



HISTORY OF THE ROXY, BINGARA, NSW



The Roxy was built by three Greek partners from the island of Kythera, who arrived in Australia during the early 1920's

1920 Emanuel Aroney (from the village of Aroniadika)

1921 Peter Feros (from the village of Mitata)

1923 George Psaltis (from the village of Frilingianika)

*1924 they arrive in Bingara to establish a café. They formed a partnership called **Peters and Co**, a generic business name chosen by Kytherian businessmen who adopted it as an informal franchise among Greek shopkeepers.*

After several years of trading, the partners decided to expand their business and set

about building an entertainment complex that would remain unparalleled in comparable towns of the region.

1933 *Peters & Co purchase the building which houses their café, together with adjoining properties.*



Architectural plans are commissioned for a modern picture theatre, café, individual shop fronts as well as a guesthouse at the rear of the complex. The enterprise would include a modern café that would seat 140 patrons; four independent shops facing the main street

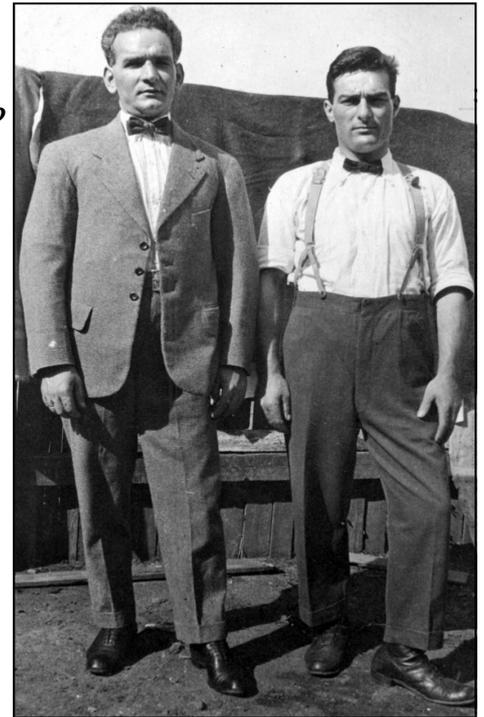
*that could be leased to ensure the financial viability of the endeavour; a guesthouse to accommodate Roxy patrons staying overnight, and **at its heart**, a cinema that would be hailed as "the most modern theatre outside the city."*

1934 *Peters & Co relocated their café business across the road in Maitland Street (adjoining Clifton's Garage, which today is between the Credit Union building and the Landcare office) to continue trading during construction.*

*The size of the town would not impede the partners' vision. Bingara, with a population of around 1,500 in the 1930's, would be invited to share their aspirations which knew no bounds in terms of majestic beauty and modernism. Sydney architect, Mark Woodforde, was engaged by **Peters & Co** to realise their dream.*

When the Roxy officially opened on March 28th 1936, the Bingara Advocate reported that "no event in the history of Bingara has caused more interest and excitement."

For the three partners however, the excitement would be short-lived as in September of the same year, they filed for bankruptcy.





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The Roxy operated as a cinema until 1958 when it shut down. Apart from the occasional film screening, odd boxing match or roller disco, it would spend the next 40 years virtually lying dormant. A new generation was growing up in the town never having stepped foot inside it.

1965 The Roxy Café and residence was annexed from the theatre and is sold as a freehold title. The Roxy Café ceased operation and became a memorabilia Shop.

1989 The Roxy Café and residence was sold to a Chinese proprietor who opened a Chinese restaurant - The Shun Kwong.

1998 The former Bingara Shire Council purchased the Roxy Theatre area and refurbished it to its original splendour (but not the Roxy Café and residence, that remained a freehold title and continued to operate as the Shun Kwong Chinese Restaurant.)

Funding was received from the Commonwealth and NSW State Government, along with a large percentage injection by the then Bingara Shire Council.

In 2004, The Roxy Theatre was re-opened to the public as a cinema, performing arts venue and multi-purpose function centre that includes a variety of conferences, seminars, weddings and private functions.

2008 The Chinese restaurant ceased operation and the current Gwydir Shire Council purchased the premises.

With the Café restoration completed in 2011 the Roxy is destined to become a place of national significance that conserves and protects the important cultural associations between people and place.

2014 The Roxy Museum opened to the public on Saturday April 5th. Its civic pride and confidence in its heritage, in its cultural facilities and collections is destined to attract people from all walks of life. All wanting to share this unique experience.

