



A touch of class

AS a child, I was in simple awe of my grandmother's china. The dainty Shelley teacups with fine handles for elegant fingers. The fragile curves of the saucers. The pretty motifs of cottage flowers in diaphanous hues, or the rich designs in plum and gold etched in the meticulous detail of a bygone era.

They seemed to be the remnants from a refined and immaculate world of unselfconscious gentility, where I imagined that women wore gossamer and gloves and dined in serenity broken only by tinkling laughter and the clink of silver teaspoons against fine china.

The magic of those reveries is brought to life at High Societea. This secluded teahouse in the leafy suburb of Clayfield is devoted to the palate-pleasing pleasures of high tea.

Owner Kathy Heath has coupled knowledge, gleaned from 20 years in corporate catering, with her passion, flair and attention to minutiae, not to mention a myriad of personal touches, to create a teahouse that is as much an experience of winsome indulgence as fine dining.

Shielded from the street by lush greenery, High Societea is a tranquil nook where guests can choose to sit inside, in a room decorated with Kathy's own antique sideboards, mirrors and lamps, or out in the courtyard, at tables laid with damask clothes and linen napkins,

sterling silver cutlery and one of 100 dainty antique china tea sets patterned with sweet peas, bluebirds and other delicate designs.

The scent of old-fashioned roses freshly picked from the gardens of two local rose-growers wafts from vases of blousy blooms that create the centerpiece of each table.

The high tea three-tiered stands arrive laden with selections of petite gourmet delights. Miniature homestyle cakes and tartlets nestle next to mouthwatering ribbon sandwiches and quiches and are accompanied by a pot of premium leaf tea or plunger coffee.

High tea would not be complete without cucumber sandwiches, fluffy scones and dainty pikelets – my personal favourites – made to perfection from a family recipe. Choose from sweet or savoury selections, ranging in price from a cost of \$29.50/person, or the Royal Ascot High Tea, for those who want the best of both worlds, which is served with a complimentary glass of Pimms.

This is not somewhere to just drop in for coffee and cake, but the destination for a special outing. It's a place to take your mother or daughter or old friends for a memorable delight that will leave them thinking about the uninitiated with whom they can share the delicacies of this hidden gem in the future. – **Fiona Cameron.**

High Societea
Bonney Place, 318 Junction Road, Clayfield
www.highsocietea.com.au
T: (07) 3357 4299
High Societea is open Monday to Saturday, with a private room and courtyard available for functions.
Sitting times: 9.30am-11am; 11.30am-1.30pm; 2pm-4pm.
Bookings are essential.