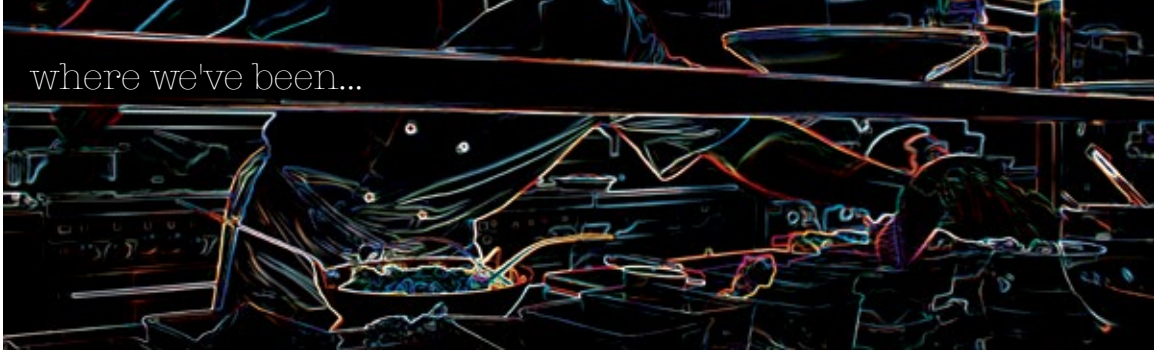


where we've been...



SQUEEZE & GRIND Camden

Over some 15 years, Squeeze & Grind has become an institution of Camden's lifestyle. Recently Dean sold the cafe he created all those years ago. Shondell is the new owner and the local girl's excitement and enthusiasm promise to take the cool venue to a whole new level.

I dropped in for lunch midweek and it's still the coolest place to hang out in the Autumn sun and enjoy excellent food and drinks. You might even see Dean floating around. I did, but he seemed busy so I didn't interrupt. Dean's a nice guy and he has been helping Shondell in the early days, particularly given the staff crisis facing restaurants and cafes. So from the diner's perspective, nothing much has changed. Shondell has made her mark on the aesthetic of the space but the day to day successful formula Dean created is still playing out. If you ever buy a successful hospitality venue - try to keep your ego in check. No need to reinvent anything. Doing so risks the patronage that was built up over many years of hard work and trial and error.

I made my order from what was still a reduced 'Pop Up' menu. There was still plenty of choice and Shondell will create an exciting new menu when staffing levels allow.

After such an incredibly long period of horrible weather, late April early May turned on some glorious days. This was one.

I opted for a Protein Bowl: Chicken; Pumpkin; Mushroom; Chilli Greens; Quinoa; Hummus; Nut and Seeds. If ever a dish lived up to the boast of being both healthy and yum, it's this one. From the very first mouthful, this well thought out and super healthy dish is absolutely beautiful. The flavours are subtle and superbly balanced. Nothing dominates - it's just yum! I also ordered a Jungle Juice and I can happily recommend that too: orange; pineapple; watermelon; mango; passionfruit. As soon as I read the list of juices I knew I would love it - I did.

Squeeze & Grind is a Camden institution with good reason. Sure there's great food, but there's also a vibe - a young energetic, urbane vibe that's hard to fake. Good luck Shondell.