



Cobblestone Lane

Recycling and refurbishing was key for chef/restaurateur Heath Smith when he took on a 19th-century property in the heritage town of Bathurst, NSW

“**M**y wife Elissa and I spent some time looking for a restaurant space after moving to Bathurst in 2003. We opened Cobblestone Lane in March 2006. It was originally part of a department store called Webb & Co that started in 1853. The restaurant is positioned over a laneway that was used by Cobb & Co coaches. The space is enclosed but still has a nice open feel with lovely old exposed pillars. It took us about 12 months to renovate. The restaurant is 80 squares and the function room and deck are another 80 squares. I wouldn't say the restaurant's rustic but there's a lot of exposed brick, timber and iron. The timber is recycled from around the Bathurst area.

“There are huge arches leading into the bathrooms that we filled with glass, as well as recycled timber that was pulled out of the old pits from Mt Panorama. In the middle of the restaurant there's a 35-metre convict-built well that we came across during the renovation. We built that up and put lights in there so it's a real centrepiece.

“We really like recycling things and turning them into something new. We used old meat lockers and fruit crates to decorate the restaurant. We fill them full of pumpkins or highlight a massive bowl of tomatoes or pears—all from around our area. We also use fruit and vegetables rather than fresh flowers. Often people are surprised by the colour and the flavour. It's what we are all about.

“The function room was designed in a similar style to the restaurant—lots of exposed brick, recycled timber and big solid beams. The function room's ceiling is 26 feet high and was the main part of the general store.

“Bathurst is a heritage city that's really beautiful in autumn. We're across from a park, so we wanted colours that reflected our local seasons. We selected green, white and red—the colours of the Italian flag. It suits the style of food—we're contemporary Australian but we have a strong Mediterranean influence. If you sit in the restaurant and look out to the park, the colours kind of enhance each other.

Cobblestone Lane
Webb Chambers
2/173-179 George Street
Bathurst NSW 2795
Phone 02 6331 2202
www.thecobblestonelane.com

“When we were choosing finishes, we wanted good quality furniture but we wanted kids to be comfortable. Everything is really strong, nothing can be broken, and the floors are sturdy.

“The lighting was chosen to be a little brighter than a lot of other restaurants. We didn't want a quiet dimly lit venue; we wanted more of a buzz. The ceilings are 16 foot in the main restaurant so we have subtle spots at the top, and feature lights that run into the middle of the room.

“I think we are very much a part of our community—we're here to celebrate your engagement party but also when you want a table for two. A lot of people say we're a formal restaurant but we're not; we're more of a brasserie-style meeting place.” ○

WORDS: KERRYN RAMSEY