

By Dusty Miller

INK scarcely dry on this week's main critique when I learnt how prescient were my sentiments that a \$100 000 one plate café breakfast would soon be a mere memory.

Something always stops me brunching at - and grading - Mimi's, Borrowdale Village. Last time, an awful din from ghetto blasters accompanying a dancing display taking place between there and the Wimpy had me gapping out of earshot to Deli-cious for a pleasant surprise.

This time, I'd hardly left the car when I heard what proved to be a blonde-haired blue-eyed myjouvrou soprano, warbling the South African national anthem in die Taal.

Realising that heralded the final of the Tri-Nations games in a blustery Dunedin on South Island and I wouldn't get past the Keg for a couple of hours, I entered its curtain-dimmed, smoky, fuggy interior, redolent of what I thought was last night's beer fumes to find jovial Bok and All Black fans on second ales at 9.30AM on a bright sunny Saturday.

Far too early for me, on a normal weekend. Due to medication, I was in the midst of a first "dry" five days since the age of 17.

Without a menu, ordered breakfast, coffee and a touch of speed.

Waitress bringing condiments, napkins, cutlery and a first cup of (rather good) coffee said (presumably automatically) "Good afternoon!" It was 9.50AM!

Food, on an oval platter, comprised two eggs, as ordered (sunnyside up, soft but not too runny) much good, tasty bacon, pork banger, grilled tomato, toast and butter and a mound of chips which were, sadly, rather limp and soggy. One tasted the fat in which they'd been cooked, a sure sign it wasn't sufficiently hot. I ate slowly - as usual - through a feast of football, amused by vociferous Kiwi supporters and sipped two more coffees. They don't serve the stuff (or tea) by the pot: an expensive pity.

Sad South Africa lost a thrilling game, checked the bill. Even sadder to find a quite ordinary one-plate breakfast/brunch was \$190 000, three coffees \$15 000 each, giving a total of \$235 000: an even quarter of a million, with tip, for one breakfast.

Kegs certainly know how to charge. Checking a menu I choked with horror. Chicken liver starter \$110 000, Greek salad \$80 000, pies \$200-\$290 000 (honestly!); cottage pie or steak egg and chips \$190 000, burger and chips \$170 000.

If you think those prices hairy and scary, try fish and chips \$230 000, bangers and mash \$250 000 (never!); oxtail another quarter of a bar and eisbein at...are you sitting down...? \$410 000.

Puddings are \$90-\$130 000, lager \$30 000, Bloody Mary \$55 000. On an alcohol-free few days, but asked the price of Hunter's Cider, looking deliciously thirst-quenching and delightfully chilled. It probably was...and can remain so at \$115 000 a small bottle.

All this goes to show why, the next day, we saw the nail-biting end of the Fourth Test for The Ashes at Trent Bridge at REPS, the pub laying on a braai for you to gocha your own nyama, watching superb cricket with one eye and Rob Osborne and Ellie Warren entertaining with the other. As an added bonus, their stunning daughter, Rosie, sang occasionally.

I was raised to believe there's no such thing as old, fat, ugly women, but Rosie's young, slim, beautiful, talented, with a great future and has the good taste to discreetly wear "Angel" - a delightfully haunting summery French fragrance, extremely hard to find and costing an arm and a leg (I know!)

Keg and Sable, Borrowdale. Open for food daily (usually) from noon. Tel: 884445. Two Stars late August 2005.