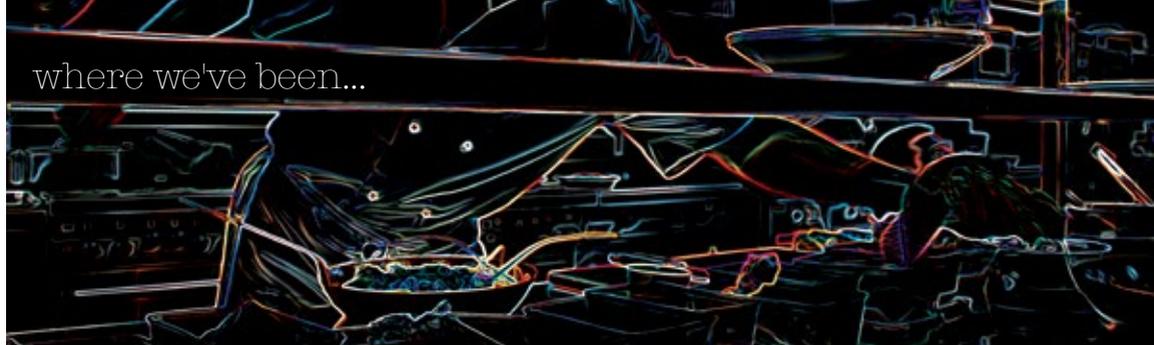


where we've been...



### **The Grid Cafe** Oran Park Town

I stumbled over this cafe and its amazing back story. After seeing that The Grid Cafe had replaced Oran Park Cafe on the outside of Oran Park Town Land Sales Office, I messaged the Facebook page to enquire if it was just a rebrand or new owners. "New owners," was the reply and I made an appointment to go out for a chat. And what a chat it turned out to be. The first revelation to spike my attention was that both chefs had worked together for the past ten years at Sydney's famous OTTO Ristorante, Woolloomooloo. But there was more!

As I was preparing to leave the appointment with one of the owner/chefs Aron Johnson, he had something he wanted to add to our conversation. "My wife said I had to make sure to tell you that I cooked in two Michelin Star restaurants, one in Rome and one in London." I hadn't quite stood up to leave, but I would have sat back down. Metaphorically though, I sat back down. He added that he was on British Masterchef too. If I had thought about my next question for a few seconds longer, it would not have come out of my mouth. "As a contestant?" Aron smiled and said, "No, as a celebrity chef."

I booked in for the coming Friday night immediately.

Kirsty and I arrived to find one big table of 'in the know' locals enjoying their night. We had the rest of the unassuming room to ourselves. It was a glorious summer evening around 22° with a gorgeous easterly breeze. The menu and wine list are concise but filled with excite-

ment. Then Aron approached our table to tell us about the night's specials: House cured salmon, grilled asparagus, fennel and orange salad, citrus dressing; Beef Tagliata, sliced eye fillet, wilted spinach, tomato, olive, caper salsa.

"Yes we will have both of them."

We also ordered Prosciutto, Watermelon and Feta Salad served with fresh mint and black and white balsamic dressing. The other dish from the normal menu was Pan Fried Gnocchi served with Pancetta, mushrooms, peas broccoli, chilli, garlic and Parmesan shavings. "... and a glass of 'Take it to the Grave' Pinot Noir please."

The food was as good as we had expected. Kirsty and I excitedly shared each dish. By the time we were on to our second course there was nobody in the Grid. That gave Aron and Krishna time to come over for a chat. They are lovely people and I gave them my knowledge of the district's dining culture.

Their dream is to serve a fairly typical cafe breakfast and lunch and then have some creative fun with the dinner menu. "Perfect," I exclaimed. "That is exactly what I would have recommended." I assured them that Macarthur diners will travel for great food. You will won't you.