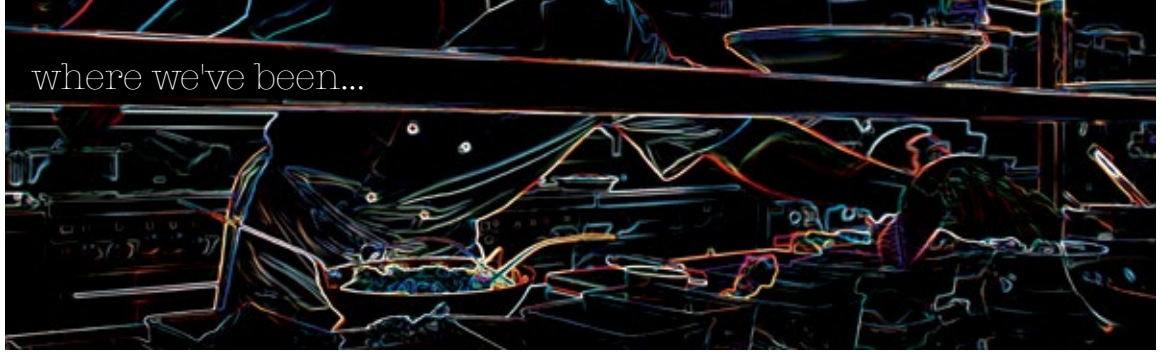


where we've been...



HARUKI Japanese Fusion Camden

There is a constant stream of new restaurants and cafes opening across Macarthur lately, but excitement still exists in the established ones. After quite a few years, Haruki Japanese Fusion is still one of my tips when I am asked for recommendations. Tasty, fresh and different! If like me, you're *Thaired*, try the Japanese/Korean dishes of Haruki.

I was dining with my friend Lara Croft. We hadn't spoken for ages so it was good to catch up on the adventure woman's life. Her Instagram page keeps me up to speed with her action packed life, but it was nice to chat in person. Lara's next adventure is in India and the Himalayas.

We actually met at Barenz for a drink first. Midweek at Barenz is perfectly chilled atmosphere for a chat. A pinot noir each and lots of chatter ensued. Lara knows about my new business venture and she was keen to find out how it was going. My Kirsty was in New Zealand visiting her family so that was another line of conversation. Like me, Lara loves live music and my latest gigs were discussed and reviewed.

We walked down to Haruki for dinner. The restaurant was more than half full on this, a Tuesday night. There was only one young girl running the room, so she was working hard. Maybe the healthy crowd caught them out. She did a great job and our turn to order came around quickly. We only ordered miso, edamame and pork gyoza to start with, oh

and a glass of pinot each. Living in Thirroul, two glasses is my limit at dinner in Macarthur.

We snacked on our salty little beans and Gyoza, that sat in a puddle of spicy ponzu and chilli oil, both were superb. Meantime, we decided on our next courses. Way too much of course. In my world as a food writer I am torn between being a relatively small eater and offering a decent cross section of the menu. This time I erred on the latter.

We had crazy little Korean Fried Rice Cakes served with sweet chilli sauce and peanut butter. We also had Roasted Cauliflower, Kombu butter and Furikake and two Korean BBQ style dishes, one chicken, one prawns. The cauliflower was last to arrive and we barely touched it. More a sampling. In fact, I think we had one floret of cauliflower each! The BBQ chicken was brilliant, so tasty and just enough chilli to get your mouth dancing. A chilled Adelaide Hills sauv blanc would have been a better wine match but I would have drunk it too fast. I can sit on a pinot.

Every dish was full of flavour and high quality produce. You can order with confidence at Haruki. If it sounds good, it tastes good. Eel is an acquired taste that I haven't achieved yet, so that ingredient is the only one that would deter me from blindly ordering any menu item at Haruki. It's different to all other Asian restaurants in Macarthur. Different in a very positive way.