

4. Wine Bar Walks: 14, 15, 19 August

Wine man Neil Prentice is no stranger to wine bar crawling. "Often very, very late at night," he says. But with 35 complete strangers tagging along? "Oh, often there are lots of strangers wobbling around with us at different times."

Prentice, who is shortly to open his own St Kilda cafe/bar, BIRDcage, sounds like the right man for the job of leading a wine bar walk around some of Melbourne's best wine bars. On the afternoon of Saturday, 14 August, he hits Acland Street in St Kilda and places like the perennially popular Dogs Bar, Cicciolina, Veludo and The Prince Wine Store. On Sunday, 15 August, the tour hits Fitzroy Street and spots including the Melbourne Wine Room, with its emphasis on some of the better pinot noirs and chardonnays from the regions of outer Melbourne; the trendy Luxe Wine Bar in Inkerman Street; and the more decadent Tolarno.

With three days to recover, Prentice will be back on the streets by Thursday, 19 August, to do the rounds of Southgate and city bars including the Eurocentric European in Spring Street and the Latin-loving Becco. "Ah look, there are a few old favorites included in these. I love Tolarno, a gorgeous place. The European is a great place. Hairy Canary ... Cicciolina are terrific."

Wine bar walkers will visit five wine bars each afternoon, dropping in for a bite and a 75ml (half) glass of wine. "The focus has been to get a bite of food that really works well with the glass of wine," says Prentice.

- *Wine Bar Walk 1, 14 August (Acland Street, St Kilda); Wine Bar*