

# Off the shelf

Helen Greenwood

## At our convenience

### Camperdown Grocer

140-144 PARRAMATTA ROAD, CAMPERDOWN.  
TEL: 9517 2000.

Open Mon-Sat 7am-10pm, Sun 8am-9pm.



#### Best Buys

Tonno Delicieux Tuna \$4.99/160g, Milawa Goat Camembert \$7.50/200g, Bonne Maman Mandarin Marmalade \$4.99/370g.

*A one-stop shop with everyday necessities and exotic treats.*

The notion of chips, Mars bars, Coke and Pepsi available at 3am as being convenient escapes me. But a shop that is open long hours and sells these things plus good pasta, wood-fired bread, farmhouse cheese, fresh fruit and fine wine – now that's convenience.

Camperdown Grocer deliberately mimics those open-all-hours shops, festooned with global brand names, which have mushroomed all over Sydney. But if you drive past its corner location and think it's just another over-lit shop selling junk food, you are mistaken. The secret to its soul is that the Nice Cream fridge is down two steps (polished floorboards, if you please), from the freezer with Streets, Cadbury and Peters; packs of Omo, Surf and Fab are a backdrop to the banded boxes of Simon Johnson chocolate truffles and coconut ice; and past the Darrell Lea selection are Jules Destrooper Virtuoso biscuits, the Belgian version of a Tim Tam.

The contrasts continue with Heinz baked beans before Herbie's Spices; next to the CSR sugars are Billington's organic granulated and Comptoir du Sud sugar cubes; Mountain Bread organic flat bread nestles up to Tip Top; Cottee's jam snuggles up with Bonne Maman conserves; and organic lines are dotted throughout.

“Why can't the Bega sit next to Milawa cheese in



Not your average corner store: Rip Viropoulos and Jannine Mezrani at Camperdown Grocer. Photos: Quentin Jones

the fridge?” asks Jannine Mezrani, the brains behind this cunning conceit. “That's the way I shop.” As do many of us. Mezrani's family is part-owner of this branch of Camperdown Cellars (talk to Rip Viropoulos for your vino), where she has set up her dream grocery, as well as the original store in Kingston Road.

She joined the business last year with the aim of creating “another kind of one-stop shop”. The difference is that while the owners of convenience stores deal with only a few suppliers, Mezrani selects her products from as many as 50.

She tastes nearly everything she sells so she can recommend with confidence: Il Madonnino Olive Oil (\$32.99/500mL), Mum's Choice Homous

(\$5.50/350g), or Miss Khoo's Asian Deli Thai Green Curry, ready to make sauces stocked by Harvey Nichols in London (\$7.99/100g).

But not everything here sports a high price tag or begs a sophisticated palate. Mezrani caters for the different socio-economic groups who live in the area.

Shoppers come in for bread and milk and end up checking Forum vinegars from Spain and Valley Produce Company dressings from Victoria. The wine buyers dive in for their favourite bottle and, before they know it, are reaching for a nibble of lavoche crispbread or Kalamata olives. The American sweets, from Junior Mints to Peanut Butter M&Ms are also a huge hit. “Brings out the kid in all of us,” says Mezrani.