

LUCIO'S

italian restaurant

The art of Lucio's

Lucio's restaurant, set in a corner terrace of leafy Paddington in Sydney, is perhaps Australia's most renowned 'art' restaurant – recently named by London's The Independent newspaper as one of the five top restaurants for Art in the world alongside La Colombe d'Or in Provence, Sketches and Ivy in London and the Four Seasons in NYC. All the more impressive because Lucio's is a personal collection, not an exhibition.

The walls of Lucio's are now crammed with many leading contemporary Australian artists. "Over the years we have built an extensive collection of artists through the friendships that I have with them," There are works by such luminaries as John Olsen, John Coburn (both of whom have designed menus which have also been archived in the Macquarie Library) Tim Storrier, Michael Johnson, John Beard, Fred Cress (the cover for the Art of Food at Lucio', Salvatore Zofrea, Martin Sharp, Gary Shead, Charles Blackman, Colin Lancel, Ken Johnson, Margaret Woodward, Sandra Levinson, Robert Juniper, David Larwill ... the list goes on - and younger ones such as Jason Benjamin, Andrew Taylor, and Luke Sciberras, who made a magnificent contribution to Lucio's latest book, The Art of Pasta.

Every year we get many requests for artists to exhibit their works at Lucio's – a request that is simply not something Lucio does. This is his personal collection, every single piece is from a friend. It continues to grow and evolve. Works are moved around and swapped with others as the whim takes him. With wall space at an absolute premium he may well be the first person to affix an artwork to the ceiling.

It all started back in 1984 when Sidney Nolan sketched a Ned Kelly on a table docket. Lucio was so thrilled that he spent as much as he could on having it framed and proudly hung it on the wall. So moved was Nolan that he presented Lucio with a painting. And so it began. A mutual admiration society between great art and great hospitality.

In 1988, to celebrate 15 years of being in Paddington, Lucio asked 15 of his artist friends to each paint a ceramic plate with a design, style and medium of their choosing. This unique collection hangs near the entrance to the kitchen and can be seen by all who walk to the main part of the restaurant. Lucio has declined many an invitation for them to be exhibited elsewhere for fear of damage in transit.

In 2009 Gary Shead's portrait of Lucio entitled *The Soffritto of Lucio* was selected as a finalist for the Archibald prize.

For more information on the art of Lucio's Italian Restaurant, please visit www.lucios.com.au, call us on +61 2 9380 5996 or email info@lucios.com.au