

Circuit Food

Walk to Lunch

How far you want to walk is a matter for you. I think *The Rocks Dynasty Chinese Restaurant* at the very end of Kent Street is well worth the 20 minute stroll. Try the steamed dumplings, the mermaid's tresses, the crab in silk and the whole fish steamed with ginger and shallots.

A little shorter walk, but the other way, takes you to *Casa Asturiana*, the best Spanish in town. Squid in its own ink is a fabulous Tapa, but all are spicy and good; prawns in garlic, chilli and tomato sauce my second favourite, but have six at least between four.

A Roddy Meagher-length walk will take you to *Alex's Italian Restaurant* which opened only this year. I have been three times. The first time I was very disappointed. Although some bits were good, the service was very poor. I ordered the baked lamb and was told 30 minutes later that it was all gone.

Somehow, and I truly don't know how they heard I was disappointed, I received a very nice note offering me that thing that there is no such thing as - and for two!

The antipasto was excellent this time, varied, and if you choose your own, can be almost fat-free. I chose trout pieces, mussels, tomato vinaigrette with basil. This I followed with the arrosto del giorno which was tender baby lamb roasted in a piece - part rib, part shoulder - with potatoes and rosemary and crisp on the outside in the Mediterranean manner. This was perfect, as befits the Specialty of the House.

Let me tell you that by "free" they meant free! They filled me and my companion to the point where one had to have a sleep before driving home, on white and red wine of excellent quality and would not even let us tip.

Feeling a trifle guilty, I went back again and it was, if anything, better than the second time. The minestrone was absolutely in traditional style and the house special pasta for the day was penne with a spicy sauce of Italian sausage slices, tomato, garlic and chilli. I only had the entrée size but after the soup that was plenty.

I tasted the rabbit casserole, which was gamey in a nicely thickened sauce and wonderful for the winter.

Wines by the glass are readily available and of excellent quality.

Chris Hickey and Lyn join me in recommending *Alex's*.

The Rocks Dynasty Restaurant
35 Kent Street, Sydney
Telephone 252 3010

Casa Asturiana
77 Liverpool Street, Sydney
Telephone 264 1010

Alex's Italian Restaurant
161 King Street, Sydney
Telephone 223 7677

Out of Town

Intrafamilial accusations of patricide took me to Murwillumbah for a few days and common sense dictated camping in Byron Bay. Nachos at the *Beach Hotel* made a great late lunch the "short" day, and the fish and chips on the beach make the best fast food in town.

But back to the very top of the tree goes *The Rocks* in the *Byron Bay Resort Motel*, which was the subject of my very first *Bar News* restaurant review.

This casual but elegant restaurant has seen many circuit dinners indeed, and I for one have never had a disappointment, but Tuesday night there was a stunner. We were three and shared fresh green Yamba king prawns grilled with bacon and served with a light Hollandaise on the side which were just perfect, and a large serve for an entrée - we had two each.

Next, Corsican seafood soup, a creamy tomato, tarragon and garlic soup with white fleshed fish chunks, local prawns and mussels, garnished with crispy garlic croutons, which was tangy fresh and delicious.

A ravioli stuffed with potato and garlic and served with tomato, parsley and basil sauce was a surprisingly light and very tasty addition.

Whilst sharing these we also shared garlic foccacia, "chat" potato skins, tiny and crisp and served with a perfect aioli.

The wine list is short, but excellent. We drank Pikes Clare Valley Riesling and black beer!

Don't go if you hate garlic, but for everyone else it is a "must do" if you are up that way.

The dead father, you ask? A Santa Gertrudis bull done it.

The Rocks
Cape Byron Resort Motel
16 Lawson Street, Byron Bay
Telephone 066 857 663

John Coombs QC □

Silence is Golden

"I must confess to an enduring admiration for those advocates who retire to the monastic silence of the Bench. I found, and still occasionally find, my opponent's address to be unendurably boring and I have only to listen to one: the judges suffer many. Indeed you might say listening is their vocation and for men and women accustomed to having their say, their behaviour is exemplary and too seldom applauded."

Sir Maurice Byers CBE, QC,
speaking at "The Mason Court and Beyond"
conference held in September 1995. □