

Pizza with a difference

THE olive tree is in place but the doors won't open on Australia's first Vapiano until the week before Christmas.

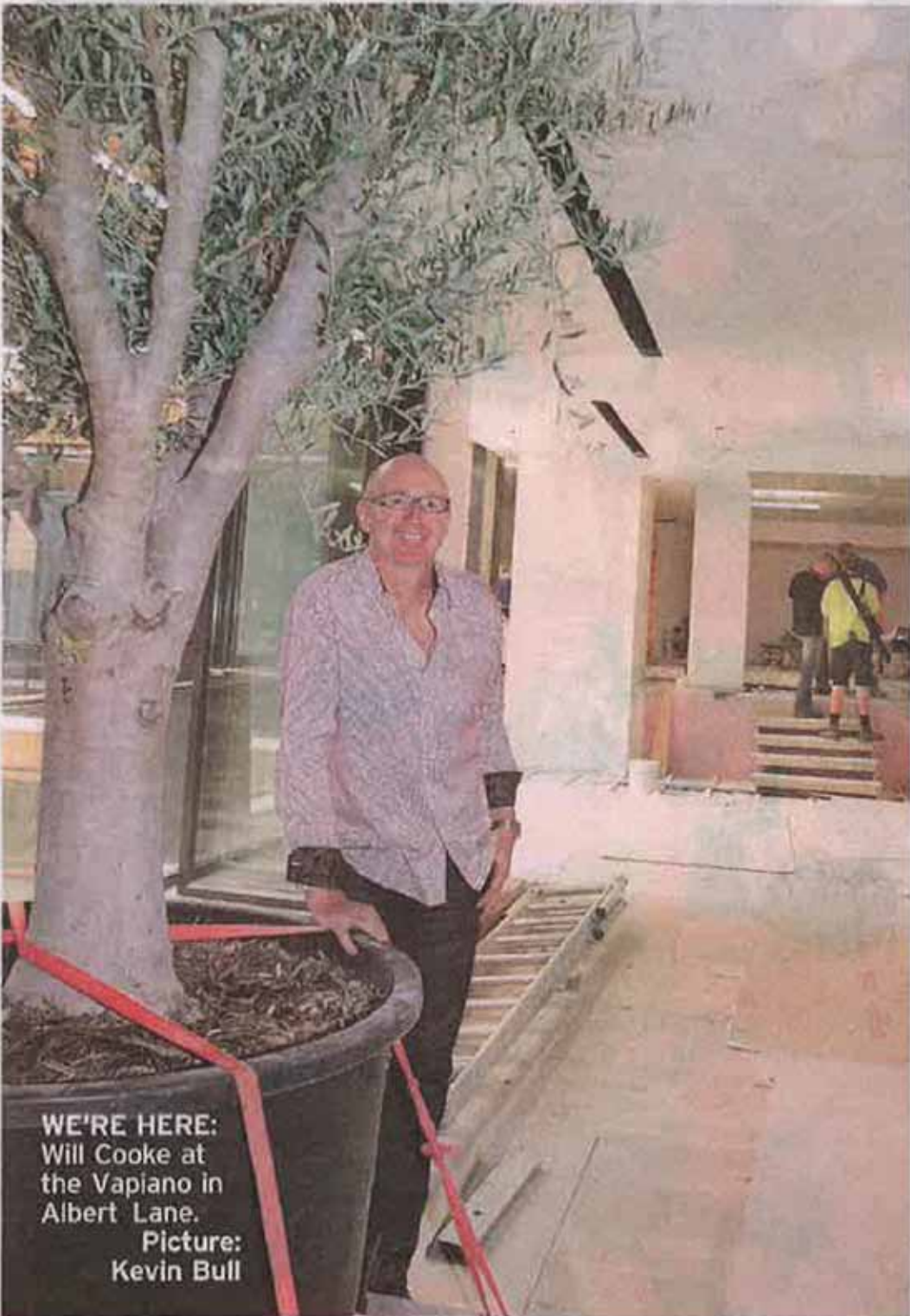
This European and US-based chain of Italian eateries is hoping to make its debut in Brisbane on December 18 taking up two floors of Albert Lane in the heart of the CBD.

But owner Will Cooke says he aims to have three locations up and running in southeast Queensland within 18 months.

Diners can expect hand-spun pizza and house-made pasta with fresh herbs growing in pots on each table. Cash makes way for a chip card system where everything ordered is swiped, recorded and the bill tackled on the way out.

"I fell in love with the concept when I was working in Europe," says Cooke who spent time overseas as an operations manager for McDonald's. Running Vapiano will be only Cooke's second job after joining the Golden Arches as a 14-year-old burger flipper. He says he'll be looking to source as much product as possible within a 150km radius - even if there is a price hike to be faced on certain items.

The Vapiano philosophy, despite being part of an international chain, is to not use any pre-made foods or manipulated ingredients. Despite this, Cooke says prices will be keen, with simple pizzas and pasta starting at under \$15. Watch this space.



WE'RE HERE:
Will Cooke at
the Vapiano in
Albert Lane.

Picture:
Kevin Bull