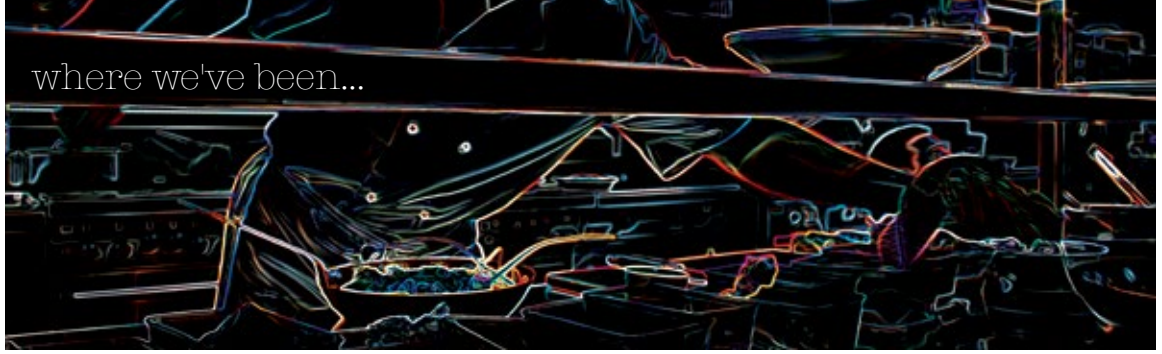


where we've been...



THE CAMPBELL Campbelltown

Have you experienced The Campbell yet? I dined at the beautiful new Campbelltown hotel recently but the changes to the old Court Tavern came to my attention by chance. I was driving along Queen Street and as I drove past Railway Street, I glanced down the street. "What the hell!?" It was clear that the hotel had undergone dramatic change. The previously nondescript wall facing the street had been replaced by glass and my quick glimpse of the interior was enough to make me go around the block, park and go inside.

The Campbell is one of the most incredible rebuilds in the 200 year history of Campbelltown. Macarthur Tavern created the city's first new millennium hotel, The Bradbury, Leumeah Hotel and Raby Rose upgrades following suit. Ambarvale Hotel well and truly set a new benchmark with its reno. A vastly enlarged footprint means The Campbell may have even surpassed that amazing transformation.

The Campbell, at the corner of Queen and Railway Streets, is now a large well designed space divided into distinct precincts, but the focus is food. 320 seats of varying styles offer choice and somewhat of an assurance that you will always get a table when you visit.

I met magazine staffers Kirsty and Lisa for lunch just before Christmas. We were joined by Kirsty's effervescent almost 7 year old, Brinley. She wore a spectacular dress perfect for twirly

dancing and generally added Christmas excitement to our lunch.

There are four enticing salads on The Campbell menu. We ordered three of them: Charred Prawn Salad served with calamari, crunchy Asian slaw and palm sugar dressing; Golden Nut Pumpkin Salad - roasted pumpkin with Persian fetta, roasted walnuts, Spanish onion, baby spinach, cherry tomatoes, pumpkin seeds and honey mustard dressing; Asian Style Beef Salad served with aromatic herbs, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, Spanish onion, mescaline, bean sprouts with Nam Jim dressing served on a rice paper bowl.

The Charred Prawn Salad was mine and I must admit that I didn't read the menu description. The calamari was a lovely surprise. This sweet and crunchy salad was exactly what the hangover doctor prescribed. I barely looked up as I smashed the bowl of yum. Kirsty devoured her Golden Nut Pumpkin Salad with similar gusto, but Lisa lagged behind. The kitchen was happy to give her a takeaway box. We know what she had for dinner. It was a similar story with little Brinley, who ordered a ham and pineapple pizza. She was never going to finish the whole thing, but mum was happy to wash her hands of dinner service.

The Campbell is impressive and marks another step in the evolution of Campbelltown. The food is excellent and the whole place has a nice feel. Highly recommended.