

# State Library of South Australia Media Release



Image: Commonwealth Press Union Dinner at the South Australian Hotel, 1955.

## State Library serves up menus from the collections in new exhibition 28 February 2023

***Sweet and savoury: Menus from the collections of the State Library*** is a new free exhibition now showing at the State Library of South Australia. It explores the hidden stories of restaurant and dinner menus from the Library's extensive menu collection.

From the plain to the ornate and from the simply functional to the beautiful, the State Library has many thousands of menus. The exhibition looks at menus from our oldest, from an 1867 Government House dinner, to those recently acquired from South Australian restaurants large and small celebrating cuisines from around the world.

Curated by State Library staff, Mark Gilbert (Exhibitions, Media & Marketing Librarian) and Peter Zajicek (Senior Conservator), menus have been displayed in themes such as hotel dining, dinner and a show, trains and boats and planes, changing times, world leading chefs, favourites, a taste of country, Italian style, see you at the Highway, an occasion and country cooking.

Highlights from the exhibition include:

- the Library's oldest South Australian menu, dating back to 1867
- a rather harsh critique written on the menu of Ernest's Restaurant, known for its fine dining
- a menu written on a cleaver!
- menus from iconic South Australian restaurants such as Nediz Tu, Mistress Augustine's, Possums, The Magic Flute and The Pheasant Farm.

Geoff Strempele, Director State Library of South Australia says, "This exhibition shows the diversity of the State Library's collection. Some people might not see the importance of collecting and preserving menus for future generations, but they can tell us so much more than what was on the menu."

"The menu collection holds the history of changing trends in food, dining, restaurants, menu design, and reflects the social history of the time, such as Adelaide's culinary revolution that took hold during the Don Dunstan era of the 1970s."

Menus are kept as part of the Library's ephemera collection. Ephemera is material which is designed to be short lived such as posters, handbills, programs, wine labels, and advertising material. However, these everyday ephemeral items are a record of South Australian life and social customs, arts and popular culture, and local and national issues.

To complement the exhibition visitors can see photographs of restaurants, some of which no longer exist. In the theatrette visitors can watch two short films, *A Taste of Adelaide* in the 1970s and *Hotel Elizabeth* showing people at the hotel during the late 1950s/early 1960s.

The exhibition is on until the end of June 2023. For more information on the exhibition go to:

[www.slsa.sa.gov.au/events/sweet-and-savoury](http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/events/sweet-and-savoury)

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#### Exhibition details:

On now until June 2023

**Open: Monday to Tuesday: 8am to 7pm**  
**Wednesday to Friday: 8am to 5pm**  
**Saturday and Sunday: 12 to 5pm**  
**(closed public holidays)**

Treasures Wall

State Library of South Australia

Corner North Terrace and Kintore Avenue

Free entry

#### Media enquiries:

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