

# Business on menu

By HELEN PERRY

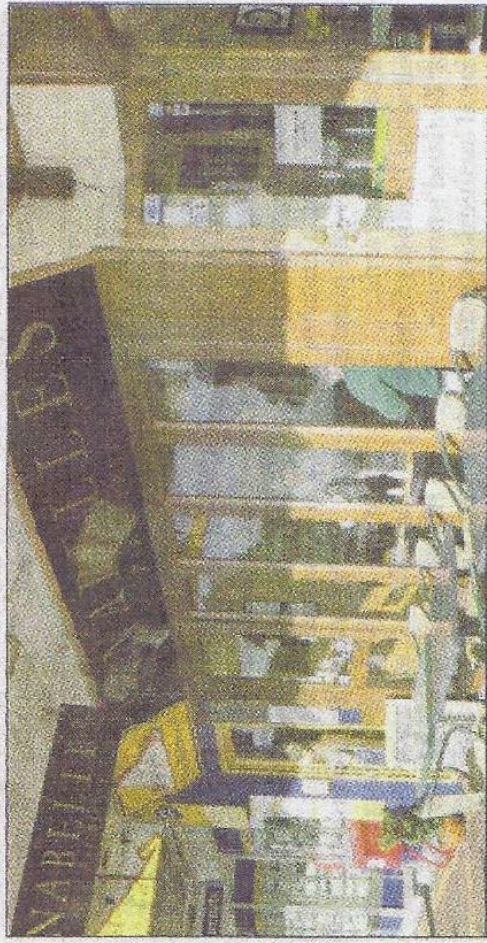
**T**HE corporate mood this year may have been sombre in some quarters but the warmer weather seems to have lifted spirits and encouraged a resurgence of business lunches.

I'd been of the opinion that lunching with colleagues and clients had taken a bit of a back seat but recently I have noticed a renewed appreciation of the benefits of talking business at the table. What's more, there does not seem to be any urge to over-indulge.

Most of my business outings have included lots of discussion over a light salad and perhaps a glass of wine then coffee to finish.

Both parties have parted company light of step and refreshed rather than sleepy and in no mood for more work. Most satisfactory on a working day.

But perhaps one of my most successful meetings of the past couple of months was at Annabelles, St Heliers Bay where I met with a South Island executive. Good weather and a high tide enhanced our focus rather than detracted from it.



**WATERFRONT DINING:** Annabelles Restaurant at St Heliers Bay.

Ninety minutes of advertising debate, with a little girl talk in-between, passed in what seemed a jiffy yet we still managed to appreciate the chicken salad and glass of Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc we both ordered. The restaurant was active but not loud and we could talk comfortably.

Our orders were delivered promptly and service, throughout, was attentive but unobtrusive.

We were also offered the choice of a quiet corner or a window seat. Had we been more than two I

might have chosen the quiet corner but on this occasion a window table and view seemed to augur well for a successful outcome.

Lunch may have been about business but it really was a pleasure. The result of our meeting was all good and I returned to the office feeling positively re-invigorated.

Here's hoping the upbeat mood of summer and pre-Christmas goodwill is further reflected in an upswing in the economy which will further encourage good business practices outside of the office.