

FINANCIAL TIMES

www.ft.com

Saturday April 24/Sunday April 25 2004

USA \$1.00 Canada C\$2.00 Bermuda \$2.25

Jewel of a Coffee Shop



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FAST LANE

Starbucks might have posted impressive first-quarter results this week but it's still finding it difficult to persuade people outside the US that its take on coffee retailing is the way forward. There are plenty of others who think they can do it better. For Australian and New Zealand ex-pats in New York, entire meeting agendas can be thrown out when the topic of finding the perfect coffee comes up.

Having already colonised most of Nolita (north of Little Italy) to the point that you hear more Aussie accents on the street than American, a

Current affairs is not what it used to be on television in the US, but at least the Aussies have brought decent coffee to New York

group of young entrepreneurs from Sydney has established a refuge for Antipodeans suffering severe coffee withdrawal. "I couldn't believe how bad the coffee was when I got here," says Lincoln Pilcher, a partner in Ruby's. "People think a bucket of boiled milk with a splash of espresso is what a cappuccino is supposed to taste like."

Ruby's looks like it was airlifted out of Sydney's Darlinghurst and wedged into a shopfront on Mulberry Street. The only things that place you in New

York are the battered copies of *The New York Times* and Susan Sarandon sitting in the window. Serving "flat whites", "short blacks" and an excellent egg and pancetta sandwich, weekends at Ruby's have become an outpost for Westpac bankers, models from Auckland and anyone else looking for perfectly prepared milk blended with a sharp jolt of Illy.

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