

LUNCH

THE OCCIDENTAL BELGIAN BEER CAFE

Over lunch at the **Occidental** bar-cum-eatery's sister in the old post office in Ponsonby, a friend confessed he'd never been into the **Vulcan Lane** establishment. He'd walked past it probably four times a week at lunchtime but never thought to stop in.

We have since rectified that and he was, as many are, very impressed. And not just by the food, the light and tasty wheat beers and the friendly service. The building itself is a grand Auckland landmark. A very sophisticated hotel (with a reading room and café) was built on this site in 1870 but was demolished in 1884 and the well-known architectural firm of **Mahoney and Sons** designed the distinctive three-storey building we see today.

Famous for being a place where journalists and bohemian students used to hang out until the late 80s, it steadily became more rundown, so its sensitive makeover as a pub serving traditional Belgian food (lots of mussels, sausages, stoemp) and great beer came as a relief to many who thought it might become another target for "property developers".

Today the landmark **Occidental** heaves after work on Thursdays and Fridays and patrons happily spill out onto the tables in **Vulcan Lane**. Familiar, absolutely consistent in its meals and beers, and always popular, this is a place that most Aucklanders know anyway. Except for a few like my friend.

If it has been your mistake to walk past because it looks too busy (outdoor tables are often full), then step inside, where you can usually find an empty table, especially early in the week. **CONT..**

The Occidental Belgian Beer Café | Occidental Hotel, 6-8 Vulcan Lane | Ph 300 6226

RIS GLUTTONY 2

03/12/09

**Morning Madeline**

Just a quick note to let you know we had a fantastic time last night. The team at the Occidental were fantastic and especially Val who made sure we were well looked after.

Thanks again

20/12/10

"Very good mussel pot, fresh, cooked properly and authentic" as a customer, Jean Peter Seidel, Corporate Executive Head Chef Princess Cruises, Santa Clarita, CA.

20/04/11

"Whenever I come to Auckland, The Occidental (including Hoegaarden or Leffe) is on my itinerary. My personal opinion is that your shanks are the best in NZ."

Raymond Sahib, New Plymouth