

The Original VILLAGE VOICE



Official journal of the Queen Street and West Woollahra Association Ltd

No.97 April 2010 www.qswwa.com.au

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President's Report

QSWWA act as your community voice, looking after the interests of both residents and businesses. Woollahra Municipal Council supports the work of the Association.

The Original *Village Voice* is the mouthpiece of the Queen Street & West Woollahra Association (QSWWA). In 2009, thanks to the initiative and drive of local retailer, Mary Read, (a director of QSWWA), over 30 traders joined the QSWWA Business Group. Mary was also responsible for the development of the Association's website: www.qswwa.com.au which lists the many businesses in the area.

The centre of West Woollahra and the hub of the Village is the junction of Queen and Moncur Streets. The area remains Australia's greatest conserved Victorian architecture precinct, with its heritage houses, shop-fronts and gardens.

I acknowledge your elected committee who give their personal time freely to be a voice for you. Past President **Ken Gresham** (now Vice Pres) brings years of local knowledge to the committee, and **Annette Robinson**, long-time Editor and **Diana Dennison**, acting Editor of the Original *Village Voice* continue to produce your local newsletter every 3 months. **Phillip Mitchellhill** keeps an eye on footpaths, curbs and gutters as well as street lighting for the StreetWatch programme. Treasurer, **Alan Smith** provides this non-profit organisation with his excellent skills and handles all correspondence. Powerhouse of energy and initiative, **Mary Read**, has established the Traders' Group and brought the website to life. **Richard Banks**, long-term business member, acts as Minutes Secretary and brings a youthful view to issues at hand. **Jennifer Rose** keeps an eye on the legal side of things. Her husband, **Alex Nettis** generously invites us into his restaurant, **Zigolini's**, for our committee meetings. We have given **Rosemary McDonald** the membership portfolio. Her mother was a founding member of the QSWWA. **Robin Brampton**, erstwhile Editor and President, continues to offer valuable input and organises the advertising for the *Village Voice*.

The Annual Christmas Carols Event was held as usual in Chiswick Gardens, opened by **Mayor Petrie**. There were 400 present from the very short to the very old, enjoying the choirs and a picnic on the grass. Thanks to **Robyn Cosgrove Rugs** and **Woollahra Council** for their continuing support as well as local businesses and publicans.

ELIZABETH GERVAY, QSWWA President

EDITOR IN ACTION



Diana Dennison with John Olsen at the launch of his exhibition Culinaria, at son Tim's gallery in March.



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GREEKS ON QUEEN

THE SELL FISH FAMILY



Steve Costi and son Con

THE Costi family sells a lot of fish, and, far from selfish, they serve more than generous portions in their new fish emporium on Queen Street. Steve Costi's father, Con, arrived in Australia in 1952 and worked in the Port Kembla Steel Works. In 1958 he opened a fish and chip shop in Haldon Street, Lakemba, a suburb already boasting several such shops. By 1958, only Con's remained, having eclipsed the rest. Con and his wife and four children stayed there until 1965 when he took them back to Cyprus for three years. On their return, Con bought a fish shop in South Parade, Auburn. Growing up, the children showed that selling fish was in their blood - all Steve's siblings have fish shops.

WHAT'S A GREEK URN?

AROUND the corner from Queen Street, and claiming to be the longest-running business in the same venue in the Village, is Salon Philippe. Philippe? I don't think so... Scratch the surface and you find another Greek, Elestherios (pronounced 'lefterios) Antoniou. "I've been here for 41 years, in this building," he told *Village Voice*. "We lived in Bowral for 16 years and I commuted, by train, reading the Greek Tragedies and Comedies and listening to my favourite music. It meant giving up the very lucrative Saturday morning trade. Now we've moved back to Darlinghurst, and we love it."



Philippe (Elestherios Antoniou) with his Urn

Philippe as the non-Greeks know him, was born in Athens

and came to Australia after his National Service, aged 24, in 1967. "I was interpreter on an American detachment, but I was young and outspoken, and very anti-dictatorship, very democratic – and there was a threat of dictatorship at the time. It seemed the right moment to leave.

"I found myself an oddity here – I had no family network, unlike most of the Eastern Suburbs Greeks, and I missed the Greek element terribly. I landed a job at Alexander's in Double Bay, which was very trendy, and did all the models' hair. Then I came to Woollahra, which was very low-key at the time – not like now. I've been renting here ever since.

"In 1980 I did an exhibition for the National Trust at Lindesay in Darling Point. We made the whole basement Greek." 'lefterios showed *Village Voice* what he brought to Australia in his hand-luggage when he came – an urn and a bust of Aphrodite. No wonder he says he still feels as if he's in exile on Moncur Street!

GENEROUSLY GREEK

ALEXANDROS NETTIS, proprietor of Zigolini's, is a man of generous proportions, rather like the portions he serves in his popular restaurant. Alex comes from a family who were always involved in the restaurant and café business, so it seemed natural for him to do a degree in Hotel Management in Greece. Alex has been in Australia for a 25 years. He supervised the seven cafes and restaurants in the QVB when it opened and bought Zigolini's 15 years ago. He is particularly interested in preserving the slow-cook methods of his forebears and maintaining the traditional foods of Italy, Greece, Spain and France, within an Australian context. Alex welcomes the input of his regulars and maintains his own 'village' within the Queen Street Village.



Alex Nettis

THE HATZIS CONNECTION

THE Hatzis family has had a presence on Queen Street since 1984 when Dimitriou 'Jim' Hatzis began running the Queen Street Deli. In time, Jim was joined behind the counter by his sons, Harry and Arthur. Arthur moved across the road to open Nostimo in 1997. This writer remembers the initial fit-out, which had tables suspended from wires in the window, swaying slightly, and beautiful plates in clear colours of watermelon, lime, turquoise and lemon. They were hand-made Greek pottery sourced by Jim, but, as pottery does, they all chipped and had to be replaced with something more durable in a matter of weeks. The menu is modern café style with Greek touches (Spanakopita, Faki, Moussaka), but includes perennial favourites such as steak sandwiches, BLTs, pizzas and bruscettas. Harry's Italian wife, Frances Tedeschi, runs the Brunello Cucinelli shoe shop farther up on the other side of Queen Street.

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ANTIQUUE EXODUS

IS THERE an exodus of antique dealers from Queen Street? Once a destination street for those on the hunt for top-end antiques and art works, Queen Street has seen the disappearance of many of the above retailers over the last few years.

Martyn Cook is on the move. **Ros Palmer Interiors** has a CLOSING DOWN SALE sign splashed across its shopfront. Ros and her partner are retiring, or trying to.

A diaspora of our favourites still remain: **Anne Schofield** presides over her fine period jewellery. **Howell & Howell** are still firmly entrenched with resident Staffy, Joshua, not moving from his leather armchair.

Michael & Victoria Greene are not going anywhere; they've been there for nearly a quarter of a century. They buy and sell exquisite antique silver, porcelain, glass and jewellery and do repairs. There is always a tray of sterling silver napkin rings (perfect for Christening presents) for families who still use table linen. Victoria remembers their opening window display – a large salver and on it a tub of napkin rings. "A young American couple came in, and decided to buy the silver tray. Then the wife began looking through the napkin rings. She put a lot to one side, supposedly as rejects, looking for the one that suited. But no, she wanted the whole pile she had selected. So then we had to replenish our stock!"



Ros Palmer
Village Voice Page 4



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Ian Perryman and his wife Belinda are still there after 20 years selling oriental carpets. Apart from antique rugs from Turkey, Persia, the Caucasus, etc, they also have a large range of kelims and other flat-weave runners, as well as textiles, fabric pieces and old Flemish tapestries. antiquerugs.com.au

Most antique dealers already have warehouses in Alexandria or Redfern to house the majority of their stock (what is on show in Queen Street is the tip of the iceberg), but today's rents are making it hard to continue on Queen – even those owning their own buildings, such as Ros Palmer, still feel the need to move on. As Ros said: "We just want to retire from being shopkeepers and concentrate of the interior decoration side of our business. But we still have to sell the building". And, it appears, the rest of the iceberg!

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GALLERY GOSSIP

THE DISASTERS OF WAR

REX IRWIN'S latest exhibition, *GOYA Los Desastres de la Guerra*, is a triumph, and a salutary reminder of the subject. "This edition is a very early print of a very rare edition of the artist's work. I exhibited this series seven years ago and three weeks later, Australia went into Iraq. My English friends said, 'Rex, what appalling timing'", Rex told *Village Voice*. "But my Australian friends said, 'God! You're a genius!'"
Let's hope nothing happens in the next month!



Francisco Goya's Que Valor!

CUISINE OF THE SUN

At **Tim Olsen's Gallery**, Culinaria, an exhibition of paintings and works on paper, by Tim's father, John, was opened by restaurateur, **Rick Stein**, from Bannisters Guesthouse in Mollymook. **John Olsen**, 83, a great cook and lively and erudite as ever, spoke delightfully about food and the sun and their bearing on his work. His zeal for Mediterranean cuisine stems from his time living in Majorca sharing a house with eminent British writer, Robert Graves. **Lucio Galletta** was upstairs overseeing the paella production, which was served to patrons on opening night. The catalogue/cookbook is on sale at the gallery for \$29.95.



John Olsen

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VALE EVA BREUER

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the death of one of Sydney's most colourful and lively art dealers. Eva, 66, died in February after an extended battle with cancer. She will be remembered fondly by all those who attended her Saturday and Wednesday openings, which overflowed into Moncur Street from No 96 which she had occupied for 15 years. Before that she dealt from home, having only started in the business after her children had grown up. We will miss her exuberant personality.



Eva Breuer (Photo:Phillip Castleton)

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The Queen Street And West Woollahra Association Ltd

ABN 98 002 872 433



A residents and traders group covering the area bounded by Jersey Road, Edgcliff Road and Oxford Street, West Woollahra

Patron: Neville Wran AC QC

President: Elizabeth Anne Gervay

Vice President: Ken Gresham

Committee: Richard Banks, Mary Read, Diana Dennison, Phillip Mitchelhill,

Annette Robinson, Jennifer Rose and Alan Smith

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DOWN YOUR STREET

Queen Street's Grand Old Dame At 115 Gets a Facelift at Last



AFTER a long wait during the planning and permission phase, Dunkley developments has visibly begun the renovation, restoration and conservation of this historic pile, where our **Dame Joan** spent several years of her childhood. A contemporary residential addition will be erected behind the original house.

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

Your village website & newsletter

Did you know that Woollahra Village has its own website? It is a very useful tool when looking for local services, and makes living in Woollahra easier.

www.woollahravillage.com.au produces an interesting email-newsletter 8 times a year, which provides you with 'what's-on' in Woollahra, gallery openings, events at local businesses, special offers and articles of interest.

Should you wish to send some local information, promote a fundraiser or inform the community about an upcoming event or activity, woollahravillage.com.au would love to offer you their editorial support.

To join the enews' subscriber list simply sign-up on the home page. To contact woollahravillage.com.au please send an email to newsletter@woollahravillage.com.au

Mary Read

The Winning Sprint



Geoff Hugel in Queen Street

Congratulations to another famous local, **Geoff Hugel**, (a shadow of his former self) on his spectacular re-entry into competitive swimming in the Nationals at the age of 32. Geoff is a familiar sight on Queen Street, often seen walking a very small dog in the village on Saturday mornings.

Spice of Spicer

Turkish-born owner, Arman Beyazgulkoku, uses spices inspired by his homeland (think of the Spice Market in Istanbul) for many of the dishes he creates in his small but chic **Spicer Street Café**. Serving a fusion cuisine with a Middle-Eastern slant, it must be the only venue in Sydney with Egyptian iced hibiscus tea (with fresh lime and mint) on the menu.

Arman's grandmother was Syrian; hence his Syrian-inspired poached chicken with fattoush



Arman Beyazgulkoku

salad. Then there's Shashuka eggs with za'atar (an Israeli speciality) and grilled haloumi with roasted eggplant. Arman uses star anise and orange blossom syrup in the poached peaches he serves with fresh ricotta and toasted brioche.

Due to the narrowness of the footpath, perambulator-wielding mummies find it virtually impossible to park their infant-mobiles outside the cafe, but not so cyclists, whose wheels have a slimmer profile. This venue also attracts dog owners who tether their hounds to the railings whilst sipping Giancarlo arabica coffee and having something irresistible to eat such as a Frangipane Tart – the thinnest shortcrust pastry with a filling of fresh figs or pears in frangipane (a custard of ground almonds).

COMINGS AND GOINGS

FRESH IS BEST

MOST notable newcomer to the culinary end of Queen Street must be **Costi's Famous Fish Co.** Near the newsagent, the new slick outlet is marble from top to bottom and displays beautiful lobsters, sushi and sashimi. The oysters are shucked onsite. **Chef Joel Best**, (ex Pier and Fishface) is in charge in the kitchen and catering is available on request. This writer ordered bowls of fish cocktails and chips for a recent event which were chef-delivered to the delight of her guests who pronounced them 'the ultimate in fish 'n' chips!'

GARRY GOES



Garry the fruitologist

AFTER over a decade in the fruit shop, Garry has returned 'to the shire' from whence he commuted daily. Customers and local retailers gave Garry parting gifts and we are all sorry to see him go. When *Village Voice* visited, we saw the framed Fruitology Award given to him by Boucher & Co, and a lovely book was delivered from Lesley McKays bookshop while we were there. Garry reminisced about customers such as the lady from Elizabeth Bay who bought a tray of raspberries each week when in season (how many punnets is that?) because her husband loved them. Another bought truckloads of those tiny toms on the vine. When asked how she could consume so many, she replied "Oh I don't eat them, Garry, I just have them in bowls for décor!"

TWO-SHOP FAMILY

THE Chinese-Australian couple, who have been running the fruit-and-veg shop/grocer next-door to Costi's for two years, are now your local fruitologists as well. Although they have both been here for 20 years, they met as high-school teachers in Shanghai having unknowingly attended the same university. "Now we will just concentrate on groceries here,"



*James Mo and Yina Hong,
New to Fruitology*

Yina told *Village Voice* when we visited them in their first venue, "and include essential items of hardware so you might avoid a trip to the Junction or Oxford Street." *Village Voice* noticed padlocks, double-sided tape, masking tape, double-adapters, paint brushes, sink strainers and plugs, retractable tape measures and more. Plus party cameras and candles. Very handy...

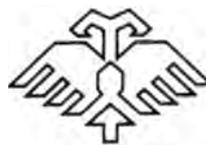
All the fruit and vegetables will be in their green-grocer outlet along near Vic's Meats. At the moment, the grocer's-shop is a work-in-progress, but is much easier to move around in now that the central island has been ditched. It acted as a traffic-calming device in much the same way as Spicer St, Peaker Lane and Alton St do for drivers - slowing things down and causing frustration!

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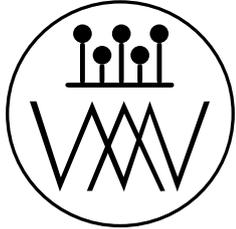


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