

Under the big top at Arncliffe

FROM the high jinks on the highwire to whirling wheel of death, there was high drama at Weber's Circus over the weekend, not to mention loads of great family entertainment.

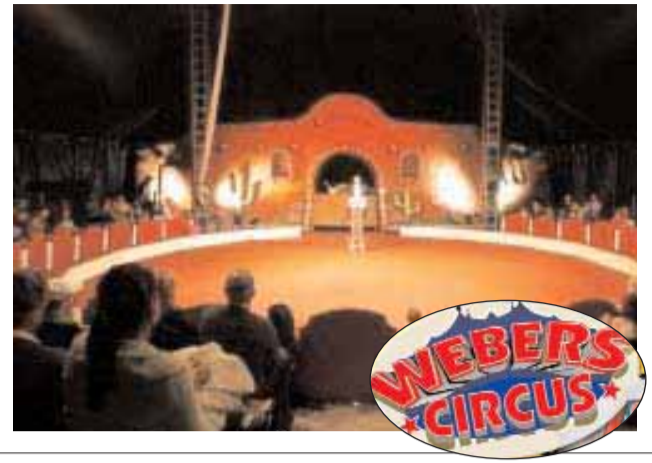
With the big top making a big splash at Cahill Park, Arncliffe, the circus set up shop for the school holidays, with shows daily through to July 26.

Weber's, with saucy South American salsa dancing, high wire acts from Colombia, plus miniature horses, clowns, performing dogs and aerial acrobatics.

The show's stars bring with them a wealth of experience having performed with the likes of The Great Moscow Circus, Cats, Grease and Shout.

The entertainment takes on a Latin flavour at

For show times visit www.weberscircus.com



Yaghdan

Last greek village in the country of Armenia

A great report by the Armenian Reporter sheds light on what might possibly be the last 'Greek village' in the country of Armenia. Until the 1988 earthquake that devastated the area, Greeks were formed a substantial portion of the population in a cluster of villages in the Lori Province of Armenia. Now Yaghdan is the only village with a significant Greek population left.

Full story in tomorrow's Kosmos Plus special edition

Greek masterpiece

NOW the plates from the final episode of MasterChef have been scrubbed and put away, judge George Calombaris has taken off for Greece.

One of his four restaurants, The Belvedere Club, is on the island of Mykonos. The others are in Melbourne, including the most celebrated, The Press Club.

As he headed for warmer climes, he left Australian home cooks with a recipe to suit winter. Yoghurt and mastic-braised neck of lamb is one of three recipes he contributes in a new book by a master chef of Greek cuisine, Vefa Alexiadou.

Calombaris is one of six international chefs invited to provide a trio of dishes for the heavyweight 700-page Vefa's Kitchen. He chose saganaki martini, braised lamb and baklava



souffle with smoked chocolate ice-cream.

There are also recipes from three chefs in the US, one in London and Theo Kostoglou, owner of Kouzina in Melbourne.

Alexiadou says her book, dubbed "the bible of authentic Greek cooking",

represents the cream of 100,000 recipes of traditional dishes she has collected from around the country.

Speaking from her home in Athens, she is an ambassador for Greek food and nothing if not prolific. Already the author of 13 hardcover cookbooks and 100 booklets, she has also hosted a daily cooking show on Greek television for 17 years.

The basis of Greek cooking involves olive oil, wine and wheat, she says. "It is the holy trinity of our cuisine."

But within that is great variety. In Vefa's Kitchen she canvasses 12 regions to explain the flavours and styles of Greek cooking, from the Turkish influences in the north and a reliance on beef in Thessaly in central Greece to a dependence on foraged ingredients on the rugged south-eastern islands such as Kiklades.

Greek cooking, she says, also relies on herbs, not

spices. "This is the difference between Greek cuisine and Turkish cuisine," she says. "You can go out of Athens and collect any type of herb."

Vegetables, too, are a key ingredient in her recipes, although she says this partly reflects the price of meat in Greece and the fact that much of the country is too hilly for beef and instead relies on lamb and goat.

The new book contains about 750 recipes, from sauces and soups to poultry and pies. Each one, she says, is authentic and unaltered. "It is exactly as we cook in Greece and as I cook in my home."

Except for one aspect: the amount of olive oil. It is clearly a subject she has given considerable thought. On the phone, she sounds incredulous about recipes from elsewhere that call for a mere two tablespoons of oil in a casserole intended to feed four people.

Her mother, who taught her about food, regularly used enough olive oil to leave a centimetre in the bottom of a dish.

But that style of cooking is gone and her cookbook reflects the change. Where her mother might put a cup of olive oil into a dish, Alexiadou uses half that amount. And the same recipe in Vefa's Kitchen reduces that further for western tastes and health concerns.

Despite that concession, Alexiadou, who worked for 13 years as a chemist, believes Greek cooking is fundamentally nutritious, which is why she is convinced it will survive. One element she hopes will encourage people to continue cooking her recipes is an emphasis on making them easy to make. "I think simplicity is the key for a good dish."

From Sydney Morning Herald

The University of NSW will accept new enrolments for Greek Studies

The coordinated strategy implemented by the Foundation of Hellenic Studies to save Greek at the UNSW has achieved some results in that the Dean has reversed his original decision not to accept new enrolments in 2010. The University will allow those students who have commenced their major to continue and will enrol new students in Introductory Greek in the years 2010 and 2011. Foundation Chairman Costa Vertzayias said: "...Lobbying politicians, student and academic pressure, a continuous letter campaign, a petition which has 5000 signatures and the threat of demonstrations and legal action have made some impact but we are still not happy. Our weak link is that student numbers in the second session are down and this supports the University's argument that there is minimal demand for Greek. We are now offering nine free trips to Greece and Cyprus for students who enrol immediately in the course. I must take this opportunity to thank the Greek Orthodox Community of NSW and the Cyprus Community for each offering 3 tickets. It is a most generous offer and demonstrates their commitment to Greek studies. The other 3 tickets are being offered by our Foundation. However, if we are to be successful we must increase student numbers right now. We have absolutely no time to lose!"



Costa Vertzayias