

Kingsleys Steak & Crabhouse

Chris Hickey and Mark Howard, a solicitor from Goulburn, recently concluded a line of bushfire burn cases and were in a mood to celebrate.

Over the year, Chris and I had substantially defeated the bookmaker - wagering only on rugby. Accordingly, we three repaired, along with Mark's fiancé, Melissa, to the Kingsleys Steak & Crabhouse. The restaurant is the furthest north on the wharf at 9 Cowper Wharf Road, just past Manta Ray and Otto's. The setting was lovely, with the Domain in the background and the marina just outside. It was a very brisk and busy Friday, two weeks before Christmas. Despite the busyness of the season, the service was attentive, although the meal itself was slow - but who was in a hurry?

After beer and a nibble of bread, we ordered.

Chris had salt and pepper calamari. This was wide strips of beautifully tender calamari with a crisp finish of salt, pepper and chilli.

I had *mussels mariniere*. These were small, local black mussels, perfectly steamed and doused in a sauce of white wine, garlic, chilli, tomato and cream(!). They were absolutely delicious and the sauce slipped down very, very nicely.

Mark and Melissa skipped entrées because they are big on meat and sweets. No-one had the crab and it was a Goulburn meat-eaters' lunch. Chris had 150-day grain-fed rump which came, as ordered, rare, and served with an enormous baked potato. He munched his way through this dish very happily indeed.

Mark had a Riverina grass-fed T-bone and Melissa something similar. I had a Burrawang porterhouse from northern New South Wales, ordered rare to medium rare. This was the only flaw in an otherwise fabulous meal, because it turned up closer to medium than I like and therefore a bit dry.

The side orders were all superb. An iceberg lettuce, tomato and Spanish onion salad with a frothy, light Belgian-style mayonnaise was very tasty and a good complement to the meat.

Next, a small pot of mushrooms braised with garlic, which were lovely. Also, we succumbed to one serve of chips between the four of us.

Some Petaluma riesling and a Margaret River shiraz helped with all of that and then we embarked upon sweets.

The country folk went for sticky-date pudding, which they shared, and Chris and I each had the special of the day, which was sorbet of three fruits: mango, lemon and apricot. These were light and delicious and made armagnac seem very appropriate.

Not cheap, but wonderfully presented by very cheerful and pleasant staff in very nice surroundings.

Kingsleys Steak & Crabhouse

9 Cowper Wharf Road

Woolloomooloo

Tel: (02) 9331 7788

Open for and Dinner: Seven days

Credit Cards: All major cards

John Coombs QC

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