

## Upmarket restaurant to offer 200 wines at affordable prices

PICTURE: KATE HOWELL

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**PINEAU NOIR:** Frenchman Steve Pineau spent seven years working at Hotel Du Vin and has now opened his own establishment in the centre of Brighton

# Quality wine without the sniffiness

A RESTAURANT boasting more than 200 wines has opened in the centre of Brighton – intensifying competition among the city's fine food establishments.

In Vino Veritas, in North Road, is the brainchild of Steve Pineau who, earlier in his career, spent seven years in charge of the bar at Hotel Du Vin.

The stylish restaurant is split between three floors – a cocktail bar in the basement, a tapas and drinks bar at ground level and the main restaurant upstairs.

Mr Pineau, who has worked at Conran's Bluebird in London and several other venues in Brighton, is hoping to fill a gap in the market.

By maintaining good relations with suppliers, he is able to buy quality wines at reduced prices and pass the savings on to customers.

by **JAMES LANCASTER**

He is hoping to attract what he claims is an untapped audience in Brighton – people who appreciate good food and drink but cannot afford top-end prices.

He said: "I am trying to cater for the 30 to 35 age group. People who don't want to go clubbing any more, people who want somewhere grown-up to relax with their friends, without having to spend a lot of money."

The 28-year-old Frenchman said he was driven by a personal love of the grape.

He said: "I wanted to share my passion for wine and introduce people to a wide variety. That's why I sell many wines by the glass. "Customers can try something

unusual – maybe a wine from Mexico or Uruguay – without paying for a whole bottle."

Mr Pineau has recruited fellow countryman Guillaume Rambert, a former sous-chef at Hotel Du Vin, to run the kitchen.

Customers can chose from European tapas or a main meal. A typical meal per head, including wine, is about £40.

In Vino Veritas – which means in wine truth – adds more of an upmarket flavour to North Road but Mr Pineau has insisted there will be no Parisian sniffiness in his restaurant.

He added: "If people want to come in wearing flip-flops they are welcome to. I want it to be a chilled place where people can just relax and enjoy good food and wine."

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## Firms call for support

MILLIONS of small firms need more support to boost their growth, according to a report.

A survey of 1,600 companies by BT found criticism that the Government was not doing enough to help. Simplifying regulations topped the list of demands followed by a call for lower business related taxes.

One in three of those questioned said they wanted better advice on how to grow their business. Only one in 12 small firms polled believed the Government was doing all it could to help the sector.

Bill Murphy, managing director of BT Business, said: "Our report demonstrates that there are many areas of concern to small businesses and it is critical that we provide more support and help these companies."

## Turning off

WORKERS are most productive at 10.30am but start to "wind down" in mid-afternoon and think about their social lives, according to a new report.

A survey of 2,700 workers by employment law firm Peninsula showed that most believed they reached their peak of productivity at mid-morning, but "turn off" work after lunch.

Alan Price of Peninsula said: "People told us they lose focus after 3.30pm and start planning what they intend doing after work. It seems workers feel they have completed most of their work by this time so they can afford to switch off. Employers need to ensure that staff are given regular rest breaks."

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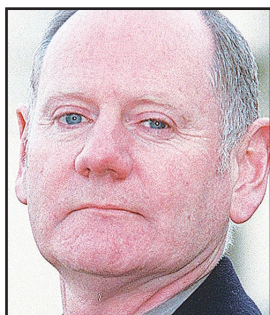
## Shoplifters will face justice

A SOPHISTICATED radio network will help bring shoplifters to justice.

The Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP) in Brighton and Hove has splashed out £120,000 replacing 400 handsets and four transmitters across the city.

The central computer system has been upgraded and now logs every conversation held on the radio handsets for potential use as evidence in court.

Shopkeepers, restaurant owners, landlords and



**UPGRADE:** Tony Mernagh

nightclub owners use the handsets to contact the police and alert the CCTV control centre when trouble occurs.

Lisa Perretta, business

crime reduction manager, said: "This is a huge step forward. Many partnerships use the Safety Net system, which is one of the most comprehensive radio management packages available."

Later this month the BCRP will introduce an individually secure intranet site, which will allow its members to download photos of offenders and report incidents online to a new National Business Information System.

The powerful server will allow business crime

partnerships across the country to analyse data and share information on the whereabouts of offenders. It means business owners across Sussex can alert their Brighton counterparts if they suspect trouble is heading their way.

Tony Mernagh, executive director of the economic partnership, said: "The big leap forward here is the sophisticated way in which the information is gathered and logged.

"It will mean we have a much greater chance of prosecuting offenders in court."