

The Polish Place Restaurant on Tamborine



**Phil & Ania Sowter
with Bella and Kathryn**



Closing the Door on 40 Years of Memories

Part 1

After 40 years of trading, Ania and Phil Sowter have made a very difficult decision to close The Polish Place Restaurant on Tamborine Mountain from September 4, 2023.

They first opened on the 3rd of September 1983, so it is befitting that they chose to celebrate 40 years to the day, and closed at sunset on Sunday 3rd September, 2023.

Being at Tamborine Mountain we did have a pleasure to talk to Ania Sowter.



Danusia - What was the original inspiration to create a destination like this?

Ania - We were young, and it was an adventure. We had our honeymoon here and bought this block of land. It took us one year to decide what to do with it. Then Tamborine Mountain became a tourist destination. It was for people to come for a day and have a walk in the national parks. We decided it would be lovely for them to pop in and have a cup of coffee and some cake. Because I'm Polish, we used the Polish theme as a potential attraction.

Boguś - Today you have accommodation and a restaurant, but also a gallery?





Ania -The coffee shop and the gallery were the first items. 36 years ago, it was a challenge as I don't think many Australians were familiar with Polish culture, it was a gamble.

Everyone was fascinated by it and the interest in Poland and in Europe became more significant.

Bogus- Is it true that when it originally opened, there was some controversy?

Ania -We had a few people who challenged our project. Fortunately, we had the Beaudesert Shire Council behind us. Mind you, there were only about 1200 people living here, now we have nearly 8000. In those days it was more challenging to open a business, there weren't that many tourist attractions on the mountain. Then more businesses started opening and then the wineries came.

Danusia- And is true that you were the first to offer accommodation in this area?

Ania- Yes, we were the first to offer cottage accommodation on the mountain. It slowly became a tourist destination for day trippers and overnighters. Tamborine Mountain changed its image completely. It's interesting how it has evolved and developed into quite a serious tourist attraction.



Bogus- I could see that you serve traditional Polish food and roast duck is your signature traditional dish. What other kinds of things do you serve?



Ania- In the beginning the emphasis was mostly on the gallery. There was the coffee shop, but people kept coming in and asking about Polish food. It took us a little while to develop, but there was huge interest. We were the first Polish restaurant in Australia outside of Polish clubs. We are the oldest business on the mountain run by the same couple.

The roast duck is made the traditional Polish way, with apples, and then I created my fried apples and sour cherries sauce. The duck is magnificent. We also have the pork hock slow cooked in our traditional way, with beer and garlic butter. I must mention pierogi, Polish dumplings. Very, very popular. We have pierogi with meat, sauerkraut and mushroom, cheese, and potatoes.





Danusia- What are some ways that you bring a touch of Polish culture to the experience here?

We had a lot of artifacts that were from different regions of Poland, such as glass paintings, wooden sculptures and metalwork, fine art, traditional folk art. It is anything and everything. And of course, I must mention Polish amber. Amber to Poland is like opal to Australia. It's a very noble stone, and we have plenty.



Boguś- Do you find that you have more of a certain type of clientele? What is your usual guest?

We have every type of clients. From overseas we get a high percentage of Chinese, Japanese and Koreans. We have British, we have a lot of French coming in. Germans like the pork hock but mostly we cater for Gold Coast and Brisbane people. Our meals are so different to any other restaurant, not steaks. It's a combination of great location, lovely environment, fabulous food, good coffees, and cakes.



Authors: Danuta and Bogusław Piotrowscy

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