

Night at Caluzzi won't be a drag



PHOTO: REBEKAH LYLELL

Restaurant
Caluzzi
 461 Karangahape Rd
 Open Thurs - Sat 7pm till late
 Reviewed by Rebekah Lyell

Spending a Saturday night dinner surrounded by drag queens – with better figures than you have – may not sound like a great night out, but Caluzzi is a jewel in flamboyant K Rd's crown.

While it pays not to go if you are prudish or offended by explicit language, the cosy Caluzzi Bar and Cabaret is popular with all walks of life.

Our group of workmates were joined by a 60th birthday party, a hens' night and a group of friends who wanted to experience something different.

The award-winning restaurant treats guests to colour, food, fun

and lively performances by fabulous and friendly drag queens.

On arrival, the girls introduced themselves and ran through the menu.

At \$55, the set price was great value, with fresh garlic bread, thick winter soup and a choice of five mains, including vegetarian options.

I chose the chicken curry which was just right, spice-wise.

Cooked in coconut sauce with herbs and a Kiwi touch of kumara, it was served on rice and included a poppadom.

Other options included lamb shanks, porterhouse steak, chicken breast, fish of the day and vegetable caponata, which were all served with vegetables and found by fellow diners to be "fabulous".

The staff were attentive without being overbearing and service at the bar was quick and friendly.

Then the party really started.

Miss Ribena led four of the other girls in a high energy, glamorous and extremely hilarious show.

The token males in the crowd – a grand total of two – were singled out for some good ribbing and they played along well.

Those who were a bit stand-offish quickly got over their fears after a hilarious skit involving the crowd.

It was all highly interactive, with many of the queens heading outside to entertain unsuspecting passer-bys. But don't worry – you don't miss the action from inside, thanks to the deep windows.

The group of top-notch, surprisingly attractive and very talented entertainers got the entire restaurant involved.

Once the show is over, the restaurant turns into a dance floor and closing time is often forgotten.

ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS: Miss Ribena performs a high-energy show.

Hardcore rapper thrills little white girl

Concert
Ice Cube
 Telstra Clear Stadium
 August 22
 Reviewed by Jessica Harkins

Reliving my hip-hop-infused teens at the Ice Cube gig last Wednesday was wild.

I flung my arm up in the air like I just didn't care, brandishing West Side, though I'm from the East, and Ice Cube looked straight at me. I was 13 all over again, dancing with my girls to You Can Do It.

At first I was anxious, not just because I'd forked out \$87 that I didn't really have, but quite frankly because I'm a little white

girl. Ice Cube fans are generally the opposite.

But it soon became clear that everyone was there for the same reason, and I left with my Chuck Taylors still on my feet, rapping songs with the rest of the crowd long after Ice Cube had left the stage.

I couldn't help but think the steep ticket price alienated half of a hip-hop-loving audience, perhaps explaining why the Telstra Clear Stadium was less than full.

It had been 14 years since Ice Cube and Westside Connection affiliate WC had graced an Auckland stage. We were reminded of this between every song, which got a little tedious, but the crowd lapped it all up.

Ice Cube and WC bantered back and forth between tracks, relishing the undivided attention. "Do you wanna hear some of that old school Ice Cube gangsta shit?" He seemed determined to



PHOTO: ANDREW MCMANUS PRESENTS

SMOKIN' GOOD: Ice Cube.

impress the loyal crowd, and there was a good mix of old and new songs, peppered with the NWA tracks that made him famous.

Although there were no obvious gang affiliations in the crowd, Ice Cube and WC split us in two and led a yelling match between the two halves – "there's a party over here, fuck you over there."

I was on Cube's side. We won hands down (or hands up). Good thing too as he had wagered \$5000 on us winning. My accomplice questioned whether the money was real, but the man's worth \$US145 million for crying out loud, so it wouldn't surprise me if it had been.

We were lucky to have an Ice

Cube concert since he had problems getting into the country. One of Manukau City's mayoral candidates tried to block his visa and cancel the gig because of the nature of the rapper's music (Fuck The Police anyone?).

This just fed into Ice Cube's Bono impersonations: "The music is key, not them newspapers, not those magazines and definitely not some fuckin' politician!"

I lost a little respect for the man at that point, but not enough to change my mind about being there. Ice Cube may be old school, but he knows how to get his club on.

He can come back to our little corner of the Worldwide Westside any ol' time.

What's on

cinema

Waitress
Cinemas nationwide
 Opens September 6

Jenna, who has a gift for making pies, is caught in an unhappy marriage, falls pregnant and has to decide whether to keep the baby. Things get complicated when she starts an affair with the new doctor. Starring Keri Russell. It's quirky but laced with an extra layer of sadness due to the tragic death of writer-director Adrienne Shelley.

Ratatouille
Cinemas nationwide
 Opens September 6

A new Disney Pixar film from the storytellers of *Finding Nemo* and *The Incredibles*. The animated adventure follows a rat called Remy who dreams of becoming a great chef.

Next
Cinemas nationwide
 Opens September 6

Chris has a secret. He can see a few minutes into the future. To avoid Government interest he hides away in Las Vegas living off small-time gambling winnings. But when terrorists threaten to detonate a nuclear device in LA, a Government agent tracks him down. Starring Nicholas Cage, Julianne Moore, Jessica Biel.

The Real Thing
Silo Theatre, Lower Greys Ave
 August 31 - September 29

Henry is a detached playwright obsessed with pop music. When cast as a philandering husband, he is forced to act out a situation he was previously only comfortable writing about. The Tom Stoppard play is full of riddles, humour and ironic paradoxes. Tickets \$18 from Ticketmaster.

theatre

Sammy! The Incredible Journey of Mahatma Gandhi
Sky City Theatre
 August 31 - September 1

Performing to sell-out crowds around the world, this play focuses on the relationships of Gandhi and shows how he affected so many. Two Auckland shows only. Tickets \$27 - \$42 from Ticketek.

Murder By Chocolate
Herald Theatre, Aotea Centre
 September 21 - 29

A comedy whodunnit, *Murder By Chocolate* is a tribute to the original. Directed by Caitlin Dullard, performed by Phil Ormsby and Alex Ellis. Tickets available from Ticketek, \$16 - \$28.

exhibitions

Mazda Artworks
The Hilton, Princes Wharf
 To September 1

Catch the final days of Auckland's big week of art where more than 900 artworks and 400 artists have featured. Work by talented New Zealand students and well-known professionals. Cost: \$20.

Westfield Style Pasifika
Auckland Vector Arena
 September 7

New Zealand fashion awards and one of the largest indigenous cultural fashion events in the world. Featuring painted body art, urban Pasifika streetwear, Pasifika bridal gear and much more. Tickets \$29.90 - \$34.90 from Ticketmaster.

events

2007 Rally of New Zealand
Mystery Creek Events Centre
 August 31 - September 2

The 38th annual event is Round 11 of the World Rally Championship and part of the Possum Bourne Memorial Rally. Three Kiwi crews are included in the competitive line-up.

Auckland Home Show
ASB Showground, Greenlane
 September 12 - 16

New Zealand's leading home and garden expo will this year include property advice from the experts. There will be 600 companies showcasing the latest home related products at the expo, which attracted almost 70,000 people last year. Tickets \$16 from ITicket or at the door.