



FROM FAR LEFT: Lou Vairo, son of the owner of Vic Market Cake Shop; delicious olives and Mediterranean dips from Kathy's Hellenic Deli; Wayne Chitty from Happy Tuna; grab a snagger from the Polish Deli

**Covering** seven hectares just 1km from the city centre on the site of Melbourne's first cemetery, the Queen Victoria Market has served the people of Melbourne since 1878. Originally both a retail and wholesale market, it was nearly lost in 1969 when the wholesale section was moved to Footscray and the State Government planned to develop the site. There was a public outcry, but it was the market's verandah posts that saved the day, when the National Trust classified them as an example of 1920s craftsmanship and design.

Most of the market's buildings built in the late 1800s are now protected as historic buildings, including the shops along Victoria and Elizabeth Streets, some with raised arched doorways to allow delivery carts to be backed in. Many of these now house some of the market's newest businesses such as Cocoro, a Japanese-inspired lounge and bar that offers flavoured coffees and teas (from gingerbread cappuccino to organic green tea lattes), snacks, sake tastings, boutique Japanese beers and delicate Japanese pottery.

With more than 800 traders, the market is one of the largest in the world and almost three-quarters of the 10 million visitors each year are from Melbourne, many doing their weekly shopping, while others come simply to experience the wonderful atmosphere at the largest open-air market in Australia.

Those who want to shop can choose from 80 fruit and vegetable stalls, 34 delicatessens, 24 butchers, 11 fishmongers, six poultry stalls, plus nearly 650 general merchandise traders. While visitors can join a guided tour every Tuesday, Thursday, Friday or Saturday, a great way to learn about the market is from the stallholders themselves, as well as sampling lots of goodies along the way.

The market's style of trading has evolved over the years. In the oldest building, the Meat Hall built in 1869, meat was originally sold in 10-pound chunks and the first butcher to sell his meat already cut into chops was told it'd never catch on. Today, the Meat Hall is home to seafood, pork, beef, lamb, goat, rabbit, game, poultry, venison and a vast array of offal, which Don Jago, the third generation of his family to run Jago's Quality Meats, says

## Melbourne's evolving cultural diversity is most apparent in the Deli Hall.

is enjoying a resurgence. Jago stresses his focus on premium produce with a sign above his counter proclaiming "We Don't Yell To Sell", a friendly dig at his neighbours who spruik their wares from the front of their stalls. One of the oldest, yet newest, businesses here is Happy Tuna owned by Wayne Chitty, whose grandfather started the stall selling rabbits in the 1920s, with Wayne making a strategic move into seafood in 1997.

The Deli Hall, built in 1929, is a treasure trove of art deco design with original features such as marble counters. Melbourne's evolving cultural diversity is most apparent here. In the early 20th century, most stall holders were of Anglo-Celtic descent, then came the post-World War II influx of eastern Europeans, introducing liverwurst, smoked eel, pickled cucumbers, rye bread and apple

