

Greek flavour to Roxy event

BINGARA PARTY

Story and photo: **Anna Rose**

BINGARA is experiencing “an arts-led economic revival” – and thriving on it – if the weekend’s 75th anniversary celebrations of the Roxy are any yardstick.

On Saturday night close to 400 people did just what they do on the Greek island of Kythera.

They gathered in the town’s main street where they ate, drank, danced and made merry until the wee hours of yesterday.

The majority of those present were of Greek descent, and were delighted to witness the official unveiling of the historic Roxy café, adjacent to the magnificent art-deco theatre built by three Kytherians in 1936.

In official speeches leading up to the opening, former councillor and mayor of the then Bingara and later Gwydir shire councils, John Wearne, addressed the gathering.

“The development of the Roxy and its surrounding buildings has more than served this arts-led revival for



DOWN MEMORY LANE: From left, Emanuel Aroney, Bob Kirk, James and Peter Aroney. Bob was a major benefactor in the restoration of both the Roxy theatre and café.

the town,” Mr Wearne said.
“While many small towns

are struggling for survival,
Bingara is thriving.

“That struggle is often due
to their inability to find that

special thing that’s quintes-
sentially theirs, and to seek

out one or more outstanding promotable features unique to their own area.

“In our case, the Roxy has supplied us with a set of opportunities which has completely swung the fortunes of the town around.”

Among the revellers were descendants of the three original forward-thinking businessmen – Peter Feros, George Psaltis and Emanuel Aroney.

Peter Prineas, the grandson of Mr Feros, is the author of a book, *Katsehamos and the Great Idea*, which features a chapter on the creation of the Roxy.

Mr Aroney’s grandsons – Emanuel, Peter and James, and their families, all made a connection with Bingara that will last a lifetime.

Among those celebrating the Roxy’s anniversary was former NSW premier Bob Carr and wife Helena. Mr Carr was the premier when the original \$100,000 funding was allocated to begin work restoring the Roxy.

While many people say it’s best not to dwell on the past, Bingara and its newfound Greek friends may tell you different.