

Former Salon Blanc owners count the cost

Just weeks after Salon Blanc at Woolloomooloo sold to the Vardis family for \$850,000, the former owners of the glamour restaurant have put the company that used to operate it into administration, with debts of more than \$2 million.

I've personally done \$1 million and I was just one of the partners in it," says former co-owner and one-time Randwick Rugby Club coach George Gavalas (pictured) in a cautionary tale about the potential perils of restaurant ownership, Gavalas says the restaurant got off to a bad start after six months of delays "including liquor licence and council hurdles before we opened".

Gavalas, who says \$2 million was spent fashioning Salon Blanc, is sceptical of Sydney's design arms race. "Unfortunately we're not New

York or London in terms of population, yet we try to compete with them on a retail level".

Despite picking up a toque last year in its first Good Food Guide season, Salon Blanc was finally killed off by the downturn in the economy. "To tell the truth, the Wharf [at Woolloomooloo] has changed," Gavalas says. "It gets trumped as A-list but I think that's waning. I don't think it's where it was three years ago".

Confirming the sale price, Gavalas says it appears a bargain compared with the reported \$1.5 million splashed out on nearby Manta in 2006. With a fresh start under the Vardis family, who have plenty of experience running city eateries, the future of the venue should be a little rosier. They've already trumpeted a



name change. It can't come quick enough.

Fardoulis back in business

THE owners of Fardoulis Chocolates say they are doing their best to keep up with demand after a fire ripped through part of their Kogarah factory last Wednesday.

As reported in Thursday's Leader more than 20 firefighters spent five hours tackling the blaze in the upstairs area of the Princes Highway chocolate plant.



The flames caused extensive damage to the part of the family business that produces dinner mints, but Anna Fardoulis is keen to let people know the factory shop is still open.

"We are recovering from the effects", she said. "There's major damage to one of the sections".

Con Fardoulis said the factory had lost 50 per cent of its productivity as a result of the damage. "The dependence now is on the insurance company, QBE, for a quick recovery", he said. "We are doing our utmost to keep production going as best we can".

Contrary to initial reports, the fire was not caused by cooking equipment left on overnight, but involved electrical cables. The builders had already started work and cooking machinery would need replacing, Mr Fardoulis said.

CAPTION: Fire damage: Con and Anna Fardoulis say it is crucial the business gets back on its feet as soon as possible following the blaze.

Looking at the law

By Mark O' Brien

YEAR 9 students from Kogarah High School had a close-up view of the legal system recently with a visit to the offices of NSW Attorney-General John Hatzistergos.

The students were part of a NSW Department of Education and Training mentoring program: Law Firms Encouraging and Assisting Promising Students (LEAPS).

The program involved workplace learning aimed at increasing academic engagement and broadening student life experiences.

Mr Hatzistergos said the NSW Attorney-General Department had taken part in the program for the past six years, benefitting many volunteer mentors and students.

"Generally, the program improves confidence, self-esteem and motivation, while mentors develop their interpersonal skills and put something back into their community", Mr Hatzistergos said.

"The program is for students at

risk of disengaging from school, and it helps them identify and set goals, then make the most of opportunities to achieve them.

"Since the program began, feedback from students shows they improve school attendance, boost study skills and their self-esteem lifts, resulting in greater willingness to take part in school and community activities".

Thirty NSW law firms are providing 420 volunteer mentors to

assist 380 students in 2008. Kogarah MP Cherie Burton congratulated the students from Kogarah High and their mentors.

"LEAPS creates a structured partnership where each mentor encourages, guides and supports the student, in addition to providing a positive role model," Ms Burton said.

"Mentors spend a lunchtime every two weeks in their student, discussing their life experiences.

"Lesson materials are used to help develop the student's confidence, learning skills and future goals".



Leaps and bounds: Year 9 students from Kogarah High School met NSW Attorney - General John Hatzistergos (centre) recently.

Foodie goes to the polls



David Tsirekas, chef-owner at the toqued Perama Greek restaurant at Petersham, has confirmed rumours he's seeking election a the Marrickville Council elections in September. "We don't want Petersham to be another Leichhardt. Resources should be put into providing parking, not just putting meters everywhere". And the chef can't be accused of being anything other than transparent on the subject of sent-interest. "We do OK [with winter alfresco diners] because we're often full but I don't think businesses should pay council for outside seating during winter when hardly anybody sits out there".



Quality shines in pearly heaven

THEY live up to their name at Kogarah Quality Care Denture Clinic, providing the highest quality dentures by using state-of-the-art equipment and materials. Dental prosthetist George Georgiou, who has been in the business for more than 10 years, said the dentures were manufactured on the premises. "We only use top quality acrylic, metal and teeth. The acrylic is high impact strength for the base of the denture and the teeth are four-layered, cross-linked teeth with nano pearls, which are ideal for top abrasion stability," he said.

Mr Georgiou said qualified technicians were on hand to make whatever the client needed - full upper, full lower dentures, unbreakable flexible dentures with no hooks, and all types of metal partial dentures. People with allergies can be helped as dentures can be made to be allergy free. Dentures come with a five year warranty. With a dentist on the premises, dental work and dentures can be done more or less at once and no referral is necessary. Mr Georgiou said package deals were available for patients requiring dental work and dentures. The clinic will do repairs and realignments while you wait and sports people will find the right mouthguard.

"At present we are offering free consultations and 20 per cent off dentures", Mr Georgiou said.

**Kogarah Quality Care Denture Clinic:
2/34-36 Princes Highway, Kogarah;
9588 6622**