

## Lilla's Cafe

28sep05

**117 Main Rd, Yankalilla, phone 8558 2525**

Open: 9am-5pm, Sat-Thurs; 9am-10pm, Friday.

The locals call the town "Yank". Short and sweet. Which in times gone by would have just about spelled out Yankalilla's capacity to stop hungry souls in their tracks to the southern Fleurieu Peninsula, Rapid Bay, Cape Jervis and beyond, to Kangaroo Island.



Lucy Dalston, Colleen McLeod and Terry Higgins at Lilla's Cafe, Yankalilla.

That's not to say that now the Yank bakery, famed for its pasties and related munchies, and a little hole-in-the-wall wurst and roll joint are not terrific.

But great fresh plates of salad, smart stacks of good steak, tasty breads, fresh juices, monster modern cakes, strong coffee? No way. Not here.

Enter the energetic Colleen McLeod, who has worked at Agatha's Food Store in the mid-1990s, Willy Hill Cafe and the Normanville Beach Cafe before opening Lilla's a year ago next to a twee little gift shop at the Normanville end of town.

And the district's culinary landscape was transformed in one swoop.

You'll pick it by the tin cow outside, crafted by a local artist. And the fun mauve interior with funky bits of furniture.

And the recipes from her mother's cookbook that are written on the floor – people regularly write them down in their traveller's notebooks. Then there's the increasing number of locals who have quickly figured they can come and go with a smile for a decent caffeine hit, a community meeting or a major family meal.

Many of them also have begun bringing in their backyard produce, from rhubarb to cauliflowers, oranges, lemons and fresh free-range eggs. They're "luminous yellow", Colleen says, and sensational for her serious country breakfasts.

Come back if you can for lunches, where you'll be stretched to huge chicken, leek and bacon pies with the lot on the side (\$14.90) and on Friday nights for dinner where the tucker goes another step to harissa-spiced chicken breasts or a heroic Hamlet's (a Willunga butchery) sausage plate at \$21.90, with potato cake and braised cabbage.

Soon an outdoors wood-fired oven will open for further Friday-night fun, casual pizzas, breads and dampers in the tradition of Willunga's famed Russell Jeavons.

Short and sweet? Now there's a reason to linger way longer.