

Melaleuca House - Mount Annan

When it is one of my kids' birthdays, we go to the restaurant of their respective choice. Now that Brooke works at the Magazine, her thinking has altered when considering restaurants. Like me, she now includes a strategic aspect to her decision making. We really needed to get to Melaleuca House, the new restaurant at The Australian Botanic Garden Mount Annan. They are always open for lunch too, which is rare in our district. All things considered, Brooke decided upon the welcome addition to our restaurant lunch scene.

Brooke has developed quite a strong relationship with my parents. Brooke is an intelligent, outward looking girl and in her unaffected way, she sees her grandparents as great company - simple as that. That realisation only occurred to me when my grandmother was in her late 80s. I wish I had the intellectual maturity at a much younger age so I could have known my grandmother better. In retrospect I think she reflected me more so than any other family member - lament.

Why am I talking about grandparent relationships....? Oh that's right, Melaleuca House. Brooke invited my mum and dad to join us for her birthday lunch (story link). I was a few minutes late and of course Brooke and my parents were 'exactly' on time (the punctuality gene) and when I arrived at the restaurant there they were already seated.

It is a Wednesday and the room is close to full. The new owners haven't really changed the pretty chalet look. There is a noticeable

difference but it's not a massive makeover by any stretch. Not surprisingly, my parents already have a bottle of WA Sauv Blanc in an ice bucket on the table. Brooke has her obligatory glass of Coke in front of her - Diet no doubt. There are birthday wishes and kisses across the table before we touch glasses to Brooke on her special day.

Down to ordering. The menu is fairly simple and concise. I think they could stretch it a little further towards restaurant food. At the moment it is more like a brasserie menu, which is fine. Maybe just a couple of daily specials would suffice... Just an observation.

Our choices will give you a good indication of the ground covered by the menu. Brooke: chicken, avocado and Brie cheese a wrap. Dad: Tandoori Chicken Salad. Mum and I both had Prawn Linguini. My dish was beautiful. By

this stage I was on a weight gain diet after suffering a few days of that infamous stomach bug that did the rounds in Winter. Pasta, veggies, rice, bread, etc., were being consumed at an alarming rate. I took my 'eat anything that stays still long enough' attitude to Noosa. What a serendipitous place to be under those circumstances. Two of my favourite restaurants anywhere in Australia - and many more to explore.

Tucked away inside the Garden, Melaleuca House is easy to forget about when organising a business lunch or girls' lunch, or whatever lunch. Make a point to organise your next one at Melaleuca House. The food is good quality, our service experience was really good (and I

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am sure that nobody knew me) and the location could not be any better in our district. If you have time to linger after lunch, the opportunities for a relaxing and beautiful stroll are just about limitless.

Brooke likes to make a full day of her Birthday - in fact, a few days! 'Brookeday' had begun with breakfast at Rashays in Campbelltown with two of her 'besties'. I love Imraan and Assil. Like Brooke they are intelligent, successful (in their individual ways) and also completely unaffected. I regard that as a very rare attribute in modern society. I know I am not in many ways. I admire anyone who can maintain their 'self' through everything. Brooke has a wonderful base of friends.

Dinner will be with her mum and siblings. There are of course more plans for the rest of the week, culminating in her much anticipated Tea Party at my place on Sunday (while I was away in Noosa). Brooke is a fun girl. I love her.