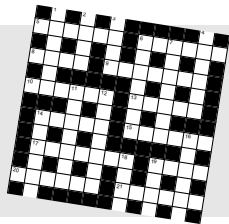


THE ROTUNDA

NORTH FITZROY'S COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

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EDITORIAL

The Rotunda is back for 2022

It's been too long. The last time you had a fresh copy of *The Rotunda* in your hands was the height of holiday season, when you were tearing your hair out frantically sourcing last-minute gifts. You got some nice soap for Mum – yet again. You got your teenage cousin some deodorant – how imaginative. You panicked and bought your sister an iTunes gift card. Who uses iTunes anymore?

The new year, the holidays and summer came and went. No doubt some of you already feel a little jaded by work or school, but you've still got some things to smile about: We aren't locked down and the latest issue of *The Rotunda* is right in front of ya. It's going to be a good 2022.

This edition, as always, is chock-a-block. Our series on local activism continues with the amazing story of Fitzroy Pool and the fight to save it. We've got a long-awaited sequel to the 'pub crawl in real time' from Issue 01 – this time, it's a quest for coffee. Rounding out this issue is Street Style, a report from our dog-field correspondent Ludo, an article on a beloved North Fitzroy restaurant and some local cricketers' fond memories of the late, great Shane Warne. Oh, and the crossword, of course.

***“As always, if
you're interested
in contributing,
advertising or
donating, check out
our website or email
northfitzroyrotunda@
gmail.com. The future
of this publication
depends on it.”***

The copy you're holding has gone from computer to printing press to freight truck; from truck to HQ to our deliverers' homes, and from our deliverers' homes to yours. Thank you to the diligent and tireless distributors who make it all happen. But I won't keep you any longer. Enjoy our issue for March '22.

**We respect and acknowledge
the traditional custodians of the
land, the Wurundjeri people of
the Kulin Nation.**

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LOVE FOR FITZROY POOL RUNS DEEP

Full story pages 4-5




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Protective polka-dots

North Fitzroy’s streets and footpaths have been getting a makeover

First came the ‘3D’ zebra crossing outside Piedimonte’s installed by the City of Yarra in 2018, and now our bike lanes have gone full polka dot.

Bright yellow spots have recently appeared at the intersections of Kneen and Falconer streets and at Napier Street and Queens Parade.

The big spots are teamed with bold yellow lines, fetching green paving and fluoro-accented striped, collapsible posts. Together they scream ‘Look at me!’.

Which is the point. They have been installed for safety reasons, though they also make quite the fashion statement for those interested in trends in paving design colourways.

The new traffic measures are part of a VicRoads ‘pop-up bike lane’ program across numerous Melbourne suburbs that have been installed to connect key bike riding routes.

The very big yellow dots have been introduced as they are visually different from customary city road markings which are usually boring old stripes.

The pop-up bike lanes will only be in place for 12 to 18 months and will be removed or converted to permanent routes if they are successful and more funding is found.

The Napier Street and Queens Parade intersection situated a few metres from the new Gasworks school, Wurun Senior Campus, is a particularly eye-catching example of the new approach to safety.

Motorists really have no choice but to slow down given the psychedelic explosion of dots, lines and collapsible bollards in riotous colours.

The Pop-up Bike program across Melbourne is costing \$15.9 million and is aimed at helping make cycling safer while seeking to strike a compromise among the needs of all transport users.

A Department of Transport spokesman said: “We’re installing 100 kilometres of new and improved lanes and treatments – including yellow ‘polka dots’ in Fitzroy North – to give people alternative options for travelling as the community continues to get back to normal travel.”



STREET STYLE



This lovely lady provided a bit of an antidote one Saturday afternoon, whilst your correspondent was just a tiny bit underwhelmed by a passing parade of locals in Birkenstocks, vests, exercise outfits and tasteful linen (not all at once). It was like ray of sunshine to see this full face of exquisitely applied make-up, dressed in some brighter hues.

NAME:
Sara Tonin.

WHAT DO YOU DO?
I am a Drag Artist. But it’s a double life as I work a 40-hour week in retail (not in drag!) and then my drag on top of that! She’s a very busy lady!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD TODAY?
I’m just visiting. I currently live in Carnegie, so it’s very quiet and suburban, the perfect place for a hibernating Drag Queen! You have actually caught me waiting to go upstairs to a Hens party I was booked for!

WHO ARE YOU WEARING?
This costume was made by Morgan Wells, from Morgan Wells Drag Closet.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT YOUR WORK?
I love the creative freedom to be whoever I want to be! And also being able to meet so many people that I may have never met before. Including yourself!

WHAT DREW YOU TO DRAG?
Everything is so heightened and every detail is just taken to the next level.

TELL US ABOUT THE LIFE IN DRAG?
I’ve been doing drag for seven years so it’s definitely been a journey to get to where my skills are now. YouTube is your best friend, you can learn how to do a lot of things from YouTube. But nothing compares to being in the dressing room with your sisters and getting ready together and sharing tips and tricks you’ve learned on

your travels. The Drag scene in Melbourne is massive! There were so many queens born over lockdowns who are now able to get out and start performing.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD?
I love that there is something for everybody.

THREE WORDS TO DESCRIBE THIS HOOD?
Diverse, Artsy, Community.

WHERE DID YOU GROW UP?
I grew up in a town called Bacchus Marsh! I’m a country gal.

HAVE YOU STUDIED?
I have a Bachelor of Arts (Musical Theatre) from Federation University Ballarat.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST HURDLE YOU’VE OVERCOME?
The biggest hurdle for me was definitely the passing of my mother in 2015. It was undoubtedly something that changed my life and my path forever. I had only done drag once or twice prior to her passing, and after she passed I realised that when I am in drag I look like her, which was a huge reason for me to continue doing drag.

ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT STATE OF MIND?
Organised chaos!

WHEN AND WHERE WERE YOU HAPPIEST?
Currently right now! I am extremely lucky and grateful to be doing what I love three days a week and I wouldn’t change that for anything!

IF YOU COULD BE STANDING ANYWHERE A YEAR FROM NOW, WHERE WOULD IT BE?
In the line at the bank waiting to cash a BIG FAT CHEQUE!

WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR COFFEE?
A few friends have recommended “Industry Beans”!

NEVER GONNA GIVE BREW UP

After waking up hungover, a young man tours North Fitzroy's cafés in search of a remedy. He gets pretty buzzed along the way

By Charlie Gill

Illustrations by Marnie Florence-McNeil

Loyal readers of *The Rotunda* will recall that our very first issue included a 'pub crawl in real time' – in which this newspaper's editor, along with his good friend, got a pint at six North Fitzroy pubs in one night and documented their experience. (There were many, many typos come the last entry.) A night out on the piss leaves one quite dusty the morning after, and thus it became apparent that *The Rotunda* has a responsibility to embark on a similar expedition for a beverage that can help one deal with a hangover: coffee. Besides, we do live smack bang in the middle of what the world calls the 'Latte Belt', so let's see what North Fitzroy's cafes – well, some of them – have to offer.



8:00 AM. Some nameless caffeinated concoction from the servo on Alexandra Parade.

Aarggghhh, Myy mouh... A horrible taste... What hapened last night? My eyes hurt... The world is hazy and my mind is...just... Ugh. Where's Ned? Did we get... an Uber? not stil drunk am I? No. Waking upp is just awful. My eyes feel like two possums slept in them. I just need coffee and I nneed one now. Where... OK... That servo next to Scooterama. Ergh.. The big silver machine is bearing down on me... Oh no I'm panicking;



I'm pressing every button. When did we leave the pub? Is Ned dead? Whatever ... what is this in my cup? It has milk and water and maybe some petrol in it. Whatever. It's not bad. i need more.

8:30 AM. A long black from Aphro and Wolfe.

I'm staggering up Brunswick St on a pilgrimage to the Café Mecca that radiates outwards from Piedimonte's. But here's Aphro and Wolfe, a little off-Broadway, besides the oval. Oh, God. I still don't feel good... I'm beginning to recall last night's events but can't really elaborate... I will say that the last thing I can remember is stumbling out of The Pinnacle and painting the asphalt with my dinner. Yuck.

What will I get? Not a latte, nor a shot of espresso... too brutal, too early, the sun still sits low in the sky, the alcohol still sits high in my stomach. But a long black... perfect. I've taken it to a bench in Edinburgh Gardens. The caffeine is slowly unclouding my head.

***“Waking up is just awful.
My eyes feel like two
possums slept in them.
I need a coffee.”***

9:00 AM. A shot of espresso at North Island.

Now I'm right in the heartland. I've sat down at North Island on Scotchmer Street – the quiet, relaxing and underrated café next to Dench – but with a jolt I've realised I know nothing about describing coffee. I'm frantically googling, trying to learn what piquant, astringent and tallowy mean. Do I ask the guy on the other table if this coffee tastes tallowy to him? I think he'd probably punch me. Which reminds me of when a girl told me she wanted to be a barrister and I asked which café she'd like to work at. She looked like she wanted to punch me. (Though it was an honest mistake). Anyway, my phone is not providing me any good answers regarding coffee description. There's a photo from last night of me and Ned on a seesaw. Oh, God – is that our last ever photo together?

9:30 AM. A café latte at Dench.

Here's the thing: the company that made your iPhone isn't named Jobs and the world's most famous electric car company isn't known as Elon. These men – despite their influence and importance – still lacked the confidence to go eponymous and thus, upon walking into John Dench's café on Scotchmer Street, one is immediately impressed – almost intimidated. Does their coffee walk the talk?

It does. However a waiter informs me that John Dench actually sold the café last year. The new regime started using different coffee – an ambitious move, one that would seemingly plunge Dench and its tranquil environment into deep chaos – but switched back after complaints. I'm in dire need of a smooth, gently-as-she-goes latte, the kind that says to your stomach: this is the first day of the rest of your life.

It's going down very well and – in Dench's ordered and spacious interior, with white brick walls and newspapers perfectly placed on tables – life seems pretty good. I'm four coffees in and the sun is shining down joyously. Summer is beautiful and winter will be too. Ned might be gone forever, but he's in heaven right now, and I'm comfortable with that.

An older man at the table in front of me is reading *The Age*, no doubt riding the same wave of contentedness that I am. The painting on the wall above me is of somewhere in Bosa, Sardinia, which looks lovely. I'd like to visit someday. For now, I'm happy here.

10:30 AM. An iced latte at the Tin Pot.

It's heating up and I need something cold and my rule is one coffee per café, so I've left Dench and headed for its greatest rival; its antithesis; the yin to its yang. Can you imagine walking into Mary Poppin's handbag? That's what it's like walking into the Tin Pot. In a good way. Its sprawling interior is a pandemonium of furniture, a cornucopia of art and things and people splattered on and in-between its big green walls.



No two chairs are the same – endless mirrors – an antique candle scone – decadent low-hanging lights. I'm sitting beside a classical sculpture of bare-chested woman holding a patera and below landscape paintings of far-off mountains – nymphs of Aphrodite and old men in tweed hunting jackets and Parisian intellectuals, all would feel at home here. Countless portraits of Asian women advertising Nugget Boot Polish adorn the wall behind the bar. Every artistic age and every human era everywhere all at once and never-ending; it is overwhelming and maybe not the best place to be when I'm five coffees deep and feeling very excited and a little bit anxious.

And that's all before looking outside! Dench is hidden away on Scotchmer but the Tin Pot is right on the front line where trams roll past filled with masked faces regarding you regarding them (they always seem to know something I don't), where The Parkview stands proudly on the opposite corner, where a buzz of people enter and exit Piedimonte's incessantly. The speaker is playing MJ's "Don't Stop Til You Get Enough", very clever subliminal messaging and it works on me well. (God I'm paranoid.)

I'll have another iced latte, thank you. They're delicious.



11:30 AM. A cappuccino from Piccante.

I've crashed. The Tin Pot was intense, or maybe I just was, maybe that's the tin pot calling the kettle black (pun absolutely intended). Sorry. Writing-wise, that's all I've got. I'm done. I don't want more coffee, but there are still so many cafés to get to. I'll round out my expedition at Piccante.

I ask the girls behind the counter for a cappuccino – looking at them with the sad, manic eyes of a junkie on a come down. The staff here are young, tattooed and boisterous. The music is loud and good, the best of any café so far: harmonica from a Western movie played over a steady jazz beat; happy Latin rhythms; an amped-up remix of a classic soul song. The tinsel is still up from Christmas. It sort of feels like I'm in a party-loving share house. The refrain of the next song is "cocaine is a serious drug".

It's all putting me in the mood for a different kind of beverage. And suddenly my phone buzzes. Ned's texted. He's alive! And would you look at that? It's 12:01 PM. Maybe he's up for an afternoon beer...



LOVE FOR FITZROY



Thousands gather in Fitzroy Pool to protest its closure.

Summer wouldn't be the same without Fitzroy Pool, one of the Inner North's most precious gems. 25 years ago, it was almost taken from us

By Charlie Gill

This is the third instalment in The Rotunda's series of articles highlighting community activism by North Fitzroy and Fitzroy residents. The story of Brunswick Street Oval (as told in last year's September issue); the Brooks Crescent residents who fought to keep their homes (the November issue)... Over the last five decades, activists have completely shaped what North Fitzroy is today.

At the door, new, dry arrivals walk out and scan countless faces for people they know. On the near side, children's hearts burst with frenzied joy as they splash and shout, the commotion only tempered by sharp sideways glances from watchful lifeguards. In the lap lanes, swimmers' thoughts teeter between concerns over both their freestyle form and silent lane politics – am I too slow for the fast lane? Am I too fast for the slow lane? Should I overtake? Babies cling to their parent's arms and glide through the little pool's shallow waters. On the far side, tattooed hipsters talk, read and bake on the concrete.

But you've heard this all before – Fitzroy Pool needs no introduction. It is a rockstar, or as close to a rockstar as a cement basin can be. Already canonized by Helen Garner's 1977 novel *Monkey Grip*, the pool took on new symbolic meaning when state government-appointed commissioners tried to close it in late 1994.

For suited-up movers and shakers, the pool was nothing more than an asset or a political football. For citizens nationwide concerned about the power given to unelected

commissioners, it was a red warning beacon flashing: DANGER, DEMOCRACY AT RISK. But for the people who really counted – local residents, loyal users of the pool – the cause of their anxiety was simple: they just wanted their pool back.

The fight for the pool is the most famous of any local community struggle – but many are only vaguely aware of its trials and tribulations, from opening in October 1908 to the present day. (At its opening, hundreds of men and women stood poolside as a rowboat took to the water to mark the occasion, all of them dressed more for the races than a swim.) Our story begins on an innocent spring day in 1994 – when an ill-fated trio made a very bad decision.

“It was the heart of Fitzroy in summer. To take that away was just unimaginable.”

Then-Premier Jeff Kennett's amalgamation of Victorian municipalities saw the birth of a strange new beast named the City of Yarra, a stitching-together of the Fitzroy, Richmond and Collingwood local councils. Overseeing this process were three commissioners appointed by the Kennett government – an all-powerful triumvirate consisting of Julian Walmsley, Barbara Champion and Frank Thompson.

Desperate to free up some funds, on October 10th they decided to close the pool – which

had at one point been losing \$40,000 a month and was, apparently, a burden on ratepayers. “The City of Yarra is now very well catered for in regard to pools,” said Chief Commissioner Walmsley, referring to the Clifton Hill leisure centre, half the size and indoors. It was also a significantly further distance from the Atherton Gardens high-rise flats, from which many children would frequent Fitzroy Pool to escape the summer heat.

The community was not going to stand by and watch as its beloved pool was sold off to the highest bidder; destroyed to make room for “forty highly-priced residential units”, as one flyer stated. That being said, the anger and outrage with which local residents responded must have surprised the commissioners – who had not consulted with the community.

It's true it was in bad shape: hollow, drained, moping desolately besides Alexandra Parade and in dire need of a facelift that would cost a pretty penny. However, for local residents, the thought of abandoning it was out of the question. Bruna Evans – who helped fundraise the campaign by getting badges made – described the community's reaction to *The Rotunda*:

“It was the heart of Fitzroy in summer. To take that away was just unimaginable... People were just not going to take it.”

Indeed, after the closure was announced that Monday morning, wheels were set in motion. Calls were made; support was gathered; outrage brewed. A community

campaign – so effective that it would later be studied in universities – was in its genesis. That Friday, 200 schoolchildren and parents from North Fitzroy Primary School and Fitzroy Primary School spent lunchtime tying yellow ribbons on the pool's wire fence and held up signs of protest. People wrote to the nation's newspapers to express their dismay. “I can smell revolt in the Spring air,” said Georgie Stewart in *The Age* letters.

A public meeting at Brunswick Street Oval was planned for the following Wednesday – a ground that, decades earlier, was saved from private ownership by community activism. Was history going to repeat itself? Over 2000 gathered at the grandstand, incensed and determined. Speaking at the rally, comedian and local John Clarke made a good point: if they were going to close the pool, why not close footpaths as well? Why not shut down the Yarra River? Neither of those were making a profit, either.

That Sunday, nearly 3000 people marched down Brunswick St and stood in Fitzroy Pool.

Then-Deputy Prime Minister Brian Howe – a Fitzroy resident who was a key figure in the Brooks Crescent struggle 25 years earlier – described the protest to *The Rotunda*.

“It was a fantastic demo, a drained pool, a sea of faces looking up at you. The thing about those days... We organised some great protests, and sometimes we did some very good things.”

POOL RUNS DEEP

Brian did not hesitate to flex his power, demanding the City of Yarra return \$550,000 that was given by the Federal Government to build the gym. (A.K.A the large structure beside the pool described as resembling both a tuna can and a spaceship). This was the last thing the commissioners needed – public outrage was increasing rapidly, especially after *The Leader* revealed that the original staff report calling for the shut-down included some dodgy statistics. It claimed the pool attracted 50,000 users – but the latest figures for 1992/93 showed attendance at 70,000. They claimed the pool was losing much more money than the average Australian pool – but only when compared to indoor pools and pools in warmer climates.

On October 24, the commissioners announced a four-week moratorium during which a review would be conducted by a consultant. “We might have erred a little on this matter”, conceded commissioner Champion.

How had a community campaign forced this extraordinary backflip? Leigh Hubbard, member of the Save Fitzroy Pool committee, told *The Rotunda* that one factor was a widespread feeling of anger of towards the Kennett government:

“The commissioners were unaccountable. They’d been appointed by a government who in that period had sacked 20,000 nurses and teachers. So, shutting a pool to them was nothing... It was the first kind of fightback in a community against that prevailing Kennett government ideology.”

Local management consultants assembled metrics for why the pool should stay open. A heritage application was put in. A high school student designed the badges for Bruna. Leigh, who worked at Trades Hall, was able to ensure the unions wouldn’t allow the pool’s power to be turned off during its occupation – which is, perhaps, the most pertinent example of just how deep the community was willing to dig.

“A number of people were there permanently, coordinating it,” Leigh explains. “There were heaps of people who would spend two or three nights. Their whole families would go down and spend a night there.”

As Bruna says: “It’s such an activist community – people don’t give up easily.”

Today, swimmers glide over the very spots where occupiers sat at tables or set up barbecues – diligently manning their stations at ground zero. Brunswick Street traders provided breakfasts each morning of the occupation, which continued throughout the four-week moratorium and would end

in one of two ways: with bulldozers tearing through the pool’s concrete basin, or with water gushing back into it.

It all hinged on the review that consultant Brian Haratsis was conducting. He spoke to community members, investigating the pool’s financial performance and considering its social worth. The possibility of closure remained and thus – as he listened, calculated and contemplated – a dark cloud of anxiety hung over Fitzroy.

The stakes were high. In the years since, the pool has continued to host many beautiful and joyous summers – a furnace forging precious jewels of memory. I can remember bumping into a friend in the shallow end and swimming up to his parents in the deep to lobby for a sleepover. I remember making my way across the pool by ducking under lane ropes and dodging lap-swimmers like they were oncoming traffic. I remember, as a six-year-old, jumping into the baby pool with thick corduroy pants on – I was so eager to swim, I hadn’t realised I was wearing them. These cherished memories sit alongside thousands of others held by anyone else who has used and loved the pool over the last two-and-a-half decades: endless bundles of treasure that were almost stolen from us.

“It is a magical setting that – somehow – has been picked up from the coastline and dropped inland.”

So, people did what they could. 250 activists visited the Clifton Hill pool and jumped in to demonstrate the overcrowding that closure would result in. Many sent impassioned letters to Haratsis, as described in the *Melbourne Times*:

“Teng from Fitzroy says he wants ‘Mr Brian’ to tell the commissioners to re-open the pool:

“If you tell them, you are a good man.”

He wasn’t the only kid to make their feelings known. Bruna’s son Lachlan, then aged seven, sent an outraged letter to the commissioners – complete with illustrations and a razor-sharp final line: “P.S. You don’t care about kids.”

On November 28, Haratsis sent the City of Yarra his report. Three days later, the commissioners announced that it wasn’t



Photo: Peter Weaving.

closing. It needed significant work done but was to stay open on a three-year trial. Haratsis had found it was too important to the community, with Champion emphasising the decision was “not for the trendies and the lap swimmers” but for “the young kids down south”. Indeed, 90 percent of kids in the estate used the pool and, thankfully, would be able to for years to come.

The job, however, was far from done.

“We had this enormous rush because we wanted to open the pool, so we had to do all the work,” Leigh explains. “There were probably 30 or 40 people who painted every part of that pool. Somebody just used the fire hydrant over in the street to fill the pool. It was done on the smell of an oily rag.” On December 18, the pool re-opened with a rowboat pushed onto the water, just as was done 86 years earlier.

“I’ll never forget how tremendous that was,” activist Danny Connor told *The Age*. “The children just cheered and cheered.” Since then, that cheering has never really stopped.

The most quintessential Australian scene is surely that of a crowded beach at the height of summer: throngs of people, kids playing beach cricket, yellow sand and navy water bordered by a distant horizon line. It is a magical setting

that – somehow – has been picked up from the coastline and dropped inland – set in concrete; a stone’s throw from big grey high rises; hidden right beside a busy road. It’s magical. That’s why in the bleakness of early to mid-century Fitzroy, the pool was “the one kind of oasis that people had”, as Leigh puts it. That’s why Bruna continues to swim at the pool weekly with her grandchildren. That’s why people fought so hard for the pool. That’s why the struggle to save it is such a fantastic and oft-told story. (In 1998 North Fitzroy Primary School did it as their school play).

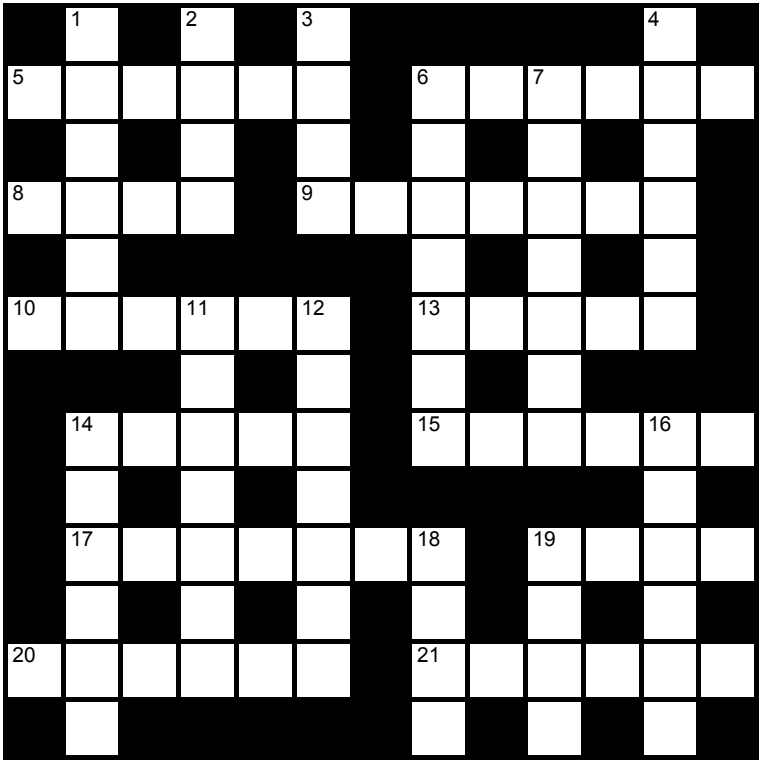
Helen Garner – writing a profile of the pool’s then manager, Bill Decis, in 1981 – describes it as follows:

“The beauty of the Fitzroy baths is of an especially Melburnian kind: not thrusting itself forward, but modest, idiosyncratic, secret almost, needing to be imagined, discovered through familiarity.”

How lucky we are to have it; how close we were to losing it; how grateful we must be to those who fought for it. A non-Italian speaking out-of-towner may visit the pool, spot the big sign reading ‘AQUA PROFUNDA’ and think it quite self-serious – and very Fitzroy – for a pool to declare its own waters ‘profound’. That being said, if any pool could make such a claim, it’s this one.



CROSSWORD by LR #5



- ACROSS**

5 Street where you might see a Monaro or Commodore? (6)

6 AFL played by Scarlet around Edinburgh Gardens? (6)

8 Remain (4)

9 Illegal copy (7)

10 Soon! (2,1,3)

13 A lane for a princess? (5)

14 Underground worker (5)

15 Pact between countries (6)

17 Mooring fee for a ship (7)

19 Dances; hits gently (4)
- 20 Street for a superhero? (6)

21 Way to make gold with second metal? (6)
- DOWN**

1 A place to have an iced bun? (6)

2 Feeling after having too much coffee, perhaps (4)

3 Door handle (4)

4 Celebrity at the centre of toe-sucking scandal (6)

6 In the thick of (7)

7 Tree leaves (7)

11 Ray of solar light (7)
- 12 A place to drape yourself around? (7)

14 Host enthusiastic in the street? (6)

16 I plant confusedly in the street? (6)

18 School test (4)

19 ...and fairest street? (4)
- NB: 11 answers are street names of North Fitzroy**

? denotes cryptic clue

Solution: northfitzroyrotunda.com/cheat

CLUB CRICKETERS REMEMBER WARNIE

On Sunday the 6th of March, Edinburgh Cricket Club gathered at their Brunswick Street Oval clubrooms, planning to hold their annual 'reverse raffle' fundraiser and watch their sevenths team battle out a crucial match (one of only two of their teams that've made finals). The raffle was held but their match was washed out: a victim of the recent spell of rain that's marked the end of cricket season, the end of summer and the end of Shane Warne. (All synonymous with each other).

Now he's gone, there's a Warnie-shaped hole in the public consciousness that can never be filled. But at least he's unlikely to be forgotten any time soon. Outside the clubrooms, a group of men sat drinking beers and chatting – though to be honest, they weren't actually talking about Warnie at all. (They were talking about football). After prompting, though, came a barrage of opinions and feelings about the man.

"He proved that you could go out off an hour's sleep, a slab and a deck a day and still be the best leggie of all time," said one club cricketer.

"He was a fat bogan from Mordialloc who seduced movie stars and hang out with royalty," said another.

"He was actually a rockstar," said someone else.

But Shane Warne was always something of a controversial figure. Polarising, even. And one cricketer, while still acknowledging his brilliance – "I turned on the TV to watch him" – described the larrikin genius using a word that simply cannot be printed in this (or any) newspaper.

The fellow cricketer to whom he was talking considered this, then responded:

"That was the magic of him: we knew he wasn't a perfect guy, but everyone still loved him because he was an icon. It wouldn't have mattered what sort of bloke he was – he represented something else".

Another 'Burra player, sportswriter Richard Hinds, wrote on the morning after his death:

"I expect it will be quite strange for club cricketers when we #ReportToGrounds today. Warnie, because and despite his preternatural ability, embodied all the varying aspects of the club game – right down to our actual bodies. He will be a part of every contest."

Thanks for the memories, Warnie.



St John's Primary School Clifton Hill

At St John's Primary School Clifton Hill we are inspired by the words of Sr Mary Aikenhead, Founder of Sisters of Charity that our purpose is to provide "education inspired by the power of love and compassion, to bring forth just action and hope in our world". Since 1886, this has been our long and proud tradition, as a family and community-centred school in Clifton Hill.

Valued for our smaller, nurturing environment we are committed to the individual learning needs of every student in our care. With a basis founded in evidence based social and emotional learning, we believe that connection, happiness, being known, celebrating diversity and individuality results in high academic achievements.

Imagine a school where everyone knows your name and you know everyone else's, where you can host and present your work or ideas at assemblies frequently and where each teacher knows where you are at on your individual learning journey.

At St John's Primary School we explicitly teach the skills of phonics to ignite every child's reading and writing journey. We are committed to the benefits of a strong, evidence based SEL (Social & Emotional Learning) curriculum which teaches and actively models a culture of self awareness and management, with genuine acceptance, caring and inclusiveness. At St John's Primary School we teach the whole child.

Smaller class sizes, of mainly straight grades, allow us the flexibility to be responsive to each child's needs so that all students achieve success in their learning. We focus consistently on the individuality of our students, making research-based adjustments as needed to ensure that every child experiences success and strives to achieve.

St John's also has an extraordinary parent community, who add richly to the life of the day to day school environment, but also beyond our school boundaries. They are passionate, hardworking, inclusive and generous in their support of our families and of our staff.

At St John's Primary School we are proud of our diversity and the joy it brings, and we celebrate the richness of our multicultural community. We seek always to develop mutual and deepening respect and understanding of different faiths and cultures, as they enrich and deepen our school life and is evidence of the value we place on the sacredness of everyone we encounter.

We joyfully provide our free weekly playgroup as an opportunity for Clifton Hill families with pre-primary school, to come together to meet new people and engage with each other informally whilst accessing quality teachers and educational knowledge.

St John's Primary School accepts children from Clifton Hill, Fitzroy North, Carlton, Carlton North and parts of Northcote and is now open for primary school enrolments for 2023.

I would love to provide you with a private tour of our beautiful school by simply emailing me on kcampagna@sjcliftonhill.catholic.edu.au, or alternatively please feel free to attend one of the upcoming open days.



St John's Primary School
CLIFTON HILL
sjcliftonhill.catholic.edu.au



Principal:
Kerrie Campagna
77 Queens Parade
Clifton Hill, 3068
(03) 9489 1346

A CRAVIN' FOR MALAYSIAN

Sitting humbly just north of the village is a comforting and affordable restaurant with a delicious menu

By Dawn and Jack Norman

Over the past couple of pandemic-riddled years, it's been hard for us to love being at home. Absence makes the heart grow fonder, and we have not been much absent from our little corner of Fitzroy North. Yet there is still something lovely about *feeling* at home. We want to be surrounded with things and people we love – somewhere everybody knows your name. That home-like feeling is perfectly captured by Malaymas, the Malaysian restaurant on the corner of Holden and St. George's Road.

Malaymas feels like an extended living room, with perky travel food shows silently playing on the TV and the family owners sometimes working at tables next to customers. It was the first restaurant we ventured out to after both of our kids were born. It's the last place we'd go before a lockdown struck and the first place we'd go when things opened up again.

Malaymas has all the right vibes. More importantly, it has all the right food. Delicious, delicious food. Our orders always include as much as we can convince each other we might, in gluttony, eat.

Two Roti dishes rival for our affection: one with chicken curry and one with Beef Rendang. The chicken curry comes in a sauce rich with flavour and an exciting

spicy oil layer, meat on the bone, satisfying both the teeth and the belly. The Beef Rendang – really one of the signature dishes of Malaysian cuisine – is perfectly done and incredibly tender. 'Baby prawns' are our two-year-old's favourite food – more specifically, the baby prawns that bejewel the ever-delicious Malaymas fried rice. He will dig for them like they're precious gems buried deep in a mountain until he's discovered and devoured every single one. What remains after the child's gold rush is a delicious mound of savoury rice.

“Malaymas feels like an extended living room.”

We can't live without the Indian Mee Goring and the Fried Kuey Teow (with XO Sauce). The Mee Goring has a lovely tomato acidity that balances the richness of much of the rest of the food. And we think that XO sauce should really be called XOXOXO sauce, because it sends its love straight into your mouth with every bite. (We aren't going to make jokes about Hor Fun – this is a family newspaper.)

Sometimes we go for the curry laksa with Hainanese chicken, especially when we are



feeling particularly socially distanced and want an excuse not to share. This really amounts to two main dishes, like a homely wife (plain and satisfying Hainanese chicken) and the exciting mistress (spicy and multi-textured laksa). You may notice that we aren't including a recipe in this month's article. Well, we tried making laksa at home once. Many hours later we ended up with a sort of slurry that tasted vaguely like boiled prawns – not worth the incomprehension at the Queen Vic when we asked if we could buy just prawn shells. We'd recommend buying Laksa from our local experts – Malaymas!

Shaved ice. It's really so much more. Like the fried rice, the shaved ice is bejewelled, not with prawns but with corn, jellies of all

sorts, pandan, beans, peanuts, sweetened condensed milk, and a lot of wow.

If you're really looking to round out your decadent meal, add in the Sour Plum drink. What are those fruits and why are they so delicious when mashed into the bottom of a glass?

One of the best things about Malaymas is that it is incredibly reasonable. If you have the self-control we often lack, you can eat a very satisfying meal for under \$15 a head, and perhaps more frugal readers could find even cheaper combinations. Who knows how many people could be satisfied by Hor Fun?

We love you, Malaymas.

LUDO: “I’M MORE THAN MY HAIR”

It's been a beautiful summer. The sun is shining, the birds are chirping and the pubs are open. Guess who's still complaining?

By Ludo

Baby, I'm bark! That's right. Just as you thought you'd got rid of me and my brave confessions, insightful ruminations and justifiable grievances, I've returned to the esteemed pages of *The Rotunda*. And I'm ready to unload.



Though actually, that would contradict my new year's resolution. Dogs can't quit smoking, learn guitar or cut down on red meat – so, I resolved to be more Zen. I'm approaching everything in a more holistic way. I'm only worrying about things I can do something about, like eating the freshly baked cake my owner left on the kitchen bench. I could eat it, so I did.

The real challenge to my recently adopted philosophy has been my new haircut. My owners let me sweat through December and January, but the moment it hits 35 degrees they suddenly develop a conscience. By then, it takes another two weeks to get an appointment with Pam, and suddenly it's autumn.

After a lengthy waiting period I finally got in and – credit to her – thought she did a terrific job. I left the grooming salon with a spring in my step, caught myself in a shop window, let out a joyous woof and headed to the dog field. My abundant shaggy locks were a cocoon from which I had emerged triumphantly; a beautiful

metamorphosis reflective of the same one the world is currently going through. I was a microcosm of the optimism I had sensed in North Fitzroy: cafes buzzing, humans queuing at Jimmy's with new passport forms in hand.

“How does one practice self-love when one looks like a badly shorn sheep?”

But at the dog field I spotted Andy, a Jack Russell cross Chihuahua with a hideous visage and penchant for snark. His owner, though, is even worse and my owner greeted him coldly: 'Hello, human', he said. 'Hello, Andy' I said to Andy. It was hardly two seconds before his owner glanced at me and proffered:

“He looks like a skinned rabbit with a feather duster attached to his arse.”

I was humiliated and furious. For starters, it takes courage for a Groodle to get groomed. Pitbulls, Greyhounds and Dalmations wouldn't know what it's like, but most Poodle crosses struggle with a debilitating identity crisis every single summer. Our curls taken from us instantly; the smiles from passers-by occurring less and less often; the enthusiastic but gentle pats from mini-humans abruptly ending... How does one practice self-love when one looks like a badly shorn sheep? And the thing was, I liked this haircut.

Then there are the fat jokes. Once the curls disappear, the love handles reappear. The body shaming a well-built Groodle must endure is unbelievable. Once the hair's gone, I've got nowhere to hide and must try to ignore Andy and his band of sycophantic Yorkshire Terriers as they look over at me and laugh. Even worse, my owners apologise on behalf of me! “Yeah, he's a bit out of shape”, they say sheepishly. What if I'm fine with my weight? What if I'm comfortable the way I am? They talk about me like I'm not there. To be fair, it's unlikely they realise I understand everything they're saying.

Have we learnt anything over the pandemic? Did we become smarter, or

kinder? It doesn't seem like it, and I'm still as anxious as ever. Omicron is subsiding, but now we've got geopolitics to worry about. (Yes, I watch the news, you pick up something when you're forced to watch it night after night). It seems my telepathic mental texts to Putin's puppies – Yume, Verni and Pasha – didn't work.

God willing, you will see me back here in a month in a better frame of mind — curls fetchingly restored and Andy injured in a nasty driveway event. Though maybe it's unwise to worry so much about the future. For now, let's just chill out.

Ludo – styled by Pam



E-bikes that go the distance

Ivanhoe-based e-bike retail store Dolomiti is the passion project of founder, Fitzroy North resident, Giampaolo Zanol.

During the early 2000's Giampaolo was a professional golfer. While he was playing on the European tour, he observed a growing trend in e-bikes. After retiring from the golf tour in 2012 he founded Dolomiti - the first dedicated e-bike retailer in Australia.



"I founded Dolomiti Electrical Bicycles to transform the way Australians exercise, play and travel. I could see that e-bikes are better for people and our environment. And I wanted Australia to be part of the revolution that was already taking off in other parts of the world."

Now, a decade on, Giampaolo is proud to say that he has helped all kinds of people find e-bikes they have since loved and relied on for years. And he says that it is largely thanks to partnering with the best brands, sourcing top-notch tech - and bringing real value to every customer who walks through the showroom doors.

Giampaolo - or you can call him John - says, "you may think this sounds strange, but my goal is not to sell you an e-bike".



"I'm here to listen and give you the best possible advice. Whether it's explaining how e-bikes work or comparing one model to another, I'm always excited to share my knowledge."

And his customer reviews reflect this attitude, with comments such as:

"Awesome service, attention and PATIENCE. Lots of choices. John is great to deal with and always helpful, Had it 6 months, nearly 6000 km already. Never late for work anymore!"

"Great people to deal with. So patient and easy going. I must have driven John crazy with my procrastination however he was always happy to continue with my journey into the e-bike world. I am extremely happy with my eventual purchase and loving riding the beautiful trails with the assistance that a battery gives to old legs."

For the uninitiated, e-bikes are bikes with integrated motors that complement your own peddle-push-power. Giampaolo says: "Think of it like swimming - with flippers on".

Australia now has the choice of hundreds of different brands and models of e-bikes. "That's why our first question will always be...why are you buying one in the first place?"

If you are thinking about buying an e-bike, it is good to know a few fundamentals. Including the fact that e-bikes must meet certain safety standards to be legal on Australia's roads. This includes the requirement for motors to cut out at 25km per hour.

Many north-side residents are selling their cars and replacing them with e-bikes. E-bikes can be a great transport solution that enable you to avoid traffic jams, and they don't require licences, registrations or petrol. This means you can save money- while being kinder to the environment.

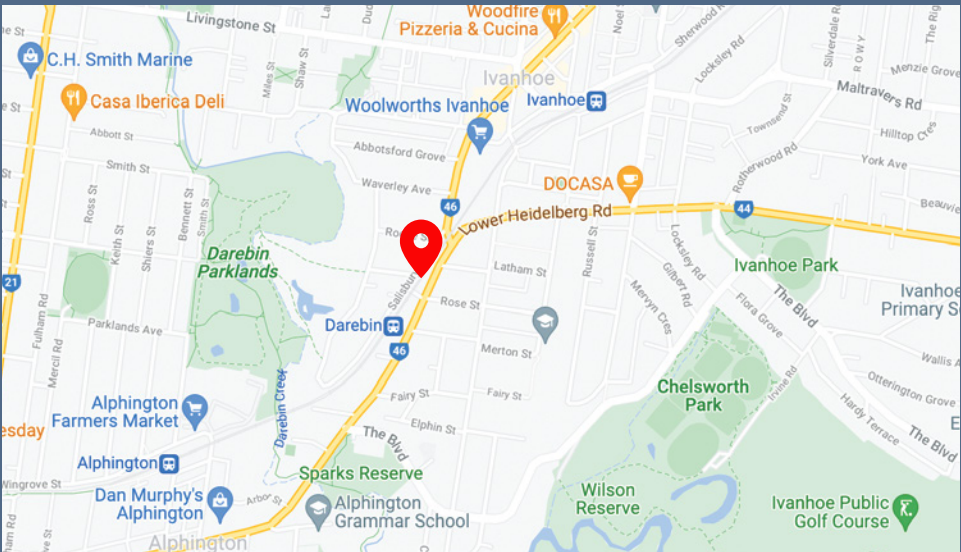
There is also the need to think about the sustainability of your e-bike over its lifetime. For Giampaolo, this means only stocking quality brands such as Bosch, that are locally supported, have a proven track record and a commitment to net zero.



"It's important that the brands who supply the parts for your e-bike offer local support. If they don't, you'll have nowhere to turn should functional issues arise.

"We also have specialist mechanics in our dedicated workshop to maintain and repair your e-bike."

Dolomiti is open seven days a week, and you'll find Giampaolo there every day. When he's not at work, he spends his time biking around Fitzroy North, finishing off with a coffee at Picnic, walking his whippets with his partner at Edinburgh Gardens, and having a bite to eat and a nice bottle of Italian wine at Supermaxi.



Dolomiti
Electric Bicycles

1075-1087 Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe
VICTORIA 3079 Australia

Monday - Friday 10am - 6pm
Saturday 10am - 4pm
Sunday 10am - 3pm

03 9982 1440 | 03 9497 3733