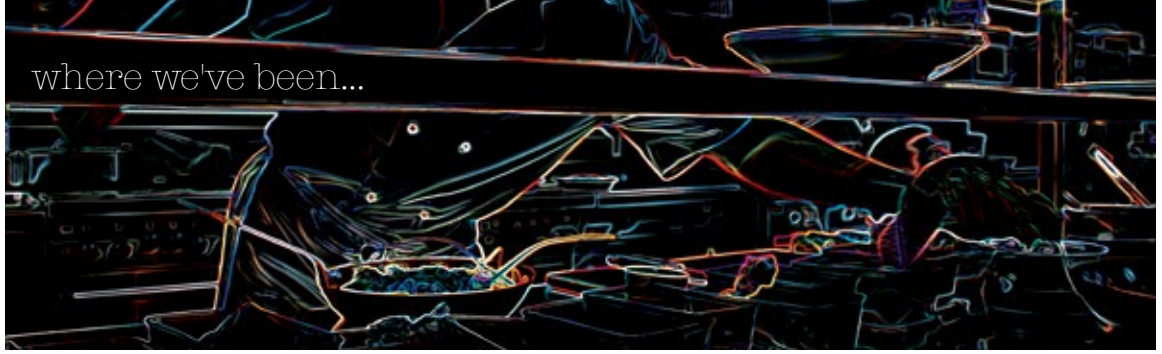


where we've been...



### **LUIGI'S ITALIAN** Narellan Town Centre

Since Covid, I've been trying to organise catch ups with my business friends on a regular basis. I have two motives - one is obvious - the other is I need to dine out for magazine reviews and I like to vary who I am dining with to make it more interesting for all of us. This time: Tim Bryan of Greenfields Developments and Scott Wakeling of Wakeling Automotive

I decided on Luigi's at Narellan Town Centre. Again, I have a number of motives: Longterm advertiser (tick); great food (tick); support the new owner Jo (tick). Luigi's has been one of the district's favourite restaurants for 15 years. The recent sale to staff member Jo has changed very little. The only thing I noticed is a much appreciated tweak of the wine list, introducing some Italian food wines like Tempranillo, Chianti and Dolcetto.

Whenever I post about Luigi's on social media, it draws out their fans to tell me their favourite dishes. Amusingly, Scott told us that when he mentioned he was lunching at Luigi's, his wife Greer immediately asked him what he would be ordering - then proceeded to rattle off her favourites. Tim too is a regular at Luigi's and admitted that despite spending some time perusing the menu, he would probably order his usual. He did.

We reached consensus on a bottle of Squealing Pig Tempranillo - and again on our entree order. We all went for a seductive menu 'special': Burnt Butter and Lemon Thyme

Prawns. I know this breaks all the rules of dining with me... but.

Thankfully our mains were all different, offering you a little more information about Luigi's menu. Tim's usual is the Eye Fillet. Scott went for Lamb Back Strap served on mashed potato with broccoli and a cherry tomato and rosemary butter sauce. That dish has featured in Luigi's ads before. It looks amazing. I opted for Risotto Marinara.

We talked about the business world, both locally and globally. After opening a Volvo dealership in Wollongong, Wakelings have purchased some land and are preparing a multibrand assault on our coastal neighbour. He conceded that it's a different market. "Weird," was his word. I corrected him. "No, it's a more normal market, Macarthur is the unusual market. We have a strong cohesive community that is the envy of other regions."

Wakelings have over many years become the dominant force in Macarthur's motor vehicle retailing. Scott's father Paul, set out to become a part of the community. Donating over \$1.6m to Campbelltown and Camden hospitals over some 20 years via Wheels For Life, cemented their standing. But there was far more work done to build credibility and reputation amongst our population. Scott now has that challenge in Wollongong - where no such dominant market force exists - and a seemingly weaker sense of community. Anyway - we wish Wakelings well.