the credits you feel even more that you've

been privileged to witness a profound experience, engaging the most profound feelings of attempting survival. But this is not a film where famous actors, faces or names are going to catch your eye.

The story is told from the terrorists' point of view as well. I read that during shooting the men playing the attackers and the crew and passengers were kept separate to further accentuate the feeling of 'them against us' up there in the action onboard. If that is so, it was a clever and effective technique of director Paul Greengrass.

The waiting and the tension surrounding the moment of attack, and the spiritual preparation is excruciating, but dramatically and brilliantly so. After seeing the movie you can be forgiven for experiencing the freaked-out repetition of 'Allah Akbar', by wanting to run for the

nearest exit. But it is interesting to be multi-identifying with both the passengers and the attackers, a wonderful aspect of movie-watching. And it's why seeing this movie is so moving and disturbing.

I was waiting to hear a Kiwi accent from one of the 'big men' passengers, but alas, in vain. From the point of attack and counter-attack by the passengers, to the incredible spiralling descent of the plane in Pennsylvania, the tension is the thickest. The action and fight forward, and fight back, is a constant, relentless round of fear and stark violence, the desire to live, to get the plane up – or hit a target – to the bitter end. Fliers, against a fearsome few. Up in the sky, nothing but you in the plane, who you are, and who you are with.

An agonising and awesome experience.

# Truffles: classroom dining at its best

There comes a point in every relationship where the need to impress with date venues ceases. Where the most pretentious joints in town once provided an excuse for dressing up and spending large, unassuming neighbourhood restaurants now comfortably take their place.

I'm lucky my relationship has reached this point, because Truffles – one of two restaurants run by AUT University's hospitality students – is not first-date material.

We arrived with much apprehension. Twenty-five dollars per person for a three-course meal sounded dangerously cheap... were we dining guinea pigs at risk of being utterly disappointed?

Or worse, food-poisoned?

But it becomes immediately apparent that Truffles deals in classic silver service.

The tables are impeccably set, the napkins artfully folded.

**Restaurant**  
*Truffles*  
Cnr Wellesley St & Mayoral Dr  
Open Mon-Thurs lunch & dinner  
Review by Amy Kelley

Each waitperson, in spotless black and white, has a tea towel draped over one arm.

The lights are dimmed and funky urban beats play in the background.

Black cloth is draped here and there and tealight candles adorn each table.

Granted, they made an effort. But even the star-printed gauze slung over the sterile grey ceiling can't hide the fact that it is a classroom.

Which brings me to service. Most of the waitpeople are overseas students and, whilst smiling and eager to please, would benefit from a few lessons in pronunciation of specials.

We were amused to be offered the "win" list and told the vegetarian dish of the day was not roasted, but "toasted", pumpkin.

We inspected the menu while munching on warm bread rolls and were impressed by meal descriptions, which were more like those of a signature restaurant than a frumpy training establishment.

I started with a spicy golden lentil soup, he with warm duck salad.

Both were suitably light but full of enticing flavour.

His duck was ever so tender. My soup was lifted out of the ordinary with the addition of a crunchy vegetable bhaji fritter.

Thanks to Truffles' limited size, staff get right what so many others fail miserably at: the pace of meal delivery.

There was just enough time to let each course settle without causing us to wonder how long it had been between dishes.

But had we been made to wait a little longer for our mains, it would have been worth it.

The presentation was well above what we imagined and our taste buds were not disappointed. My roast turkey breast was perfectly cooked and stuffed with a delicious confit of cranberry and stone fruits.

Alongside was a generous serving of crispy vegies, including roast potatoes I declared better than Mum's.

His lamb shanks were melt-in-your-mouth tender, the accompanying polenta tasty, but he thought the dish over-filled the plate.

For a moment we were so taken away we almost forgot we were in training territory. But as our slightly under-confident waitress attended to the table, Truffles' manager swooped over and corrected her arrangement of our dessert cutlery.

By this time we were comfort-

ably full but felt a duty to sample the desserts. My boyfriend beat me to the chocolate offering, the proud winner of a rich steamed pudding.

I settled for an apple crumble tart, but was pleased to find the sweet crust, lightly spiced apples and accompanying fennel ice-cream just as divine as his pud.

So, does the food at Truffles disappoint? Certainly not. Do we think it is value for money? Definitely.

Of course, there is no denying Truffles' origins. If you're looking to impress or want an evening of intimacy, go elsewhere. The attentions of a "fifth wall" of waitpeople, assembled on the sidelines can easily suffocate a table of two.

But come with a large group prepared to create your own party and you will add the one ingredient missing from this recipe for value-for-money dining.

## What's on

### cinema

#### Mrs Palfrey at the Claremont

*Cinemas nationwide*  
Opens Aug 17  
The tale of an unlikely friendship between an elderly widow and a young writer, *Mrs Palfrey at the Claremont* is an endearing and simple pas de deux for film and theatre veteran Joan Plowright and the up-and-coming Rupert Friend.

#### Thank you for smoking

*Cinemas nationwide*  
Opens August 17  
Satirical comedy follows the machinations of Big Tobacco's chief spokesman, Nick Naylor, who spins on behalf of cigarettes while trying to remain a role model for his twelve-year-old son.

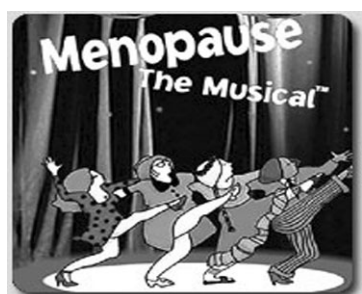
#### 50 ways of saying fabulous

*Academy Cinemas, Lorne Street*  
Opens August 17  
A coming of age story, directed by Stewart Main. 12-year-old Billy has the misfortune to be growing up gay in small town New Zealand in the 70's. A tale to warm your heart.

### theatre

#### Menopause: the musical

*The Civic*  
Showing until October 14  
This smash-hit musical has wowed audiences all over the United States with its hilarious celebration of women and The Change.



#### The Case of Katherine Mansfield

*Herald Theatre, The Edge*  
August 22- September 16  
A celebration of New Zealand's most controversial writer, from the age of 18 to her premature death at 34. Directed by Katie Wolfe and starring Danielle Cormack.

#### Take Me Out

*Silo Theatre*  
August 18- September 23  
Directed by Shane Boshier and winner of the Tony Award 2006 for Best Play, *Take me out* tells the story of Darren Lemming, the epitome of a baseball star living life large.

### events

#### Frock Off

*St Matthews in the City*  
August 19  
Frock Off is a Catwalk Studios Runway Fashion Event, show-casing 80 models from 05-06 courses frocking the catwalk and walking the walk.

#### West Papua: The hidden Pacific conflict

*AUT University conference centre*  
August 18-19  
Papuan, Australian and NZ human rights activists, campaigners and researchers put the Indonesian-ruled territory on the map.

### exhibitions

#### New Zealand Chinese Arts exhibition

*Aotea Centre, Auckland*  
August 5-27  
The spirit of China will be on display in the annual New Zealand Chinese Arts Exhibition. Chinese calligraphy, sculpture, pottery, oil paintings, watercolours and acrylics from both professional and amateur Chinese artists.

#### Straight from the Heart

*Bruce Mason Centre, Takapuna*  
August 1-31  
An exhibition by the New Zealand Art Guild.

#### Beyond the Pale

*NorthArt, Northcote Shopping Centre*  
Ends August 20  
A ceramic art exhibition featuring work by 13 of New Zealand's foremost ceramic artists. A refreshing look at ceramics which sheds a modern light on the art-form.



PHOTO: LUCY VICKERS