

Andrew (Andy) Clappis



Crust to Creation

~

A Culinary Journey of Andy Clappis, From
Humble Loaves to Artisan Mastery.

Edited by G. Geracitano

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Designed by

2025



ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

A TRUNK FULL OF MEMORIES, A SUITCASE FULL OF DREAMS: STORIES OF
ITALIAN IMMIGRANTS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

CATEGORY

A TAVOLA: THE INFLUENCE OF ITALIAN IMMIGRATION ON SOUTH
AUSTRALIAN FOOD CULTURE: DINING OUT

INTERVIEW WITH

ANDREW (ANDY) CLAPPIS

CONDUCTED BY

GIUSEPPE (JOE) GERACITANO

2 JUNE 2025

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A Trunk Full of Dreams, a Suitcase Full of Memories: Honouring Italian Migration in South Australia

For over a century, Italians have journeyed across oceans and continents in search of opportunity, dignity, and a better life. While Italian migration has shaped societies across the globe—from the bustling cities of Argentina to the alpine towns of Switzerland, its imprint on South Australia is both profound and deeply personal.

A Global Movement, A Local Legacy

Following Italy's unification in 1861, waves of migration surged as millions fled poverty and hardship. Between 1876 and the late 1980s, nearly 27 million Italians left their homeland. Initially, the Americas were the primary destination, with Argentina, Brazil, and the United States welcoming the largest numbers. Europe also played a significant role, especially Germany and Switzerland.

Australia, though home to Italians since colonization, saw its most significant influx after World War II. By 1933, just under 1,500 Italians lived in South Australia, the bulk arriving in the mid-1920s. By 1971, that number had soared to over 32,000. Today, almost 104,000 South Australians claim Italian ancestry, with the City of Campbelltown standing out, nearly one in four residents there trace their roots to Italy.

Preserving the Stories That Built a State

Despite their contributions, Italian migrants, like many non-Anglo-Celtic communities, remain underrepresented in Australia's historical record. Their stories, struggles, and triumphs are often absent from national archives and mainstream narratives.

To redress this imbalance, the Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc. was founded in 2015. With a mission rooted in cultural preservation and community pride, the Society collects oral histories, documents, and photographs that illuminate the Italian experience in South Australia.

The transcripts of these firsthand accounts are preserved in esteemed institutions including the State Library of South Australia, the South Australian Parliament Research Library, the National Library of Australia, the Migration Museum of South Australia, and other relevant repositories. This ensures enduring accessibility for researchers, descendants, and the wider public. Discussions are currently underway with the State Library of South Australia to house the oral interviews within the J.D. Somerville Oral History Collection, further safeguarding these voices for future generations.

A Trunk Full of Dreams and a Suitcase Full of Memories

The Society's flagship project, *A Trunk Full of Dreams and a Suitcase Full of Memories*, captures the diverse journeys of Italian immigrants. Stories are grouped into evocative categories—Life Achievement, Business, Sport, Community Organizations, Trades, and A Tavola, which explores the influence of Italian cuisine on Australian food culture.

The motivations behind this collection are threefold:

- To help descendants understand and honour their heritage.
- To reconnect Italian families with the stories of those who left.
- To enrich Australia's immigration history by showcasing how Italian migrants adapted to new cultural rhythms, work practices, and civic life.

This is the story of second-generation migrant Andrew (Andy) Clappis, who followed in his father's footsteps to become an icon in his own right within South Australia's hospitality industry. The son of a refugee from Istria (now part of Croatia), Andy grew up in a family whose legacy was deeply rooted in food and community. His father played a pivotal role in popularising Italian cuisine across South Australia, introducing authentic flavours and dining experiences to a growing audience.

From the age of seven, Andy was immersed in the family's world of restaurants and their hotel, working alongside his father and learning every aspect of the trade. Over the years, he became an integral part of these venues, sharpening his skills and developing a deep passion for food. Eventually, Andy emerged from his father's shadow as a master baker and accomplished restaurateur, culminating in the creation of his own celebrated establishment, Our Place @ Willunga Hill, located in the heart of Willunga, South Australia.

A Living Archive for Future Generations

The Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc. stands as a guardian of memory, ensuring that the voices of Italian migrants are not lost to time. Through its work, the Society invites all South Australians to reflect on the richness of their multicultural heritage and to celebrate the enduring legacy of those who arrived with little more than hope, and a suitcase full of memories.

Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano
President
Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc.
2025

A Tavola: How Italian Immigration Transformed South Australian Food Culture

Australia's culinary landscape has undergone a profound transformation over the past century, and few influences have been as enduring and flavourful as that of Italian immigration. While the popular narrative credits post-World War II migration with introducing Australians to pasta, espresso, and olive oil, the full story is far richer woven through generations of resilience, entrepreneurship, and cultural pride.

From 'Wogfood' to National Treasure

In the immediate post-war years, Italian food was often dismissed as foreign and inferior. Derogatory terms like "spaghetti eaters" and "garlic munchers" reflected a broader cultural resistance. Yet today, Italian cuisine is celebrated as a cornerstone of Australian dining, with the Mediterranean diet hailed as one of the healthiest in the world. This shift didn't happen overnight, it was shaped by a complex interplay of social, economic, and cultural forces.

Beyond the Kitchen: Institutions That Shaped Taste

Italian migrants didn't just bring recipes they built institutions. From family-run restaurants and cafés to manufacturers and market gardeners, Italians created a food ecosystem that served both their own communities and the broader Australian public. Businesses like D'Orsogna Smallgoods, Vittoria Coffee, and the Perfect Cheese Company began as humble ventures and grew into household names.

Retailers such as delicatessens, fruit and vegetable shops, and butchers filled a gap in the market, offering familiar ingredients to migrants and eventually attracting mainstream customers. Meanwhile, importers ensured that 'Made in Italy' products remained accessible, even as local production grew.

A Toast to Italian Wine Culture

Italian migrants also reshaped Australia's wine industry. Their love of wine with meals introduced a new way of drinking, one rooted in tradition and conviviality. From the Barossa Valley to the Limestone Coast, Italian families like Virgara, Serafino, Zerella, and Di Giorgio helped elevate Australian wine to international acclaim. They brought not only expertise but also new grape varieties, enriching the nation's viticultural diversity

Oral Histories: Preserving the Legacy

The *A Tavola* project seeks to document this transformation through oral histories and archival research, focusing on South Australia's unique experience. By capturing the voices of restaurateurs, growers, manufacturers, and retailers, the project aims to fill gaps in the literature and honour the everyday heroes who changed how Australians eat and live.

More Than Food: A Way of Life

Italian food is more than nourishment; it's a cultural expression. It speaks of identity, belonging, and the joy of gathering around a table. As one Italian saying goes, '*Una tavola senza vino è com'una giornata senza sole*', [a table without wine is like a day without sunshine]. Through their culinary traditions, Italian migrants taught Australians not just how to eat, but how to savour life.

This story on *Andrew (Andy) Clappis* celebrates the enduring legacy of Italian migration and its delicious impact on Australian culture. For more stories and updates on the *A Tavola* project, stay tuned to our upcoming publications.

Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano
President
Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc.
2025

A Legacy of Taste and Tradition: The Clappis Family's Journey from Refugees to Culinary Icons

By the time guests arrive at Our Place at Willunga Hill, they are greeted not only by sweeping views of the Fleurieu Peninsula but also by the unmistakable aroma of freshly baked bread. Behind every loaf, every dish, and every glass of wine served at this unique dining destination lies a story that stretches across oceans and generations, a story of survival, migration, and an unwavering commitment to heritage.

At the heart of this story is Andrew (Andy) Clappis, a chef, baker, and storyteller whose life mirrors the broader history of Italian migration to South Australia. His journey from a boy growing up in a migrant household to a celebrated figure in the state's culinary scene is a tale of family resilience, cultural fusion, and the transformative power of food.

Fleeing the Shadows of War

The Clappis family history begins in Pola, a picturesque port city that once belonged to Italy. Andrew's father, Gaudenzio (Enzo) Clappis, was born there in 1933. But after World War II, the region of Istria was ceded to Yugoslavia, and life changed dramatically. Enzo's parents owned a knitting factory and were Singer sewing machine distributors, a mark of success that drew the ire of the incoming communist regime. His mother was imprisoned briefly, accused of being a capitalist, while the family business was dismantled.

Andrew's mother, Zofka, faced a similar fate in her homeland of Gradac, Slovenia. She spent nine long years as a political refugee in Mantova, Italy, separated from her family during a time of fear and uncertainty. It was in Mantova that she absorbed the rich culinary traditions of northern Italy, learning the secrets of Mantovan dishes, recipes that would later flavour the Clappis family table in Australia.

In 1951, fate brought Enzo and Zofka together aboard the migrant ship Fairsea, bound for Australia. Like thousands of displaced Europeans, they were seeking refuge and opportunity. They landed in a country still unfamiliar with their customs and food, but they carried with them a deep desire to rebuild their lives, and a trunk full of memories and dreams.

Hectorville: A New Beginning

The couple settled in Hectorville with their four Australian born children, a suburb that became a hub for Italian migrants. Their home was filled with the comforting cadence of

Italian conversation, the clinking of cutlery at mealtime, and the earthy aromas of slow-cooked sauces and fresh bread.

For Andrew, the youngest of four children, Hectorville was a place of warmth and abundance. Sundays began with Mass at St. Mark's Church, followed by a traditional Italian lunch: pasta or risotto to start, then a hearty roast sourced from the family's own backyard chickens or rabbits. Sometimes, Andrew would discover that his beloved pet pigeon had become part of the meal, a testament to the family's self-sufficiency in their early years.

The neighbourhood was a mosaic of cultures. Andrew grew up playing with children from both Italian and Australian backgrounds, forging friendships that would last decades. Hectorville's vineyards and market gardens were a constant reminder of the migrant communities who were literally and figuratively planting their roots in South Australian soil.

Schoolyard Sandwiches and Cultural Exchange

At Rostrevor College, Andrew carried his culture with pride, even in his school lunches. While other migrant children hid their salami or anchovy sandwiches, Andrew embraced them. In fact, he often bartered them for classic Australian meat pies, turning lunchtime into a mini marketplace of cultural exchange.

"I never felt embarrassed about my food," Andrew recalls with a laugh. "My mum's sandwiches were so good that even my teachers wanted them. One teacher loved her crumbed eggplant so much she'd trade me potato crisps just to get a piece."

These simple exchanges mirrored a broader societal shift. During the 1970s, Australians were beginning to embrace the flavours of multiculturalism. Italian food, once confined to migrant households, was slowly entering the mainstream, setting the stage for a culinary revolution.

The Clappis Restaurant Legacy

The Clappis family's true influence on South Australia's dining culture began with Buonasera Restaurant, one of Adelaide's first authentic Italian restaurants. Opened by Enzo Clappis, it quickly became a beloved institution, introducing diners to pasta al dente, slow-simmered sauces, and fresh seafood prepared with Mediterranean flair. It was a bold venture at a time when Italian food was still considered exotic by many Australians.

Over the years, the family expanded their culinary empire, owning and managing several well-known establishments including Enzo's Burnside Village, Enzo's Kent Town, the

Maylands Hotel, and later, Our Place at Willunga Hill. Each venue reflected their commitment to authenticity and innovation. Buonasera offered the classic Italian dining experience, while Enzo's brought a contemporary edge to traditional dishes. The Maylands Hotel became a neighbourhood favourite, known for its welcoming atmosphere and exceptional menu.

For young Andrew, these restaurants were both playground and classroom. At just seven years old, he stood on a banana crate to reach the sink at Buonasera, washing dishes by hand. As he grew older, he learned every aspect of the business, from making espresso to managing front-of-house operations. These early experiences shaped his understanding of hospitality and instilled in him a lifelong passion for food and service.

Training Abroad: A Young Man in Switzerland

Recognizing his potential, family friends and political leaders encouraged Andrew to seek formal training overseas. With the support of Linden Prowse, a senior figure in Premier Don Dunstan's government, Andrew travelled to Switzerland in 1976. There, at the prestigious Park Hotel in Gstaad, he mastered the art of silver service.

The experience was nothing short of transformative. Andrew served royalty, film stars like Elizabeth Taylor and Audrey Hepburn, and global elites who flocked to the Swiss Alps. He learned precision, elegance, and the importance of storytelling in hospitality, lessons that would shape his career for decades to come.

The Maylands Hotel: Where Family and Food Flourished

Upon returning to Australia, Andrew joined his family in their next venture: the Maylands Hotel. This historic venue became a hub of innovation, blending Italian culinary traditions with South Australian produce. It was here that Andrew's three daughters were raised, often seen proudly delivering baskets of freshly baked bread to diners. It became the first hotel to serve restaurant quality food at pub prices and had the first espresso coffee machine in a hotel in South Australia.

The Maylands Hotel was also where Andrew's passion for breadmaking truly took root. Inspired by techniques he had observed in Sicily, Switzerland, and Slovenia; he began experimenting with artisanal loaves. The bread quickly became a signature feature of the restaurant, symbolizing both heritage and hospitality. A stint working in the Tip Top bakery taught Andrew the technique of mass production.

The Path to Breadmaking

Andrew's fascination with bread began during his travels in Sicily, where he watched local bakers use centuries-old techniques. He was captivated by the artistry and

patience required to create loaves that were not only nourishing but deeply symbolic of community and tradition. His fascination with bread making deepened during a visit to his aunty Ivanka in Slovenia, who baked bread every second day using traditional methods.

At the Maylands Hotel, Andrew began to experiment with these methods, using local South Australian ingredients to craft breads that reflected both his heritage and his surroundings. Through trial and error, he perfected recipes that emphasized slow fermentation, natural flavours, and rustic presentation. His breads became renowned for their texture and depth of flavour, earning a loyal following among diners. For Andrew, breadmaking was more than a culinary pursuit, it was a spiritual practice. 'Bread is life,' he often says. 'It's the first thing you offer a guest, a gesture of welcome. Every loaf I bake is a connection to my family's history and to the people who share it at the table.'

Our Place at Willunga Hill: A Culinary Destination

In later years, Andrew realized his dream with Our Place at Willunga Hill, a venue that blends fine dining with storytelling. Perched atop the Fleurieu Peninsula, the restaurant offers guests an immersive journey through Italian traditions and South Australian landscapes.

Every meal begins with Andrew's signature bread, baked onsite using techniques passed down through generations. The menu celebrates local produce while honouring the dishes Andrew learned from his mother and grandmother. Diners don't just eat; they become part of a narrative that stretches back to post-war Europe and the migrant experience.

A Legacy in Every Loaf

Today, as Andrew kneads dough in the kitchen at Our Place, he reflects on the journey that brought him here. His hands carry the memories of his parents' struggles, his childhood in Hectorville, his adventures in Switzerland, and decades spent shaping South Australian dining.

In this way, the Clappis legacy continues, rising like a perfectly proofed loaf, nourishing both body and soul. Through their journey, we are reminded that food is never just food. It is history, love, and the most delicious form of resilience.

Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano
President
Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc.
2025

Clappis Family Early Years.



Enzo and Zofka (Sonia) on their wedding day 23rd March 1952.



Enzo and Zofka (Sonia) Clappis, together with their children Fred, Vivien, Suzi, and Andrew (Andy), form a close-knit family whose legacy is deeply rooted in hospitality and heartfelt connection.



Enzo and Zofka (Sonia) Clappis enjoying a peaceful day at home with their children, taking a well earned break from their busy lives in hospitality.



Park Hotel : Gstaad - Now the Four Season Hotel, Switzerland.





Hollywood Hideaway Gstaad

Switzerland





Park Gstaad 1910 Switzerland.



**Andrew working at Park Hotel Gstaad
Switzerland, Christmas 1976.**



Enzo Restaurant Kent Town in 1983

From Left : Gordon Pickard, Andrew Clappis, Vince (Vincenzo) Amadio.



Front entrance to Our Place at Willunga.



Looking at the property at Willunga Hill



Enzo, Andrew (Andy) and Zofka (Sonia) Clappis



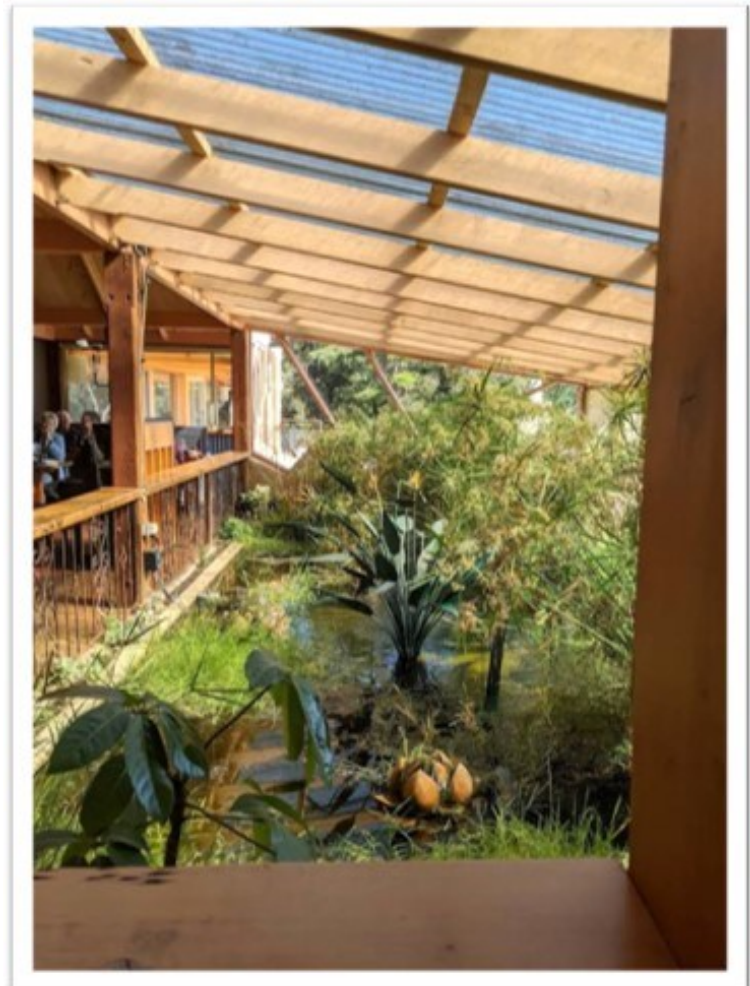
***Our Place—Willunga Hill
inside the Restaurant***



***Restaurant— Our Place
Willunga Hill—in front of
the Bar***



View of the Restaurant by the pond.



The pond adjacent to the restaurant, home to numerous fish and even a resident turtle.



Andy introduces the day's main course with enthusiasm, drawing special attention to the rich, house-made jus — the sole gravy crafted to complement the dish. In the background, his father, Enzo, renowned for his legendary gnocchi, can be seen quietly observing, adding a touch of family tradition to the scene.



Meat in natural jue and Horseradish



With a warm smile, Andy greets the lunch guests & enthusiastically introduces the day's menu, highlighting the fresh ingredients and chef's specials that await.



Before serving, the meal, Andy takes guests on a journey through the cultural roots of the recipe and the local sources of each ingredient



**Guests enjoying the meal, that
Andy has prepared.**



***Our Place—Willunga Hill
inside the Restaurant
Dining area***



Selection of different Menu's available





May's fresh vegetable salad.



Family dinner with home-grown veggies, Coorong mullet and the best ever bread



A snippet of Sunday Lunch– home made Pizza



Andy's cannoli are coming together beautifully—fresh ricotta filling is the heart of a great cannoli.



Fresh Ricotta Canoli



The final flourish on the cannoli—filled with velvety fresh ricotta—is a moment of pure indulgence, echoing the sweet mastery of Sicilian pastry traditions. Each bite is a mouthwatering tribute to centuries of culinary artistry.



Preparing to bake 6,000 loaves a week is no small feat—it echoes the legendary kitchens of Versailles, where grandeur met precision. Amid the whirlwind of flour and fire, Enzo joins Andy like a seasoned maître boulanger, ready to conquer the ovens and orchestrate a bake worthy of kings.



Crusty home-baked bread, a bottle of bold South Australian wine, and hearty homemade fare—crafted with the finest local ingredients. It's a table that celebrates the soil, soul, and flavours of the region. What more could you ask for?



From our humble kitchen in Willunga, loaves are crafted by hand, baked with love, and sent out to those who've called for their daily bread.



Golden-crusted bread, fresh from the oven—its aroma alone makes mouths water.





**Christmas around the fireplace
at Our Place**



Italian Historical Society of SA Inc. Christmas Luncheon with Committee & Members 2024.





**Andy sharing a warm & memorable moment
with the President Giuseppe (Joe) Geracitano &
Secretary Giovanna (Jenny) Geracitano**

-

**of the Italian Historical Society of SA Inc
at the Annual Christmas Luncheon celebrating
Heritage, Friendship and the Festive Spirit.**

**Andy Clappis and
his daughters,
Celandine,
Arnica and Dana**



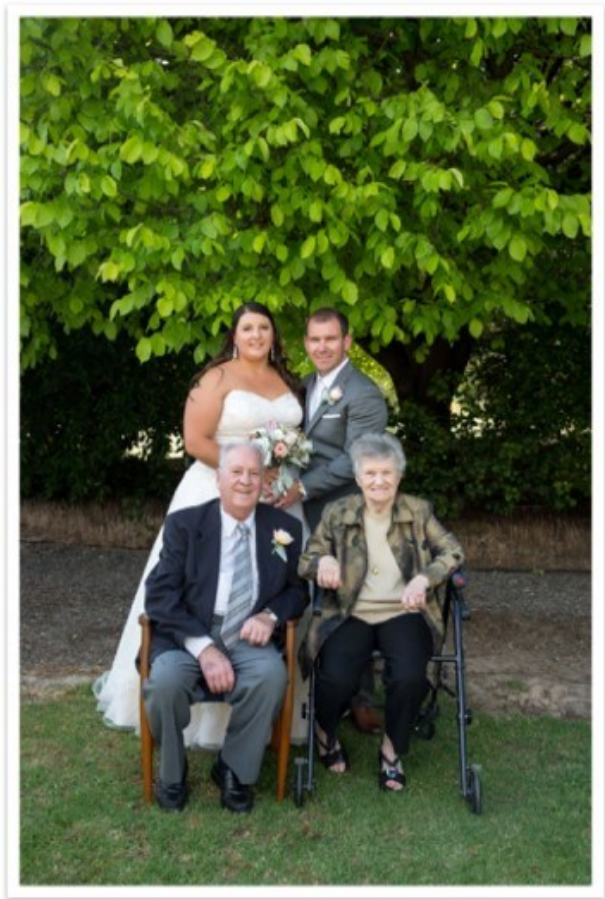
**Andy with Celandine at her
graduation.**



**Arnica, Andrew and Dana Clappis
Andrew twin girls**



**Celandine Wendelborn (eldest)
daughter and Andy**



**Celandine and Simon
Wendelborn celebrate their
marriage alongside their
cherished grandparents -
Enzo and, in loving
remembrance, Zofka (Sonia
Clappis)**



**Franklin Shane
Wendelborn, Andy
Clappis and Taya Zofka
Wendelborn (Andys
eldest grandchildren).**

Family Moments

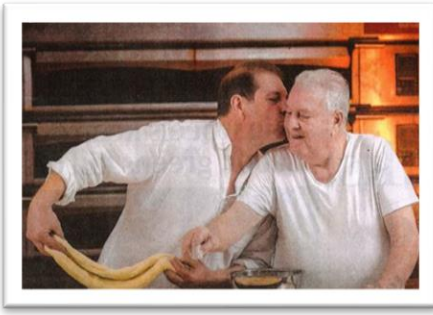


**Andrew (Andy) Enzo, Celandine, Arnica
and the late Zofka (Sonia) Clappis**

Rostrevor College Reunion



From schoolyard memories to shared milestones—Andy celebrates his 45-year Rostrevor College reunion at Our Place, Willunga Hill.



McLaren Vale chef Andy Clappis and his father Enzo conjure their magic in the kitchen

Love of food and family an ideal recipe

RHIANNON DOWN

Food and family are intertwined for restaurateur Andy Clappis. The chef and owner of Italian restaurant Our Place @Willunga Hill in McLaren Vale, near Adelaide, has been cooking up traditional pastas, breads and pizzas for more than 15 years.

Despite being “retired”, dad Enzo Clappis, 87, who arrived in Australia from Pula — which was in pre-war Italy and now modern day Croatia— in 1951, is always on hand to help.

The Clappis family’s inspiring journey from teenage migrants to celebrated restaurateurs has found Andy and Enzo a place in the National Australia Day Council’s ad campaign to celebrate Australia Day on Tuesday.

Proud great-grandfather Enzo worked in fruit orchards around Australia before moving to Adelaide to pursue his passion for food with Andy’s Slovenia-born*‘mum Sonia, who passed away at 90 years-old in July. The pair opened several restaurants. “One of the reasons Dad tells me they came to Adelaide was his love of food. In Whyalla (SA) there was no prospect of getting involved in the industry,” he said.

“In Adelaide he started cooking for men in a boarding house and then he got some jobs working in one of the first Italian pizza bars and restaurants before he started his own restaurant in 1966.

“He opened Enzos Restaurant in 1970 and the premier at the time, Don Dunstan, he used to frequent the restaurant which was the first restaurant with outdoor dining, and he struggled to get people to eat outside and (the former premier) used to sit out there under an umbrella in the rain.” Andy has followed in his father’s footsteps, working in the food industry all over Europe, before coming home to open his own restaurant.

He said his latest venture Our Place @Willunga Hill is more than just a restaurant but a way of sharing his family's culture and story.

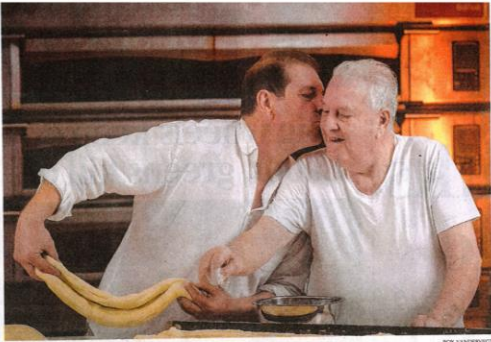
"Where my Dad is from there is a Colosseum in better condition than the one in Rome," he said.

"It's a stone's throw across the water in Venice. Our dialect is very similar to the Venetians but we also have the Austro-Hungaria influence, a lot of our words and food is similar to theirs. We love horseradish, we ferment our own sauerkraut."

Andy's specialty is a sumptuous Italian-style bread with a thick crust that he makes himself from a cross-culture of yeast and a 30-year-old starter.

National Australia Day Council chief executive Karlie Brand said the Story of Australia TV campaign was about celebrating the nation's diversity and history.

"Andy and his family are such a success story and how they've made Australia home," she said.



McLaren Vale chef Andy Chappis and his father Enzo conjure their magic in the kitchen

Love of food and family an ideal recipe

TOMORROW IN THE AUSTRALIAN

AUSTRALIA DAY

Full coverage of who got going, plus searchable lists online

FOOD AND FAMILY

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A Taste of Tradition: Sunday Lunch at Willunga Hill with Andy Clappis

Looking for an authentic Italian dining experience in the Fleurieu Peninsula? Join us at **Our Place at Willunga Hill** for a traditional Sunday lunch with renowned chef **Andy Clappis**.

Family, Food and a Feast for the Senses

For Andy, Sunday lunch is more than just a meal; it's a ritual steeped in family history.

Growing up in an Italian household, food was the centrepiece of every gathering.

"Italians," Andy explains, "just can't imagine any gathering without food."

This passion for food led him to a career in hospitality, from helping his father import pasta machines to working alongside culinary giants in Switzerland.

Today, Andy continues this tradition at his **Willunga Hill** home.

His Sunday lunches are legendary, with guests enjoying a unique dining experience.

There's no menu; everyone eats together, creating a vibrant atmosphere that Andy describes as "a gathering for a special event."

The aroma of freshly baked bread and roasting meats fills the air, adding to the magic of the occasion.



More Than Just a Meal

Andy's culinary expertise shines through in every dish, from his slow-cooked pasta sauces to his renowned bread, which is now enjoyed in restaurants and wineries across the region.

His secret?

"It's all about timing," he reveals. "Long, slow cooking for some sauces, but others, like burnt butter with fresh sage, can be done in seconds."

But it's not just about the food.

Andy's warm hospitality and the stunning setting of **Our Place at Willunga Hill**, with its breathtaking views of the **McLaren Vale** wine region, make his Sunday lunches truly special.

Guests feel like they're part of the family, enjoying a relaxed and convivial atmosphere.

A Legacy of Love

For Andy, **Willunga Hill** is more than just a home; it's an extension of his family's heritage.

With his daughters now involved in the business, this labor of love is set to continue for generations to come.

Want to experience the magic of a **Sunday lunch at Our Place at Willunga Hill**? Be sure to book your spot and prepare for a feast for the senses. You'll leave feeling nourished not just by the delicious food but also by the warmth and hospitality of Andy and his family.

Delicious Sa

Our Place, Willunga: Italian degustation at pub meal prices

Our Place at the top of Willunga Hill, open only for Sunday lunches, is a festive Italian restaurant experience like no other, writes Tim Lloyd

Tim Lloyd



Andy Clappis at Our Place in Willunga.
Photo: Morgan Sette

delicious SA

Don't miss out on the headlines from delicious SA. Followed categories will be added to My News.

The Clappis family has a long and distinguished history providing food to South Australians. It has led them through restaurants, hotels and bakeries, and you could argue that Our Place is the logical outcome of all that expertise.

For an entrée, Our Place has a remarkable view, perched at the top of the valley that hosts the Willunga Hill Bike Climb up its flank, looking down a steep decline to reveal a panorama of the coastal plains stretching below and far out to sea.

Inside, Our Place is a function centre for weddings, parties, birthdays and meetings. But never on Sundays, when it turns itself over to anyone who is prepared to book. Booking, it must be stressed, is essential.

It has room for a couple of hundred party people, and the usual seating arrangement is for long tables for large groups out for a celebration. But it is possible to book a table for two and get caught up in all the buzz.

The Clappises are into house-made food, décor, architecture and entertainment. Andy Clappis introduces notable diners – he even called up football great, now Deacon, Darryl Hicks to say grace – describes the next course, cracks a joke, and makes quite sure that everyone knows this is a family affair. Dad is at the counter. Mum, until recently, was in the kitchen. Andy is everywhere.

There is no choice, although vegan or vegetarian is catered for. The food follows a familiar routine. When you arrive there is pizza or, on this occasion, a chickpea grenada followed by pizza. When you sit down there might be vitello tonnato, deep fried squid, home made pate, and a salad rich with tomato and buffalo mozzarella. Salads and toppings are from a

profusion of tomatoes, leaf vegetables, zucchinis and eggplants growing around the property.

Everything is accompanied by big serves of hot, crusty Italian filone, that can be ripped up to go with butter, with fresh and fragrant green-hued olive oil or to sop up all the juices.

A zucchini risotto sounds too anaemic but this one, with zucchini flowers, is a gem, deeply, warmly satisfying peasant food that is cleaned up with that bread. Handmade gnocchi also comes and goes swimmingly.

On this Sunday, Andy proudly announces that the locavore trend had been taken a step further and a two-tooth hogget, fresh off the family's surrounding grazing land, has been brought to table via a whole animal 24-hour roast. It is paraded before being expertly carved up by Dad. It shows all the rich flavour that well-reared hogget can provide, quite free of mutton taint.

The meal finishes with cannoli: creamy, none-to-sweet filling in crunchy pastry parcels. We had all eaten too much as usual.

"We Italians have a saying: *l'appetito vien mangiando* – appetite comes from eating," announces Andy in riposte.

So that's the food. It is all very good, served in hearty quantities, and deeply imbued with Italian culinary tradition.

The difference is that this lunch is like an Italian feast, a *festa di nozze*, say. All the formalities of the orderly restaurant have been done away with: fixed numbers, fixed menu, drinks bought from the bar and only passing individual service. This is a three or four hour degustation for the price of a good pub meal.

I have been to Italian – and French and Japanese – restaurants like this before. You ask to eat and the meal is whatever is put before you, prepared with a confidence that speaks of tradition and care.

If you trace back there is the Willunga Farmers Market, where Andy's crusty white breads drove one of the most popular stalls from its beginnings in 2001. Bread from the oven is at the heart of Our Place and Andy still delivers his bread to Adelaide restaurants and Willunga outlets.

His dad is from the Veneto region of Italy, his mum from Slovenia. Enzo and Sonia ended up in Whyalla, then Adelaide, and established Buonasera, then Enzo's – later Chloe's – before taking on the Maylands Hotel, making all of them drawcards for great food. Young Andy, in the meantime had been sent off to learn the restaurant trade in Swiss resort hotels.

It all comes together at Our Place. The restaurateur who has turned into a great baker, Sonia's unwavering traditional cookery, and Enzo, now well into his 80s, carving the hogget and then watching with undisguised pleasure the feast unfold around him.

15 September 2018

QUIET LUNCH WITH THE CLAPPIS BLOKES



No sorry mate we're shut today for renovations. This is just a work lunch.

by *PHILIP WHITE*

Under cover of renovations Enzo and Andy Clappis gave a lunch for a few senior blokes.

Their [Our Place](#) is a buzzy *tavola di famiglia* for lost weekend lunches and special events. It's down The Range from Casa Blanco, across the Willunga Fault atop its escarpment.

You look out over the Gulf St Vincent from up there with the eagles.

Father and son served astonishing dishes through a lazy afternoon, including hung pheasants with porcini risotto. Shivers.



A bright young prominently neck tagged health inspector from the local council seemed surprised when he strode in to interrupt the Member for Mawson dutifully stirring porcini juice into the big risotto pot.

The inspector withdrew, suggesting he should return to make an appointment after the

renovations - and lunch - were complete.



Pane di Andy is a tru-blue gastronomic highlight of McLaren Vale life. Andy Clappis by Tony Lewis for In daily.

When I was green in this game, Greg Trott, explaining his region advised "Young White, there's no competition between McLaren Vale

and the Barossa. They're German. We've got the Italians."

We sure do. This is the menu:

- **Pane di Andy and Michael Harbison's olive oil**
- **Baccala Mantecato alla Venetiziana**
- **Pesce in Savor (Coorong mullet)**
- **Vitello Tonnato (classic Piedmonte dish)**
- **Trippa in Bianco served with freshly grated Padano**
- **Fagiano con Castagne e risotto in bianco con Fagiano e Funghi Porcini**
- **Verdure selvatiche from our paddock (wild broccoli)**
- **Gorgonzola dolce con pere**

Joe and his brother John Petrucci were there. Wine people. Growers. Joe brought his confounding Sabella Colorino, which is the syrup of starless nights. This is Joe and his winemaking son Michael.

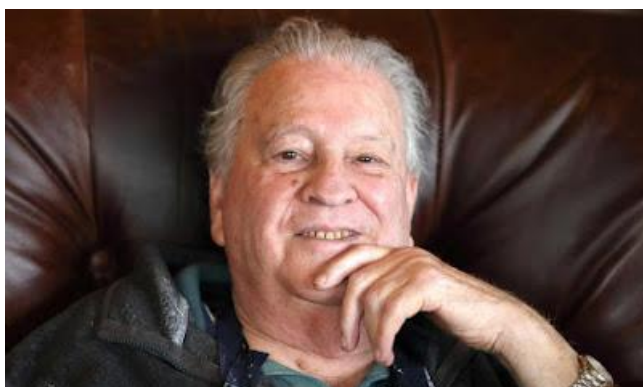


photos at top and this one by Philip White

Enzo and Andy are heroes in Adelaide pub history. When they had the Maylands, they were I think the first publicans in Australia to put a posh espresso machine on the front bar. Their food was exemplary.

Premier Don Dunstan called Enzo "The King of Offal". The last bottle of Penfolds Bin 60A I shared with Max Schubert was in the Maylands. Robbie Robertson brought it. That's what sort of a joint they ran in the face of a towering wave of Colonel Sadness and Hungry Dan's. I have lived a blessed life.

Thankyou dear Enzo and Andy for adding such rich new layers. And that *al dente* honeycomb tripe was pretty trippy. *Enzo Clappis by Tony Lewis for Indaily*



ANDY CLAPPIS

OUR PLACE AT WILLUNGA HILL

Smiles don't get wider, nor greetings more genuine than those delivered by Andy Clappis when visitors arrive at his historic McLaren Vale restaurant, Our Place at Willunga Hill. Andy's 89-year-old father Enzo Clappis is always nearby. A legendary baker and his late wife Sonia arrived in Australia in 1967 from Italy and brought with them their love of food and the way they ate in Italian villages – everything fresh, nothing wasted. In the new kitchen, Enzo bakes bread daily while Andy prepares dishes that are shared around the table with friends old and new who crowd his communal table to enjoy meals that are paired with a side of drama.

An effort worth flying over.



Above: Andy Clappis.
Top right: Simon Gloftis.

SA ANDY CLAPPIS, OUR PLACE AT WILLUNGA HILL

Smiles don't get wider, nor greetings more genuine than those delivered by Andy Clappis when visitors arrive at his hilltop McLaren Vale restaurant. Demand for his hearty Sunday Italian lunches (and his charisma) is fierce. Andy's 89-year-old father Enzo Clappis is always nearby. Hospitality legend Enzo and his late wife Sonia arrived in Australia in 1951 after fleeing Europe as post-war refugees. They went on to pave the way in Italian dining in South Australia. When he's not helping in the kitchen, Enzo proudly watches his son work the crowd. His whole roast pig and coveted cannoli are served with a side of drama.

In short: From Italy, with love.



When he was just 17 years old, Enzo and Sonia decided to give Andy a start in his hospitality career and sent him to Switzerland to study at the Park Hotel in Gstaad.

Leaning close, Enzo whispers: "The most beautiful thing he said to me while he was there was 'I'll never forget the sacrifices you made to send me here, but I don't think I'm going to learn any more than what you taught me Dad'.

Cultural magnetism

Anna Bronzi arrived in Australia from Liguria aged 11 after her mother saw an advertisement in an Italian magazine calling for skilled workers to enjoy the benefits of the Australian lifestyle. Curiously, Anna's father had completed the same certificate in silver service in Switzerland that Andy was later to earn.

Anna, the eldest of five children, was born in La Spezia, Italy, and grew up on the edge of Lago di Como.

It was her family association with the hospitality industry that eventually led her to meet Andy, who takes up the story while passing around a taste of his signature crema di baccala or creamed saltcod on polenta crostini.

"Dad and I got a call from Peter Jarmer. He told us he needed a hand with a big function.

He wanted two capable service staff to pour Champagne on the Popeyes that would be bringing the guests to the restaurant. I agreed to do it and Peter suggested I arrive earlier and meet the other guy. When he introduced me to Enzo Bronzi (Anna's father) he said 'I've always wanted to meet your father' so I invited him and his wife to the opening of our new restaurant (now Chloe's)."

At that stage, Anna was just 19 and although she had briefly met Andrew, they didn't really click until three years later. By that stage, Enzo and Andrew Clappis were running a business importing equipment from Italy.

Anna dropped in to ask for help getting a job and the rest is history.

"Culture (Italian) was a big magnet between us," says Anna, who grew up in a very Australian part of Adelaide and was keen to keep her connection with her Italian roots.

Our place

Talking to Anna and Andy about how 'Our Place @ Willunga Hill' came about, you get the feeling that this is a couple at the beginning of a journey, full of excitement and anticipation for what lies ahead.

They have already had a lifetime in hospitality, successfully running the Maylands Hotel until 2000 and raising three children there. While they had the hotel, they kept their own Angus cattle to produce high quality beef to the high standards on the land adjacent to their current property.

When their time at the hotel was drawing to a close and they started looking around for a rural property, Anna says something kept bringing them back to the same place.

For Enzo & Andy

Enzo, the patriarch, a craftsman of gnocchi,
each pillow soft, a taste of the old country,
brought here, to sun-kissed shores,
a heritage kneaded with love and tradition.

Andy, his son, a chef with a heart as warm as the Tuscan sun,
a smile that melts like Parmesan on hot pasta,
his hands dance with ingredients,
creating a symphony of flavours,
a bridge between cultures, a culinary embrace.

"Our Place",
more than just a restaurant,
a sanctuary built on shared stories,
laughter echoing off brick walls,
the aroma of basil and oregano a constant hum.

Generations intertwined,
Italian roots planted deep,
deep within the vines of McLaren Vale, and the Willunga Hills.

A testament to the beauty of blending,
of multiculturalism,
the seamless dance of cultures,
a vibrant tapestry woven with passion, love and respect.

You'll find Nonna's recipes resurrected,
Silently reimagined with each generation,
a fusion of flavors,
a celebration of heritage,
a welcoming embrace.

Enzo watches, a twinkle in his eye, his legacy is thriving, in real time.

Andy plating memories, one dish at a time,

"Our Place", a beacon for the community,

a shining example of true multiculturalism and mate ship.



GLENN WILLIAMS
BROOKED HILL

In a corner of sunlit Australia, high on Willunga Hill,

where the earth hugs the sky, and vines caress the hills,

there lies a place,

a sanctuary of taste,

where Enzo stirs the pot

and Andy greets with open arms,

each smile a doorway,

each laugh an affirmation of acceptance .

In the kitchen, spices swirl,

tied together by love,

and laughter, mingling within the steam,

as Enzo, the king of gnocchi,

crafts pillows of potato,

soft as a cloud,

each bite a memory of Italy,

rooted deep in his heart,

made by hands weathered yet gentle,

a testament to tradition,

and the art of patience, developed over time,
from that 5 year old boy, to a nonagenarian.

Andy, with the warmth of a sunbeam,

shares tales of flavors,

of heritage wrapped in a dough,

while welcoming strangers as friends,

his laughter a melody,

a chorus echoing through tables,

where stories are intertwined,

Where the past mingles with the present,

A tapestry of lives woven together,

one shared meal at a time.

"Our Place", a beacon of multicultural dreams,

where every plate tells a story,

Italian roots stretching across oceans, to a
Cucina in Australia where the sauce simmers
gently,

infusions of garlic, rosemary

and a hint of dusky, warm basil,

wafting through the air,

inviting all to savor,

to taste the essence of belonging.

Here, the world converges,

in a mosaic of flavors,

where Italian warmth meets the Australian sky,

each dish a dance,

each gathering a celebration,

and love spills over like sauce

on the edge of a plate,

uniting hearts and palates,

an embrace of tradition and new beginnings,

creating harmony in every bite.

With each plate served,

Hands are joined,

nationalities blending in whispers,

savoring the past,

while forging ahead,

in the warmth of camaraderie,

in the spirit of sharing,

Enzo and Andy, a father-son tapestry,

weaving joy through food,

in the heart of their beloved "Our Place",

a sanctuary, a home,

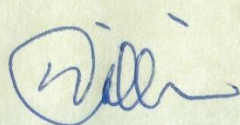
where love is the main ingredient,

and every meal is a gathering,

of souls, of laughter,

of the beautiful mosaic we call life.

Today, "Our Place" is "Your Place"



Glenn Williams
Broken Hill



2025 SOUTH AUSTRALIA

ITALIAN RESTAURANT

FINALIST

Our Place @ Willunga Hill

Willunga

SPONSORED BY





SCHWEIZER HOTELIER-VEREIN

SOCIÉTÉ SUISSE DES HÔTELIERS

ZEUGNIS – CERTIFICAT

_____ bezeug _____, dass
_____ attest _____ que

_____ CLAPPIS ANDREW _____

vom _____ bis _____
a servi du 1er février au 28 février 1977

als _____
en qualité de commis de bar

in _____ Dienste gestanden ist
dans notre établissement

Monsieur Clappis nous a donné entière satisfaction
par son travail, sa politesse à l'égard de la
clientèle, et son esprit d'initiative.
Il nous quitte libre de tout engagement.

Genève, le _____, den 28 février 1977 19
le

SUFFET DE LA GARE
CORNAVIN
J. E. Schild
1200 Genève

Unterschrift:
Signature



SCHWEIZER HOTELIER-VEREIN

SOCIÉTÉ SUISSE DES HÔTELIERS

ZEUGNIS – CERTIFICAT

_____ bezeug _____, dass

Nous attestons que

_____ Monsieur Andrew CLAPPIS _____

vom _____ 20 décembre 1976 _____
a servi du _____

bis _____ 31 janvier 1977 _____
au _____

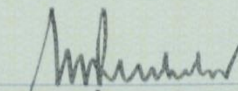
als _____ Commis de rang _____
en qualité de _____

in _____ Dienste gestanden ist
dans _____ notre _____ établissement

Pendant ce temps Monsieur Andrew a eu l'occasion
d'acquérir des notions dans le service.
C'est un jeune homme de très bonne volonté, propre,
poli et de caractère agréable, et nous nous faisons
un plaisir de le recommander.

Gstaad _____, den 31 janvier _____ 19 77
le _____

Unterschrift:
Signature


PARK-HOTEL REUTELER
3750 GSTAAD

ITALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

TRANSCRIPT NOTES

This transcript is a verbatim record of the interview. Grammar has not been corrected, though punctuation has been added by the transcriber for readability.

- Repeated words have been deleted unless used for emphasis. Filler sounds such as “ahs,” “hmms,” and similar have been omitted.
- Non-English words, including names, places, and phrases, appear in italics.
- All non-English phrases are translated into English and enclosed in square brackets.
- Where further explanation is needed, the interviewer’s notes are also enclosed in square brackets.

Punctuation Conventions

- Single dashes (–) indicate pauses within a sentence.
- Triple dashes (---) indicate unfinished sentences, reflecting natural conversational speech.
- Round brackets () are used to denote emotions or actions.
- Square brackets [] indicate words or information not present in the original recording but added by the transcriber for clarification.

Speaker Identification

- GG – Giuseppe Geracitano, interviewer
- AC – Andy Clappis, interviewee

The numbers in the left column represent the timeline of the interview.

Digital Interview

Of

Andrew (Andy) Clappis



TRANSCRIPT

Interview Conducted by:

Giuseppe Geracitano

President

Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc

Recorded

Monday 2nd June 2025

**INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW CLAPPIS FOR THE PROJECT 'A TRUNK
FULL OF DREAMS, A SUITCASE FULL OF MEMORIES:
STORIES OF ITALIAN IMMIGRANTS TO SOUTH
AUSTRALIA,' SECTION: A TAVOLA DINING OUT.**

00:00:01 GG: Recording for the Italian Historical Society of SA Incorporated for the project 'A Trunk full of dreams. A Suitcase full of memories.' Category 'A Tavola. Dining Out.' Recorded on Monday second of June two thousand and twenty-five [2nd of June 2025]. Interviewer Giuseppe Geracitano, President of the Society. Interviewee Andrew Clappis recorded at our Place at Willunga Hill, one thousand, eight hundred and eighty [1880] Brookman Rd, Willunga, SA five thousand one hundred and seventy-two [5172].

00:00:27 GG: Good morning Andrew.

00:00:47 AC: Good Morning, Joe.

00:00:49 GG: First of all, Andrew, can you give me your full name?

00:00:53 AC: Andrew Robert John Clappis.

00:00:56 GG: And your father's name?

00:00:59 AC: Gaudenzio Clappis.

00:01:01 GG: And your mother?

00:01:03 AC: Zofka Clappis.

00:01:05 GG: And the date birth of your father.

00:01:07 AC: First of June, yesterday, and nineteen thirty-three [1st June 1933].

00:01:13 GG: And the date birth of your mother.

00:01:14 AC: Twenty-first April nineteen thirty [21st of April 1930].

00:01:18 GG: The place of birth of your father.

00:01:22 AC: Pola, Italy.

00:01:24 GG: And the place birth of your mother.

00:01:28 AC: Gradac, the old Yugoslavia [Slovenia].

00:01:32 GG: And your date of birth.

00:01:35 AC: Fourth of August nineteen fifty-nine [4th of August 1959].

00:01:39 GG: And the date of your birth. Sorry. Oh, you just said it. Where were you born?

00:01:46 AC: I was born in Rose Park, Adelaide [South Australia].

00:01:49 GG: And your spouse's name.

00:01:53 AC: I'm not married.

00:01:55 GG: All right, your partner.

00:01:56 AC: Sorry my ex-partner, or my partner now?

00:02:00 GG: Your partner now.

00:02:03 AC: Kimi Nguyen.

00:02:05 GG: And your spouse's place of or your partner place of birth.

00:02:11 AC: Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

00:02:15 GG: And her date of birth.

00:02:19 AC: Twenty eighth September nineteenth sixty-nine [28th of September 1969].

00:02:24 GG: And your children? How many children have you got?

00:02:28 AC: Three beautiful girls and my eldest Celandine was born fourteenth of October nineteen eighty-seven [14 of October 1987] and my identical twins Arnica and Dana the sixth of November eighty-nine [6th of November 1989].

00:02:48 GG: I take it they were all born in Adelaide?

00:02:51 AC: Yes, Rose Park, where I was born.

00:02:53 GG: Very good.

00:02:54 AC: Queen Vic. the old Queen Vic. [The Queen Victoria Hospital was a significant maternity hospital located at 160 Fullarton Road in Rose Park, South Australia, which operated from its opening in 1901 as the Queen's Home until it was amalgamated with the Adelaide Children's Hospital in 1989 to form the Women's and Children Hospital].

00:02:56 GG: The old Queen Vic., and grandchildren.

00:03:02 AC: I have six [6] grandchildren, each of my daughters have given me two up to now, so there's three boys and three girls.

00:03:12 GG: And their name?

00:03:12 AC: Eldest is Taya [born 4/1/2017] and her second name is Zofka after my mother and then there's her, her little brother Franklin [born 1/4/2019], and then there's Yarlu [born 12/9/2020] and Yara [born 24/9/2023] and Soleil [born 7/9/2021] and Bloom [born 17/6/2023].

00:03:43 GG: Very good, quite an array of names.

00:04:03 AC: Yes.

00:03:46 GG: Do you remember their date of birth?

00:03:48 AC: Now you are pressing me, (laughs) normally my daughters remind me. (laughs)

00:04:02 GG: They were all born here in Adelaide?

00:04:03 AC: Yes

00:04:04 GG: OK, let's turn to your life as a child. Well, what was it like growing up in the Clappis family?

00:04:16 AC: Very, very beautiful and always a lot of cooking, a lot of jobs around the house at Hectorville. My brother Fred, he's the oldest, and he initially helped dad a lot with the concreting around the house at Hectorville. I did a lot of that later as well, but all the initial concreting Fred did with Dad and Sundays, beautiful Adelaide and Australia. Sundays used to be such a beautiful day to have lunch with the family and that was a big thing for us to go to church with mum at Saint Mark's, Hectorville. I became an altar boy later on, but coming home to the roast that was cooking, or we would always have a pasta or a *risotto* first and then usually a Sunday roast. We had our own chickens. Dad wouldn't tell us when we're eating our chickens. He wouldn't tell us when we're eating our rabbits. We even had my pet pigeon for lunch once. So, growing up in Hectorville, there were vineyards very close to us, there were market gardens very close to us. That's all change now, of course. But yeah, beautiful place to be brought up.

00:05:51 GG: Mentioned, talking about Sunday lunch and so on, who was the cook in the family?

00:05:57 AC: Mum and dad and, I used to always help. dad used to, mum and dad would send me down if we were low on *parmigiano* cheese we go down on Reed Ave to the beautiful deli owned by the *Covino* family in those days. And I'd get a slab of *parmigiano* and I, it was my job to grate it and I would eat the small chunks that were too small to grate.

00:06:29 GG: It's called tasting.

00:06:32 AC: And later on, the beautiful *Cicchiello* family from *LA Casa del Formaggio*, they owned that deli afterwards and you know, before they got into their big factory, they used to make cheeses at home and I used to score some beautiful fresh *mozzarella* or *ricotta*. So, we go back a long way.

00:06:55 GG: *LA Casa del Formaggio* is a big concern now.

00:07:01 AC: What magic cheeses they make.

00:07:04 GG: Yeah, they moved out of Glynde to Edinburgh Park now.

00:07:11 AC: I don't think anyone makes a *ricotta* like them. I use it for my cannoli. It's made from the whey of cheese, the way it should be, and that's so important with that beautiful flavour of *ricotta*.

00:07:29 GG: Talking about making the cheese and the various *mozzarella* and so on, I mean, the *mozzarella*, *mozzarella* is made from buffalo. Where did they actually source their ingredients?

00:07:42 AC: They sourced all around here, in the Fleurieu [Fleurieu Peninsula in the Inman Valley South Australia], they've got so many dairies producing milk for them. *Claudio* [Claude Cicchiello assumed role of Managing Director in 2000] asked me many, many years ago when he was showing me around at their first factory at Glynde. He said, Andy, you're in the Fleurieu Peninsula, do you know dairy farmers. I said, I know a lot of dairy farmers. And he came up with this idea and I put him on to some people to have their own milk vat truck to go to dairies to buy direct from the dairy. So beautiful, unpasteurized milk. Yeah. So, they were ahead of their time. *Claudio* is a great innovator.

00:08:26 GG: Yeah, I would imagine that in the sixties [1960s] and seventies [1970s] it would have been difficult to source a lot of these ingredients.

00:08:35 AC: Yeah, well, they make a lot more, I'm not sure if they're making with buffalo at the moment, but there is a dairy, buffalo dairy farm, at Myponga [town in the Fleurieu Peninsula] which have Italian strain of buffalo so I must give him the heads up on that just in case he needs buffalo milk.

00:08:58 AC: But I buy their *fior di latte* [Fior di latte means 'flower of milk' in Italian and refers to a type of mozzarella cheese made from cow's milk] which is made from cow's milk.

00:09:03 GG: Let's go back. As a child, tell me a little bit about Hectorville and so on, playmates.

00:09:12 AC: Playmates. Well, we had next door, I had *Michael Orlovsky*. His father was *Bratislavian*, his mother Australian, and he was only about a year younger than me, so we grew up together. We didn't venture very far as a family for holidays, but I used to tag along with them and my first visit to Mount Gambier and places like that was with the *Orlovsky* family. Then I had *Conrad Guerra*, his mother and

father from *Luca*, Tuscany, and Conrad was about a year older than me. So, I had on both sides, of my age. And Conrad became a dear friend, as did Michael, we still keep in touch. Conrad went to the same primary school as I did, Hectorville Primary School, St. Joseph's. Michael went to Hectorville Public School. Michael ended up going to Rostrevor College like me. Conrad won a scholarship through Sister Romanus to go to Saint Ignatius, and he did very well. Yeah, and then my beautiful cousin, who, we're very close, used to live down the road from me, *Gaby Jaksa*, his father, mum's brother my uncle *Piero*. *Piero* was the youngest state captain in soccer, the youngest state coach. I think those records still stand. He played for South Australia, played for Australia, he played with *Fulvio Pagani* from *Rio Coffee*. All my uncles played soccer, but he was the one that went on to be very successful. He even coached in Melbourne at one stage. So, Uncle Peter, Yeah, great, great soccer player.

00:11:22 GG: So, you had a lot, lots of friends around, family---

00:11:26 AC: Hectorville, Dawn Avenue which I believe was named after Dawn Fraser that avenue. There was also a Fraser Avenue close to us. But I still keep in touch with so many of the people that I grew up with then, then across the road, he came a bit later when I think I must have been about eight [8] or nine [9]. *Tony Carlo*, he and I still keep in touch. He, he lived directly across the road from us and he stocks my, he's a family fisherman, he stocks my dams, my pond with incredible fish. Yeah. So again, I'm very lucky in this industry Joe, keeping in touch with, in the hospitality industry, you've got a great chance of keeping in touch with people you went to primary school with, that you went to a senior school with that lived around you. Over the years, through our restaurants and hotel, I have kept in touch with so many people, even teachers. My Grade one teacher from Hectorville Primary School. She's been here for lunch.

00:12:43 GG: You remember what's her name?

00:12:44 AC: Yeah. And Sandra, Sandy is her name, her maiden name will come to me in a minute. But she ended up having a couple of marriages. No, it's just gone, but it might come back to me.

00:13:03 GG: Probably come back and you mentioned a number of families in Hectorville. Did you know the Feleppa family?

00:13:12 AC: The which family?

00:13:12 GG: Feleppa.

00:13:16 AC: Feleppa. Feleppa. What Ave did they---

00:13:16 GG: I believe is in Fraser Ave.

00:13:20 AC: I just mentioned.

00:13:21 GG: Yes, that's what made me think of it.

00:13:23 AC: I'm pretty sure I know who you mean.

00:13:24 GG: Mario Faleppa, the first Italian politician---

00:13:28 AC: Yes, of course. Sorry. Yeah. He used to come to our church. I was altar boy.

00:13:35 GG: Yeah, it's alright. That's a very famous name. He was, in fact, the first South Australian politician from an Italian background.

00:13:46 AC: That's right, that's right. I remember dearly. Lovely man.

00:13:50 GG: Family life. Now, what sort of language do you speak in the family. English. Italian?

00:13:59 AC: Italian, a lot of Italian, probably between brothers and sisters, probably, you know, English. But when we were sitting at the table or talking with mum and dad, it would always be Italian and that was because mum was very fluent in Italian, mother, as was dad, political refugees and mum from Yugoslavia was in *Mantova* [town in northern region of Lombardy] for nine [9] years I think, caught up with her family as a political refugee before they came to Australia and mum and dad met on the boat in nineteen fifty-one [1951] on the *Fairsea* coming over. So, mum being very fluent with Italian, it, it was just a, and even my grandmother who lived with us when she was very sick, *Nonna Marta*, she spoke fluent Italian because she was in *Mantova* at the same time.

00:15:00 GG: *Nonna Marta* is on your mother's side?

00:15:02 AC: Exactly. And unfortunately, grandfather *Jaksa* never made it to Australia. The communists didn't allow him to come, he tried many times, he died on my birthday when I was fifteen [15], so unfortunately I never got to meet Nonno *Janis*, who was a butcher, specialised in pork. And so, mum being caught up in *Mantova*, she met *Tazio Nuvolari*, the Formula One racing champion of the world at the time, did it with the P3 Alfa. He met mum in the bunker during a bomb raid during the war and a friendship arose every time they would go in the bunker, and by the way, his best friend was *Tito Gobbi*, the great singer, and mum was asked to help his wife look after his two sick boys, they were very sick and they ended up dying at a young age. My Uncle Paul, mum's brother was also, he, he was altar boy for the funeral of one of the boys. So, Uncle Paul, before he passed away, he told me the story of carrying the coffin as well, helping carry the coffin of the one of the boys. And so, yeah, we always spoke Italian at home and mum would look after, help, look after the boys. And when the boys were resting, he had professional cooks in his kitchen and mum used to help in the kitchen. So, we learned over the years from mum, so many *Mantovan* dishes. And yeah, beautiful story. My cousin *Viano*, *Viano Jaksa*, he recently just came back from Italy and it's a bookstore now, the House of *Tazio Nuvolari*, and it's also a part museum. The house itself, the living quarters, is not open to the public. But *Viano* approached the manager of the bookshop and she was very taken back by the story about mum and her brothers being involved

with the with the *Nuvolari* family because all the boys who used to kick the soccer ball around his property. And he was invited with his wife *Sylvia* to go into the kitchen where mum learned all the *Mantovan* dishes. He's brought back beautiful photographs and stories. So that's amazing. We're going to have a night where I'm going to get as much as the family as I can and we have a film night, and I would love to invite you and Jenny to come and experience the stories about *Mantova*.

00:18:07 GG: That, that would be lovely. In fact, I was going to ask if you got photos of that of the house and because historically it was important part of your family.

00:18:18 AC: Very much.

00:18:19 GG: Did your mother, I mean your mother was of Slovenian background, she would have spoken Slovenian as well.

00:18:27 AC: I learned a little bit from my grandmother when she lived with us, but like I said, my grandmother, she spoke very good Italian as well. Being in *Mantova* all those years.

00:18:36 GG: Well, that sounds a very varied type of upbringing.

00:18:46 AC: Very rich culture.

00:18:48 GG: Very rich in cultural, very rich. OK, we'll move on from the cultural side. The one aspect of culture, of course, is food and what sort of food was cooked in the Clappis family.

00:19:04 AC: Well, if we go back to, even our lunches, my favourite sandwiches were, you know, *cotoletta* [snitzel], *riempiti* [filled], the beautiful as you know the Italians, in particular the *Milanese*, invented bread crumbing of meat. Everyone thinks the Germans or the Austrians, but no the *Milanese*. And it was originally veal chops, bread crumb and pan fried with *burro cotto* or clarified butter. Yeah, we used to have these, dad used to call them *bistecche riempiti* [filled steaks], which Jenny is going to have one made of chicken today for lunch. Oh I lost my train of thought.

00:19:52 GG: About food.

00:19:53 AC: Mum used to make me sandwiches with a whole *bisteccha* [steak] and I loved having all these *salami* sandwiches, *prosciutto* sandwiches, *formaggio* sandwiches and I was not embarrassed. In fact, when I got to Rostrevor, when I got to Rostrevor I used to, mum used to make me so many sandwiches that I used to barter. I used to barter with friends, especially the boarders, and they would give me, I'd give them half a sandwich because I had many and I and I'd score a beautiful pie from Gibbs Pies. Our tuck shop lady, she organised with Gibbs Pies and Pasties that used to be Glynde. They were the first-round pies in Adelaide. She arranged round pies very, very deep, thick and high so that we wouldn't dirty our suits at Rostrevor to eat very successfully. So not only did I

have great lunches with great Italian produce, but I even used to score beautiful pies. My brother Fred, on the other hand, I heard that he was very embarrassed at having, you know, anchovies or *salami*.

00:21:22 GG: Because I was going to ask you, well, I mean, how, how did your school mates react to those types of Italian food? I mean, we know the stories of fights and---

00:21:35 AC: Yeah, I never had a problem. Somehow I got through all that without being bullied. I don't know. I must have not cared.

00:21:45 GG: What sort of years we're talking about here and what sort of---

00:21:48 AC: Well, sixty-four [1964] in primary school when I started I think, and at Rostrevor College from seventy-two to seventy-five [1972 to 1975], I didn't do matric or year twelve [12] because I went to Switzerland.

00:22:09 GG: We'll get on to that in a minute. So, it was in sort of seventies [1970s]---

00:22:20 AC: yeah. When I was a teenager---

00:22:22 GG: When the Australians began to learn about Italian food.

00:22:25 AC: I remember in particular a teacher when I was in primary school, Miss Cronin, her brother was the famous Paul Cronin the actor and mum used to also make eggplant, eggplant bread crumbed and pan fried and put in my sandwiches. And Miss Cronin, I don't know how, initially she scored a bit of my sandwich, but then she would ask me just about every lunchtime, have you got any of those beautiful eggplant sandwich that your mum makes? And I'd give her a half a sandwich or something and she'd buy me potato crisps and things which I used to even barter with my teacher.

00:23:08 GG: Probably the one thing that there wasn't available in the Clappis family.

00:23:14 AC: Exactly we had chips. Yeah, mum would make them herself.

00:23:19 GG: Yes, I remember those days. Actually, we're talking about education, I'd love to explore a little bit more about your educational background. You, as you said, you went to primary school at Hectorville---

00:23:36 AC: The Saint Joseph nuns.

00:23:37 GG: Saint Joseph nuns and then you went on to---

00:23:41 AC: Rostrevor College---

00:24:42 GG: Rostrevor. How did you find schooling?

00:23:45 AC: I loved school. It was a big culture shock to me when I went to Rostrevor though, because when I was in primary school at the time, in Grade seven [7], we used

to go to the Norwood swimming pool once a week in a bus. And I turned out in Grade seven [7] to be the strongest swimmer, and the whole school watched me get my safe swimmers, which was, I don't know, twelve [12] laps, completely clothed, jeans and everything. And it was a sort of given that when I would get to Rostrevor, because my brother was already there, there was mumblings in the family that I'm going to be a great swimmer because they had great swimmers at Rostrevor College. I turned out to be very average at Rostrevor, it was a culture shock from being the best swimmer in primary school to very average.

00:24:38 GG: Big fish in small pond then went on to be a small fish in a big pond.

00:24:44 AC: We had some champions at Rostrevor, we had Peter Dunn, we had Jordan, the family of both Tim and Nick, his brother, they were champion swimmers. Then they're the, the family of real estate, and then we had Veitch. just so many great swimmers at Rostrevor.

00:25:08 GG: I remember those days thought as well, because I'm St Michael's boy.

00:25:15 AC: I remember my member of Parliament, Leon Bignell went. Yeah, Leon Bignell character.

00:25:22 GG: Yeah, quite a character. So, you experienced that. You told me a little bit about that, Rostrevor, as far as the academic side is concerned, you experience with the subjects. What, which ones do you preferred? Which ones you're good at?

00:25:42 AC: Well, at Rostrevor I really loved being part of the agricultural class. We had a little farm at Rostrevor, they still do, I think. And I even, Daryl Hicks, the great South Australian Sturt footballer, he was our ag. science teacher, he was my religion teacher, he became the first Deacon in South Australia to be married at our cathedral, and he asked if anyone wants to be egg monitor for the farm at lunchtime to go and collect eggs in our, from all our chickens and *Pellegrino Trotta* and I, we put our hands up and the great benefit of us going to check the chickens, collecting the eggs and feeding them and watering them was that we'd drink several raw eggs together.

00:26:52 GG: There was a compensation.

00:26:56 AC: Yeah. So, yeah, yeah.

00:26:58 GG: So, you were drawn to food related activities that even from an early age.

00:27:04 AC: I used to love our one of the other side we had the Czechoslovakian and on one side Uncle Joe Orlovsky. And then we had then, and I used to call him *Nana* and Papa Graves. They were both born in nineteen hundred [1900] and same age as my grandmother that they were like Australian grandparents to me. And they had a relative from Roseworthy [farming area about 10 Km north of Gawler, South Australia] , near Roseworthy who was a farmer, Roy Curry. And yeah, I used to go with Papa Graves to the farm regularly on trips. And I just love the

smell of the farm, the sheep, the cows, and the hay, it's like being in another world. It really, really was great.

00:28:08 GG: And language wise, I mean, you told me that you were brought up speaking Italian at home when you went to school, did you know any English?

00:28:21 AC: I started speaking very late in life. I started speaking properly close to when I went to school, evidently my brothers and sisters, me being the youngest, used, I was told, used to speak for me and the first word I ever learned, evidently from Papa Graves, when I used to go and visit him, because mum would overdress me because I was a pretty sick little boy. I used to have asthma and bronchitis regularly and, I've grown out of that luckily. That I think was because of all the sports I played at Rostrevor and then the swimming that I did in primary school, at the later on in primary school. So, I was lucky to get rid of my asthma and bronchitis. But Papa Graves, when I used to walk over to him, mum would overdress me because of my, my condition. And I used to go with the Snoopy hat, even when it was sunny and a beautiful day with, you know, the ears covered with the, with the fur. And I'd walk over and I'd go windy, windy. So evidently the first word I learned was windy

00:29:35 GG: So how did you handle your initial years at school?

00:29:42 AC: I remember my very, very first day at primary school, I cried and cried and cried when mum said goodbye to me, but that, I can only remember that one day where it was traumatic for me because being the youngest mum and I had so much time together. I remember just having such beautiful, simple lunches with mum. One of my favourite things as a little boy before I even went to school was fresh white onion, fresh, you know, with the, with the stem and mum would cut into boats and we'd have a bowl of olive oil with salt and not even pepper, just a little bit of salt and mum, with bread. Mum taught me to dip in with this boat of onion, raw onion, which was pretty powerful and, and bread. And that was one of my favourite things and, and just having an egg with, and mum even taught me to eat chillies at a young age. And yeah, just all that time I had with mum, yeah, it was, it was a real shock my first day at school. But I quickly got out, got through that, I'm pretty sure.

00:31:06 GG: So how to just handle the language?

00:31:10 AC: I, I think I was, you know, speaking OK by then, but now that now people say you, you don't shut up. [laughs] I was just a late starter because my brothers and sisters used to talk for me.

00:31:30 GG: Did your brother and sisters converse in English or Italian among themselves?

00:31:35 AC: Oh, in English. But when mum and dad were around we were all talk Italian very, very comfortably.

00:31:41 GG: OK, life is an adolescent. You tell me a little bit about adolescent as a teenager. You told me a little bit about the experience at Rostrevor and, your range of friends.

00:31:59 AC: Well, I think, I think I've always been, always got, no, we organise now my reunions here from Rostrevor and I just had so many friends. My best friend was Paul *Amadio*, *Amedeo* the builders, the son of Vin, and I would swap lunches with him because he'd always buy these pies and pasties and, and his mother was Australian, always would give him money for lunch and I'd come with these incredible sandwiches. Paul and I are still very, very close. So, *Paul Amadio*, but I, I had a lot of Italian friends like *Pellegrino Trotta* who I used to collect the eggs with. But I had so many Australian friends. You know Don Wake, Peter Gava, his family evidently knew my family from Waikerie days because I was born in Adelaide, but I was conceived in Waikerie and the Gavas were in Waikerie in that time too and very close to my mum and dad.

00:33:11 GG: OK, well, are you? Tell me about Waikerie.

00:33:14 AC: Well, I was only conceived there. But yeah, several times that I've been to Waikerie, yeah, it's just, it feels very special. And I remember going to see the Jurgen family with mum and dad many, many years ago and we're driving along and dad said, see that house with the red roof, that's where you were conceived. That's when I first remembered.

00:33:42 GG: So, I think your father and your family lived for a period of time---

00:33:48 AC: Mum and dad worked all along the river. Fred, my brother Fred, his first school was in the Riverland. He went to a couple of different schools in, I think in Waikerie and also before that Loxton then and my two sisters I don't think did any schooling in Waikerie but yeah, I was. So, the family lived there, I got conceived there and then we came to Adelaide. Fred and Vivian, my eldest sister. they were born in Whyalla and me and my sister Suzie were born at Rose Park.

00:34:38 GG: How long did now? You talk about Rose Park; you talk about Hectorville.

00:34:45 AC: Rose Park was the hospital.

00:34:46 GG: That's after the hospital of course. And how long did you, the family staying in Hectorville?

00:34:54 AC: Oh, all my life, all my growing up life, the builder of the house or the finishing of the house because dad bought, I think with the plans and the and the, and the foundations were already there from the previous German owner. But then dad completed the house and the *Trotta* family, not related to *Pellegrino*, but *Giorgio Trotta* family, they finished the house off. So, from when I came out of hospital, I lived in Hectorville. And when, did we sell Hectorville? Not that long ago, yeah. It would have been, not long after two thousand [2000] that I think Hectorville was sold. Maybe even up to two thousand and ten [2010]. I'm not, I can't really

remember. But yeah, all my life before coming here at Willunga Hill was at that property.

00:36:13 GG: Another aspect of teenage years is entertainment and so on. Go through the process what sort of entertainment you were exposed to, what you enjoyed.

00:36:30 AC: Well, I was always helping dad in the restaurant. I was seven years old when dad was at the *Buonasera* and I used to help---

00:36:40 GG: We'll talk about the restaurant.

00:36:44 AC: Teenage, yeah. So what years are you talking about?

00:36:47 GG: Teenager Well, as a teenager---

00:36:49 AC: From thirteen [13] to---

00:36:50 GG: To nineteen [19] when you left school.

00:36:55 AC: Well, I was introduced to wine at an early age because when I was fourteen [14], dad took me to my first tasting with him. I used to tag along with him everywhere, and that would have been at *Primo Caon* and *Giocondo Caon's* cellar in King's Court. And I remember it was all guys and we're tasting all these wines and *Primo* and *Giocondo* were the agents for Bollinger Champagne, and it was my first sip of champagne. And as I put it in my mouth, *Primo* taught me, and *Giocondo*, to put a mouthful of champagne in my mouth and chew it like a steak before I swallowed it. I remember that vividly. And I can't do it without thinking of them now when I drink a French champagne. And then the guys were all talking at one stage and I progressed to the whites and the reds, and I remember sipping, sipping some red I had in my mouth, and I get this flick behind the ear and I look up and it's Len Evans, the great author [wine writer]. And Len Evans goes, son, use the spittoon. And I said, but I like it, Sir. And one other quick story. I, I remember when I was fourteen [14] going with mum and dad, dad had just bought a Lancia coupe and we went to the opening of Wolf Blass Winery at Nuriootpa in nineteen seventy-three [1973] and it was a big, big show. And dad, just prior to this he we're in Burnside Village, we had the restaurant in Burnside Village then dad could not work out, how we got these great reviews from Jeff Turner but he didn't know it was Jeff Turner. Jeff Turner was the original Sol Simeon of Adelaide and he was incognito. He was before Tony Baker. When Tony Baker became Sol Simeon, everyone knew that Tony was but he managed, Jeff and his wife Rosemary, managed to be very incognito. And we rocked up, mum dad and myself, and the first person that we saw that we knew was Jeff and he was already had a few wines and he was very celebrating, and he said, Enzo, Sonya, Andy, hey, and he poured dad a glass of red wine and he started telling dad that he's left the newspaper and he's bought, with his brother, the Bentley Hotel at Clare. He's bought land on Brice Hill, and he said, it's our dream to open the first decent restaurant. I don't think there was any restaurant in then in, in Clare. And we going to call it Brice Hill Restaurant. And

dad was taken back because he said, you know, that he's left the paper and dad didn't, I don't think he even realised he was at the paper then and he was just a regular client. And he said yeah, I was Sol Simeon. Dad started drinking with him, I never seen dad have so many glasses of red. So, I was fourteen, nineteen seventy-three. When we went to leave, I remember my dad saying to me in Italian here, here, he threw the keys of the car to me, and he said, son, I've had a few too many reds, you better drive us home. I drove from Nuriootpa to Hectorville. I knew how to drive because I used to practise when dad was counting the cash register at night, I would practise driving in Burnside Village his brand-new Lancia. There's a naughty story. Try and do that now.

00:40:55 GG: Depends on you. They didn't know that you would drive in his Lancia.

00:40:59 AC: Oh yeah, he used to let me practise in the in the car park, you know, late at night.

00:41:03 GG: So, I take it from that that entertainment really revolved around the family.

00:41:10 AC: Yes, and also the restaurant taught me to socialise.

00:41:19 GG: And as I said, we'll talk about the restaurant because there's a lot, lots to do talk about restaurant. So, during your growing up, did your parents ever talk about their experience in Italy and what Italy meant to them?

00:41:38 AC: Oh, it was always part of our conversations. Very much so, yeah. They were very open about so many things about the war. Yeah. We were very close, still are a very close family, and dialogue was amazing.

00:42:07 GG: Do you remember the sort of things they used to talk about?

00:42:11 AC: Scary things about the war, Yeah, horrible things that dad said. My auntie, one of the identical twin aunties, never, never forgot was something she experienced at the time when Mussolini was killed. Yeah, she experienced seeing some Italian men hanging from a tree and yeah, pretty detailed account of all that.

00:42:54 GG: Did they feel in any way betrayed by the by the Italian government? I mean, they were refugees from Istria. Did they feel in any way---

00:43:03 AC: Well, they both ran away from communism and mum had that, mum and dad had that very much in common. Mum from the Yugoslav regime of Tito and dad, the regime what, my grandmother was handcuffed and taken away, she had twelve [12] children, taken away for being a capitalist and, and was in prison for a short while. Yeah, that's an incredible story. Because they had a factory, my grandfather and my grandmother had a factory, [cough] they had a fact, a knitting factory in Pola and, the Singer dealership of that part of the world, the sewing machines. Yeah, so mum and dad both ran away from communism

00:44:09 GG: Did that feel in any way, how shall I put it? Did that, did that feel that Italy supported them?

- 00:44:24 AC: Interesting. I don't. I can't see how they would have felt that. I think they would have, if anything, felt more betrayed. Yeah, it's an interesting question, but yeah, I can't see how they were, did feel.
- 00:44:41 GG: Because a lot of these *Istriani* felt betrayed by Italy, and that's historically that comes through.
- 00:44:51 AC: My mum and dad very open minded. I mean my dad ended up marrying a Slovenian, you know, his part of Italy was taken by the Yugoslav. So, you know, they very open minded. They, they knew that, I don't think they hold grudges. They just know that, you know, they just if things progressed and, you know, for the wrong reasons sometimes, as things are now in the world, it's just yeah, we can't, we can't just think bad all the time of yeah, we have no power sometimes to control things.
- 00:45:39 GG: So, the other thing which a lot of parents that, that come and that have migrated talk about their life as migrants did they---?
- 00:45:53 AC: Oh dad, dad especially tells lots of stories when they first came to Australia. Look, [Andrew recalls a story of blood running down the river which historically didn't happen]. He remembers when they used to eat so much mutton. And I've just got to tell this little story. He, he remembers eating a lot of mutton and when dad just going to the restaurant for a minute at the *Buonasera*, he could not work out how come all these Australian and Anglo Saxons would have to have their plate so hot with their food on it if it wasn't boiling hot, you know, dad recalls this woman saying, *Enzo*, can you please take this food back to the kitchen my plate is not hot. And it was nice and warm, dad was puzzled, but he remembered the days, he worked out why the Australians and the Anglo Saxons needed their plate so hot. Because he remembers the mutton, the food with the dripping from the mutton, the fat would congeal when the fork and knife would stand up on end. So that's why they liked hot plates. Dad is convinced of that. And I am too, because, you know, cooking with olive oil the food doesn't congeal. Interesting hey---
- 00:47:51 GG: Interesting. Yes, the good old mutton and the English roast which relied on mutton on a Sunday with the three veggies.
- 00:48:04 AC: And they used to eat a lot of birds from the from the Riverland, not only ducks, but even some of the fowls and things. And dad recalls, I had to cook a lot of those things for a long time to make it tender. But they got by, they got by.
- 00:48:20 GG: All right, that's OK. Now we move on to married life. You said you had a partner. Obviously you went through a process of marriage, breakup and so on. If you want to. I mean, it's an area that it's not---
- 00:48:40 AC: No. I've got no problem. Unfortunately, the marriage didn't survive, Anna was from *La Spezia* [*La Spezia* is the second-largest city in the *Liguria* region, after Genoa. Located roughly midway between Genoa and Pisa, on the Ligurian Sea].

So, she was born in Italy and I actually befriended her mum and dad before I met her. They actually set me up, I think because years ago Peter Jarmer, the great restaurateur and chef and manager of Benjamins, when I came back from Switzerland, dad and I was setting up the restaurant at Kent Town and working with the *Trotta building family* once again, after all those years, we had *Trotta* again helping us, the builder. and Jarmer rang me up and said can you help? Can you help me? Channel Ten [10], I think it might have been Channel Seven [7] at the time, then it changed, Touch of Elegance. We're celebrating ten [10] years anniversary of Jay Walton and he wanted me to serve French champagne on the on the two Popeyes because clients and guests were going to be on the boat and then brought to, he was running the restaurant at on the river there. And now I can't even think of the name of that right on the river.

00:50:04 GG: Ernest Restaurant. [Ernest's Restaurant was located in a building on War Memorial Drive by the Torrens Lake. It featured a grand piano and a dance floor, and was known for its expensive, fine-dining experience. It closed in 1965 and was renamed Benjamin's. Other names that followed; The Taipan, Café Lago, Gekko's, and Flannigan's before eventually being the Red Orchid Barrel + Grill which closed in May 2025].

00:50:07 AC: No, after that it became widely owned by the car park [owners], manufacturer of pyjamas.

00:50:15 GG: By the weir

00:50:17 AC: Yeah, by the weir. Just kind of think. And so, I did that. But he, I met him on the on the wharf and he had, Anna's father who was from the restaurant game, he worked at the *Drumminor* [*Drumminor Restaurant*, upmarket restaurant in Golden Grove owned by the *De Ieso* family] and different places through his career, and *Enzo*, another *Enzo*, my children have two grandfather *Enzos*, *Enzo Bronzi*, he was at the weir with, at the landing, I mean with Peter Jarmer. Peter Jarmer introduced me to *Enzo*, and *Enzo* I remember saying to me, oh, I've always wanted to meet your father with the same name as me and also in the hospitality game. And I said you will. And I just invited him to our opening.

00:51:11 GG: So, that started a relationship.

00:51:13 AC: Yeah there you go.

00:51:15 GG: So, when you were growing up, did you go out with girls? Did you have girlfriends? Close girlfriends?

00:51:26 AC: My first girlfriend was English and my brother set me up when I came and I started a bit late in life. I was always so busy with *Enzo* in the restaurant and so, yeah, I was a late, late starter.

00:51:44 GG: So, your experience with the opposite sex wasn't a major part of your life?

00:51:50 AC: Not initially.

00:51:54 GG: So, when you met your future wife---

00:51:55 AC: I used to notice girls, I tell you.

00:52:00 GG: So, you two got married now your children are that from your first marriage or?

00:52:06 AC: Yeah. Yes, all, all my three girls, all the children that I had with Anna and yeah we still see each other at family gatherings and so forth. But yeah, like I said before, unfortunately didn't make it all the way. Not like mum and dad, they lived their truth [laughs]

00:52:34 GG: Yes these days, I mean ten years as a golden wedding, if you make it to ten years, you will. So, the language that you spoke at home, your wife was of Italian background, you were, you were Italian background, did you speak Italian at home?

00:52:56 AC: We, we tried a lot with the girls and I think it was great because the girls all, they don't practise their Italian much unless they're with dad. But I know that when Dana went overseas, she was able to make herself understood and understood everything because of that upbringing. I also remember, especially at the table, we often make an effort to speak Italian.

00:53:31 GG: To this date do they---?

00:53:36 AC: Especially with my eldest daughter *Celandine*, because she helps me a lot in the office here and she's now, they're travelling around Australia at the moment and they're doing home schooling with their two children and they're doing Italian on that trip. Yeah, for the children.

00:53:57 GG: So, they keep up some of your tradition, what sort of school experience, what sort of work experience? Did they, did they follow you into the restaurant or did they---?

00:54:15 AC: Oh, they all as they were growing up, when we were at the Maylands Hotel, because the girls were all brought up in the Maylands Hotel, and that's where I started making my bread and so forth, and yeah, it was fun, fun times for them to help me make bread. And I remember they used to, as very, very young girls, used to go out with the bread baskets to the tables to bring the bread, and this is daddy's bread.

00:54:43 GG: So, they're proud of it.

00:54:46 AC: Very proud.

00:54:47 GG: OK, well, let's move on to the restaurants, that's what you, your love, has been revolved around. You told me you started the age of seven.

00:54:57 AC: Yes, at the *Buonasera*. So, dad used to put a banana crate for me to wash dishes, I remember. And there was no dishwashing machine, it was all done by hand. Then I progressed, he taught me to make some coffees on the banana crate as well. And then speaking of Jeff Turner, before the Sol Simeon we had years ago, a beautiful little lunch here, little private lunch, and Jeff and Rosemary were here, John Dowie was here, the great sculptor from the, the Victoria Square fountain. And I never could remember, but I remember what I did, I didn't remember who it was, but Jeff pointed out it was him and Rosemary that I was, dad sent me out, he was short staffed and I had to open a bottle of wine for a table. It turned out it was Jeff and Rosemary and Jeff helped me open this bottle of red, a cork. And so, yeah, they're amazing.

00:56:14 GG: I take it that the Liquor Licence Court never found out about it.

00:56:21 AC: When I was at Rostrevor I used to tell that story and a lot of the guys from the boarders, from the country whose families had hotel, they say, oh yeah, we used to be behind the bar helping, it was a, it was a given in those days.

00:56:35 GG: So basically, your duties were dishwasher, coffee maker---

00:56:40 AC: And then and then progress to being on the floor.

00:56:42 GG: Being on the floor. So, at what age did you become involved in the restaurant full time?

00:56:55 AC: Well, I was at Rostrevor when I used to spend more times helping dad than at school. I used to, I used to miss a bit of school. I remember dad had four wisdom teeth taken out and he had, he developed a really bad infection, and he had to go to hospital and I had to abandon school for, it was a week or two, I think it was two weeks and I had to look after the restaurant and mum used to always, every morning she'd tell me, so, I would have been sixteen because I was driving then to the restaurant in Burnside Village. But mum kept on reminding me you got to ring the school, because she was embarrassed sometimes on the phone, you know, speaking English, but her English was fine. But she said you got to ring the school and tell them that you're looking after the restaurant, that you're not there, blah, blah, blah. And I never did. And I remember one night, I hadn't been to school for a week or so, and my teacher, my class teacher, rocks up with one of the teachers from the primary school, Michael Bergin, and he took out his first little date with this beautiful, should look like Olivia Newton John, and they rock up and there I am with a bow tie, the booking book. And they walked in, and Michael said, Andy, I didn't realise you'd left school. And I said sorry Michael, but I was supposed to ring, dad is in hospital, blah, blah, blah. And I think dad was out of hospital, but he at home at this stage still recovering. And so, they had dinner there that night. I remember going back to Wolf Blass again. There was on one table I had Wolfgang Blass had a table of about six people and then there was another table with Peter Lehmann [Peter Lehmann Wines] and they were also around the same size, different table. And at the end of the night, all that was left of clients was the two tables of wine makers and Michael and Rita, and I remember joining the

tables together and bringing out some really special old port. And we all enjoyed this port. And then, that was on the Saturday night, on the Monday, dad was back at the restaurant and I went back to school and I was running late even my first day after not being at school for a while. And I'm walking down the gully at Rostrevor and there's the school was really quiet. I mean, I was, I was running late. I used to drive to school in the combi van and Michael is walking towards me from the other side of the gully. We meet in the middle and he said *Clappis* I've already marked your present. He said, listen, it's all free periods today. I'm thinking about going to the Barossa Valley with the Rita and you come with us, because you know all the wine makers, and we can get some wine at a good price. Well, we took off. We took off when, when I got back, he lived at Dernancourt and we ended up going to Dernancourt, he said you can help, you can cook dinner for us with whatever I've got in the kitchen. And so, we went back to Dernancourt to his house, the first time I've ever been to his house. And there was a big sign on the on, the on the front door. And Bob Nickel was our deputy headmaster, I think he used to play for Norwood, and he left a sign on the door where the hell have you been today? You were seen driving out of the school with Rita and *Andy Clappis*. I never heard boo, but I think he got in trouble (laughs).

01:01:06 GG: And this, you were sixteen years old.

01:01:08 AC: Yes.

01:01:09 GG: And that's when you were cooking.

01:01:11 AC: Yeah, I remember cooking, cooking dinner there that night. For some reason, I can't remember what I cooked, but whatever he had in the kitchen and I cooked it up and yeah.

01:01:22 GG: But in the restaurant, were you---?

01:01:25 AC: No, I was, I used to, I used to be out in the front, you know, on the floor. I used to be on the floor and even when I went to Switzerland I was to learn front of house service.

01:01:38 GG: Well, we'll get on to that in a minute. So---

01:01:41 AC: But I always loved cooking.

01:01:43 GG: Can you tell me or tell me some of the stories that you remember from your days in the various restaurants and particularly in the hotel Maylands Hotel?

01:02:00 AC: Well, the *Buonasera* I think the most beautiful story is the one about opening my first bottle of wine. And then, then from there it was Burnside Village and probably my best story there is when I was sixteen. So now we go to the, no, then we went to Kent Town. And that's how I, not that I remember her from that day, but my ex-wife evidently, because I invited her mother and father to the opening, they got her to deliver flowers and evidently I accepted them from her

before everyone arrived. But wow wee Kent Town, I remember the most incredible thing was the friendship with all these wine makers. I mean, the chief wine maker of Penfolds, Max, used to come and dine with Mr Penfold-Hyland, Peter Lehman was a regular. I remember at the end of lunch I would often be invited to sit down and he used to love finishing off with either Muscat or Torquay from Ned Kelly country in Victoria.

01:03:30 GG: Rutherglen.

01:03:31 AC: Rutherglen and Glen Rowan, all those beautiful places that make, now it's probably the most unique wine of the world from that region really is so special. I don't think we appreciate in Australia how special those fortified wines are from that region. It will be recognised one day. Yeah, fortified aren't drunk like they used to be, but that was a great experience drinking these incredible wines. But not only that, Peter Lehman started the Option Club, option game where people were given an option to taste wine and come up with what the wine was with options like someone would say, you know, is this from Australia? Is it from Germany? And that was started with the, with Peter Lehman, *Primo* [Caon] used to be part of that, Len Evans, Robert Hesketh, these guys started the Option Club and now wine clubs, it's all based on that, and I remember when it all first started in our restaurant when these boys were there. I've even got a Chateau d'Yquem [Sauterne from France, grapes are harvested by hand and coupled with the impact of noble rot leads to low yields which makes the wine expensive] that Peter Lehman gave me, the most expensive wine in the world. It's a nineteen seventy [1970] something, but just, yeah, that's where I really got to learn about wine, was in, was in Kent Town at *Enzo's* restaurant at Kent Town, which became *Chloe's* afterwards. We built that kitchen., the kitchen extension was done with the *Trottas* again, and that cellar I used to fill with wine. That was my little baby. So, the wine, the wine thing really, really started in Kent Town.

01:05:37 GG: In those days, was there an appreciation among the population that about table wines, because Australia was very famous for fortified wines right up to the nineteen sixties [1960s] and so on. Then there was a revolutionary change.

01:05:55 AC: Exactly. Well, dad, dad and I remember the days when the Cold Duck [during the early 1970s the South Australian company Orland Wines produced a sparkling red wine labelled 'Cold Duck'] was drunk so much and that now gave, because Australia really, as I understand it, really invented sparkling red, and Cold Duck was one of the first ones. But that was not a good example. The Kaiser Stuhl, you know, Penfolds, I've had some old sparkling shirazes from Penfolds and absolutely magic wise. So, the transition from Moselles, which I mentioned D'Yquem before, you know, the great Sauternes from France, but you know, our sweeter wines weren't good examples necessarily of that variety. But Moselle was drunk a lot. It was even; we used to even have flagons of Moselle and put in carafes. You know, it was very popular. [coughs] So, I remember the days when, for example, Cabernet was more expensive, doesn't matter what winery or region you talked about, the Cabernets were always more expensive, especially from Coonawarra, Clare Valley. I remember we had the Taylor's, Shiraz and the Cabernet. The Cabernet was more expensive. My cousin Walter,

the great winemaker from Hedonist Wines now, but he owned Ingoldby [Ingoldby Wines from McLaren Vale South Australia] for many years. When he owned Ingleby, he became the Bushing King [title awarded annually to the wine maker of the highest scoring individual wine at the McLaren Vale Wine Show] with his cabernet from McLaren Vale. Yeah, but then the revolution of the famous Grange Hermitage by Max changed things. Everyone wanted to drink Shiraz, and now you'll probably find that a lot of the time the Shiraz is more expensive than the cabernet

01:08:06 GG: Why was cabernet so expensive?

01:08:09 AC: It was just considered a probably a better wine. I'm not sure of the yieldage, if that's got anything to do with it. I'm pretty sure it's a smaller, smaller grape. Maybe that has something to do with it. But it was just accepted that the cabernets were always more expensive than the Shiraz. But that's sort of turned around there because of Grange.

01:08:32 GG: Because of Grange, Yeah, it's all right. And Coonawarra was regarded as the best area to grow---

01:08:38 AC: Yeah, but even in McLaren Valley, we had magic wines. Also, I just got to mention about Max, when dad was at the *Buonasera*, not only was Max the chief winemaker of Penfolds, he was dad's wine rep [representative]. from Penfolds. They were both chain smokers. I was, you know, when I was seven and a little bit older, I remember them, they'd chain smokers, both of them. I think they're both smoking Camel at the time. They would chat and Max would take dad's Penfolds order. I told Peter Gago this story when he was here not long ago, I said, Peter, when are you going to come and take my order?

01:09:19 GG: Very special order. And yeah, what role did people like *Primo* and *Giacondo Caon* played in popularising the wine?

01:09:39 AC: Beautiful boys. I learned so much from them. *Giacondo* was here not long ago, we've lost *Primo*, of course [Primo Caon passed away on the 12th of June 2024]. They were just ahead of their time, those boys, they were, they were loved by everyone in the industry. Wow wee, my claim of fame is when I used to go to the Adelaide wine show, I'd end up at the brandies with Peter Lehman and, and I used to get a kiss on the lips from *Primo* and from Peter and they vice versa they'd give each other a kiss on the lips, so I was in that little club.

01:10:27 GG: Very special club. Of course. They were famous for starting *La Cantina* [La Cantina restaurant in Hindley St Adelaide from 1960 to 1966].

01:10:35 AC: Exactly.

01:10:37 GG: In nineteen sixty [1960].

01:10:38 AC: Beautiful. And dad remembers when *Giocondo* and *Primo* used to come home from school, when dad would go to their father's butchery in town and they

used to have to throw the sawdust and when they got to after school, how far back dad goes with the *Caons*.

01:11:04 GG: OK, so you were brought up in the restaurant from the age of seven. You'd learned the various aspects of the restaurant business, and your father had a great influence on teaching you. What other training did you receive in that area?

01:11:26 AC: The only time I worked away from the family business---

(knock at the door)

01:11:48 GG: The training that you received.

01:11:49 AC: Oh, the training from dad.

01:11:52 GG: Well, from that and onwards.

01:11:53 AC: Oh, sorry. So, I never, until that point, I never worked outside the family business, but I went to Switzerland. That's what you're leading to.

01:12:09 GG: Yes.

01:12:10 AC: So, in nineteen seventy-two [1976], like I said, I didn't do Matric [Matriculation] or year twelve [12], I went to Switzerland because we acquired the property at Kent Town. We were in Burnside Village and so regulars of the restaurant was Brian Polomka, who was the Lord Mayor at Norwood at the time [Mayor of City of Norwood 1981-1982] and also the famous architect of Saint Ignatius College, and Don Dunstan [Premier of South Australia], Don Dunstan used to come to, he was a client of dad's even in the *Buonasea*, but when we were in Burnside Village, he was married to Adele, and so even though they were regulars at the at Burnside Village, they both wanted dad to be in their neck of the woods. And they told us about the property at Kent Town. So that was acquired at auction. And then there was a lovely guy by the name of Linden Prowse who was chief of the unit for Industrial Democracy for, for Don Dunstan, that's how we met him. When he discovered that we bought this property, he thought it would be great for me to go to Switzerland and learn, and learn how to for silver service, because with this stately home in Kent Town, me and dad's idea was to turn it into a silver service restaurant. So, he thought I couldn't get better training than going to, and don't forget, I wasn't working in the kitchen in those days. He thought it'd be great for me to go to Switzerland because he used to go regularly for the Unit for Industrial Democracy to Germany and to Switzerland to learn and wanted to apply for Don Dunstan, the Unit for Industrial Democracy where people were involved and shareholders of a company they were working for. There's a great concept. So, Linden organised for me to go to Switzerland in the Park Hotel in Gstaad [The Park Hotel in Gstaad is famous for its long-standing reputation as a premier, luxury mountain resort, attracting a clientele of celebrities and the wealthy], he used to regularly go there and I used to get letters from him from the Savoy Hotel in London, and I would get telex's in those

days, telex's from Don Dunstan's secretary, I think her name was Barbara, and he would send a text to Don Dunstan and then there'd be, at the end he'd say to Barbara, please can you follow up with *Andy Clappis*, *Enzo Clappis's* son at Burnside Village, that I have arranged these dates for him to start in the Park Hotel. Now, the last time I saw Linden Prowse was with *Primo Caon* in our restaurant at Kent Town. I lost contact with him after that, but we became very dear friends. He ended up running for the Liberal Party, would you believe, federally in Glenelg area. But he, he didn't win. And that he was at our restaurant, with *Primo Caon* the last time I saw him. And then not long after that, we had our first colour TV at Hectorville, and I had our first VHS [Video Home System, a now-discontinued analog home video recording standard and cassette format, introduced by JVC in 1976, that was the dominant home video format throughout the 1980s and 1990s for recording and playing video on a television using a video cassette recorder (VCR)]. And I used to tape Four Corners [programme on ABC television based on Australian investigative journalism] and the news for dad and I, so, when we come back from the restaurant late at night, we could watch the current affairs and things. And I put it on one night and the story had started about money being laundered from for *Marcos* [Philippine lawyer and politician who, as head of state from 1965 to 1986, established an authoritarian regime in the Philippines] in Australia, in Queensland I think it was. And the camera went on to this guy. This guy put on so much weight. It was Linden Prowse on horseback with a ten-gallon hat. I never saw anyone put on so much weight in such a short time. And he was accused of laundering money for *Marcos* into Australia. He organised my trip to Switzerland.

01:16:27 GG: Yeah, some international connections. So, why Switzerland?

01:16:34 AC: Why Switzerland? Well, it's because Linden Prowse organised everything for me. It was just, I didn't have to lift her finger, and my manageress was just finished her marriage with an Italian guy, *Guizzard* and so she was my manageress at the at the Park Hotel. And then I did a stint in Geneva and I worked with her husband, her ex-husband in Geneva.

01:17:02 GG: Keep it in the family. So, some of the experiences in Switzerland whilst you were there, how long were you there for?

01:17:13 AC: In all, about six months. So, I left in seventy-six [1976], I came back in seventy-seven [1977]. So, I spent my first winter in the snow in Switzerland. Great experience even, even when I was working in Geneva, experienced some snowing in Geneva. I saw *Enzo Ferrari* at the Geneva Motor Show in nineteen seventy-seven [1977]. Didn't get to talk to him, but he was there. This incredible Ferrari pop riveted was on show on a caruso, what do you call it?

01:17:50 GG: Carousel.

01:17:55 AC: On a carousel. And he had his glasses on. But evidently dad met him in *Brescia* when he was at school. He got a hug from *Enzo Ferrari* when *Enzo Ferrari* visited the school, and because dad's name was *Enzo* as well, he gave dad a hug, I'm

not sure what year that was. But yeah, the one of the most beautiful people I met in Switzerland, Mr *Bialetti*, the great coffee urn man, he was living with his son and daughter and wife in the hotel where I was living at the same time. They were there for the whole winter season, so I got to know them very well. They were hiding from the *Red Brigade* [an Italian far-left Marxist-Leninist militant group responsible for numerous violent incidents during Italy's Year of Lead, a period of social and political turmoil in Italy that lasted from the late 1960s to the late 1980s] because they tried to kidnap his children. The *Red Brigade* of course killed *Moro* [Prime Minister of the Republic of Italy] in his Fiat. But I also met, and I was on the floor, don't forget, not in the kitchen, but on my days off I would go in the kitchen and I used to love helping the chef. So that was a great experience. But not only was Mr *Bialetti* he, he, yeah, what a lovely guy he used, the first time I ever saw the great wine glasses of Riddell [premium glassware from an Austrian company, Riedel, renowned for their varietal-specific shapes designed to enhance the aroma, flavour, and mouthfeel of different wines] was in this restaurant because in, in, in Australia, when I left, we were serving wine in virtually vegemite glasses. But yeah, the Riddell glasses, he would call me over, and don't forget, I was seventeen [17], I wasn't supposed to touch the alcohol, I wasn't working as a *sommelier* [A sommelier is a trained and knowledgeable wine professional, often working in fine dining, who specializes in all aspects of wine service, food and wine pairing, and cellar management. Their role extends beyond wine to encompass other beverages like spirits, cocktails, beers, and non-alcoholic drinks, with key responsibilities including developing wine lists, training staff, and helping guests select the perfect drink to complement their meal and budget. Sommeliers significantly enhance the guest experience by sharing their expertise and passion, often contributing to a restaurant's profitability and operational success], I was doing the food, and he would call me over. *Andrea, mio mico Italian, mio mico Australian che parla Italian* [Andrew, my Italian friend, my Australian friend who speaks Italian], he'd call me over and he'd make me drink from his glass, he had the most, the *sommelier* would be serving him the best Italian, French, German wines. I drink from his glass, and my manager on the floor was *Senor Pedesolli* from *Sacile* [Sacile is a comune in the Regional decentralization entity of Pordenone, in the Italian region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia] and, he called me over one day when he saw me drinking from Mr *Bialetti's* glass and he called me around the curtain where we used to do our silver service, *mise en place* [a French term for having all your ingredients measured, cut, peeled, sliced, grated, etc. before you start cooking], and he blew the shit out of me. He said what do you think this is a *pizzeria* [pizza parlour] in his dialect? He said, you think this is a *pizzeria*. This is a very *lusso* [luxury] restaurant, you can't be familiar with people. He said, don't you know who that is? I think he was jealous.

01:20:46 GG: Could be.

01:20:47 AC: But then there were so many film stars that I met. I met Julie Andrews, Elizabeth Taylor, Audrey Hepburn, David Niven, Montgomery Cliff. They all were regulars. They all had chalets in *Gstaad* and my manageress when I used to work downstairs where we used to do the fondue fromage or the *raclette* [cheese] or the boiled meats which the film stars used to love going to. I couldn't

understand how come when the film stars would walk into, this beautiful Claudine who reminded me of my mother, only she was older than my mother, but mum turned out to look very similar to her, when mum got older, Claudine would have been in her sixties [60s]. I was seventeen and she taught me to play backgammon; she taught me to play Yahtzee [a dice game where players aim to score points by rolling combinations of five dice] after work. And one night she said, Andy, I'm going to go to my bedroom and I want to get some black and white photographs, I want to show you. She came back with these photographs and remembering I couldn't, I couldn't work out how come these film stars would be so endearing to it with hug and the owners of the hotel, the German Swiss Ruetler family, they were very distant and cordial, and she pulls out these photographs and there's all these black and white photographs with her and Louis Armstrong [famous American trumpeter and vocalist]. And I said, my gosh, you knew Louis Armstrong, Claudine, and she said, did I know Louis Armstrong? I was his last lover. we travelled the world together. So, he died in seventy-two [1972], I think he died in seventy-two [1972]. I was there in seventy-six [1976] working with Claudine. These film stars all knew her through Louis Armstrong.

01:22:30 GG: So, you had a quite an experience

01:22:34 AC: Yes,

01:22:26 GG: Must have been a bit of a cultural shock?

01:22:38 AC: I think in a way I was a little bit young because I didn't keep in touch with so many people. You know, we didn't have mobile phones, of course, then we didn't have, and I look back and I'm so sorry that I didn't keep in touch with so many beautiful people I met. So that was unfortunate. So, I think I was a little bit young, but also the restaurant also taught me, you know, working with dad, taught me to be able to mix with a big array of people.

01:23:19 GG: Yeah socialise.

01:23:21 AC: But if I was a little bit older, I think I would have it would have been even more successful.

01:23:25 GG: From Switzerland, did you come back straight to Australia?

01:22:30 AC: Yes.

01:22:43 GG: Did you at any time work for anybody else apart from your dad?

01:23:45 AC: Yes, mum and dad then went, they did a small stint overseas. This was in between, this was in between Burnside Village and the restaurant at Kent Town, I think it must have been. Yeah, it was when we, there was a, there was a distant between the two because we had to do all the work. But mum and dad went overseas and we had a client, Don Jones in Burnside Village that were used to build the roads for the government of Northern Territory, you know, grade the

roads, and he invited me to go to Alice Springs. He said, oh, I'll get you a job in Alice Springs while your mum and dad are overseas. And so, the Riverside Hotel, it just spent a fortune and they were having incredible international acts at this hotel and I was on the floor there. I remember the owners wanting me to stay there and run the restaurant because I used to cook after, after we used to have big shows there. I used to cook and I don't know the, the, the owners of the hotel was setting up this restaurant and, and for Alice Springs, it was, yeah, it was their idea was a lot, there was nothing like it, and they wanted me to manage that. And I said, no, I'm involved in the family business. But I remember that was a pretty good for my confidence at that age to be offered tomorrow and run a little restaurant in the hotel. And that's right. That was right on the Todd River. I've lost my train of thought. Now we were---

01:25:44 GG: We were talking about---

01:25:46 AC: Otherwise, yeah, so there I went there for a while, and that was an experience, we drove from Adelaide to Alice Springs and before the road was sealed after Port Augusta, the bull dust was incredible and we stopped at every little hotel on the way and had a, had a shandy [A shandy is a refreshing beverage, traditionally made by mixing beer and lemonade], not really, but I remember the bull dust was it everywhere, even this esky that he had in the back and eskies are normally really well sealed. The bull dust got in there. It was incredible so, but I'm so glad I experienced that because I think it's all bitumen now, all the way to Darwin.

01:26:33 GG: You're trained as front of the house. You're now a chef, and you're also a bread maker. Tell me how did bread-making start?.

01:26:52 AC: Well bread-making started when I was in Europe, in Switzerland, and after working in Switzerland, I did the train from Switzerland with a Sicilian friend that I was working with all the way to Sicily and I was in *Palermo* for a couple of weeks. That was beautiful. At the time, I think it was the best food I had in Italy and the seafood was amazing. And in some parts of Italy where I had spaghetti, it was overcooked, but in, in *Palermo* they cooked *al dente* [Al dente literally means 'to the tooth', it means cooking pasta just to the point where it's not overcooked and mushy. It should be firm in the centre, but not hard]. I remember having *spaghettoni vongole* with my friends, a table of about twenty and it was just perfection. It was like we do *spaghetti alle vongole, alla veneziana* without any tomato. Also, in Sicily they did it without any tomatoes, just white wine, garlic, parsley, black fresh pepper. That, that was lovely to explain, but the seafood, all the seafood of Sicily was amazing. You got the audio. Put me straight again. Where were we?

01:28:01 GG: Well, we were talking about you just started to go into bread making.

01:28:05 AC: Oh yes. So, after doing Italy, I went to Slovenia to meet mum's family and I stayed with *teta Ivanka* [auntie Ivanka] and her beautiful family and she made bread every second day, big *pagnotte* [loaves] of bread and, and I started helping her. But before that I used to help in, in Park Hotel in Gstaad. I used to

help this German chef make ice cream, make bread. And I think when I came back to Australia it was a combination of my auntie's technique; this German technique and I started producing bread when we were at the Maylands hotel and all the wine makers, Darry [Osborne] had his wine group that used to come every month to our hotel. They had a private room. They would leave the food up to dad and I, and also there was the Second Thursday Club which were the older boys that was Max [wine maker] from Penfolds. It was Alan Archer that started Chesser Cellars and *Primo* then bought the business from him. Actually, I had lunch there with Alan Archer and his beautiful wife Mary when *Primo* took over. That was, that was lovely knowing all three of them so well. And I, bread making, how did I transverse to the Chesser Cellars?

01:29:43 GG: You're making bread.

01:29:46 AC: One day I made bread for my wine people and they didn't want, we used to, dad used to buy bread from, used to order bread from the family company here the *Triglau* family, Riveria bakery. We used to buy his bread, and he was here just before he passed away. His daughters rebooked Natasha. Yeah, so I started making, and all of a sudden they said we want your bread every month when we come. And I started making bread for them and then I sometimes make more and then I'd send out to some regular clients out in the bistro and it turned out I was making the bread for the, for the Maylands Hotel. And it was a great success. Everyone loved it. My daughters are very young and they used to bring the bread out when they were there. And so that but how, I also before the May, just before the Maylands Hotel, Anna was pregnant with our first Celandine and she was helped, she got a job with her mum at the Adelaide Hospital [Royal Adelaide Hospital] bringing meals out and she was very pregnant and I felt a bit guilty having a stint of not working because dad and I were, we were looking at the Maylands Hotel. We were very confident we might make an offer there. And so, I remember going to Tip Top at Maylands, they don't exist there anymore, that's all housing now. But it was right across the road from the Maylands Hotel and it was a way of me sort of keeping an eye on the Maylands, just observing how that was going before we actually got more serious about seeing if we could buy it. And I remember rocking up some ridiculous hour in the morning to see if I could get a job. My brother-in-law, Daryl, said at the time, it's very hard to get a job at the moment, this is nineteen eight-seven [1987], it's very hard to get a job in a factory at the moment. I said, I'm going to try. And I went there and someone said, can we help you? I said I wouldn't mind scoring a job here. I knew it was only going to be a short time. And but I didn't tell them that. They said, oh, we'll go and get John Hardstaff for you. That was your surname Hardstuff, he was the manager. And I thought, geez, this is a bit scary. So, John Hardstuff came out and he said, can I help you? And I said, look, I wouldn't mind getting a job here. And he said, are you a baker? And I said no, not really. He said, have you worked in a factory before? And I said no. He said, why do you think you'd fit in here? And I said, well, I'll make bread at home. He looked at me. And in nineteen eighty-seven [1987], I don't think there were many people making bread at home. Bread was so cheap to buy. There were of course, some European families would make their bread, but it was almost unheard of, and especially for a manager of a bakery and, and he said he was quite impressed

by that. He said, listen, why don't you start tomorrow morning, one [1:00 am] in the morning or something. So, they had, I had a stint at the Maylands Hotel. What it taught me, it didn't teach me how to make bread necessarily because like a lot of chemicals and things, but the thing was I learnt production, you know, it gave me an idea instead of making one or two loaves of bread at home, it planted a seed about how to make a bit more volume. And so, I used to start it like everyone start off in the, in the ovens and so forth. But then one of the boys, I think was smoking too much marijuana one night, he was working up in the dough room and all the loaves, ten thousand [10,000] loaves came out flat like the bricks and it ended up going to a piggery, in those days you could give pigs leftovers and things. But he got the sack and I was asked to go up into the dough room, upstairs and, which I successfully worked on that. And then when we were in contract with the Maylands Hotel, I remember going with dad and now insurance broker at the time that has since passed away, *Armando Verdiglione* from *Caulonia* [town in Calabria], and the three of us in our suits, dad and I just come back from the bank, we met up with *Armando* and at ten o'clock [10:00 am] in the morning we're walking around the hotel and there was already a sign on the windows and on the front door that Clappis Propriety Limited, you know, blah, blah, blah, licencing court. And I walked past the, in the front bar that the guy in the dart board, and I recognised him as one of the drivers from Tip Top. He looked at me like where do I know this guy from? And he said where do I know who you're from? I said I was working at Tip Top up in the dough room. And he goes, have you guys bought the hotel? And I said yeah. And he goes far out. I'm going to see if I can get a job in the dough room.

01:35:32 GG: That's a good position. So, all right, so you're making bread in the restaurant, in the hotel. Got to stint at Tip Top. When did you decide to make bread full time?

01:35:52 AC: And then in two thousand [2000], we sold the Maylands Hotel and I came up here with my young family and Darry from D'Arenberg Wines, he used to [come to the hotel], like I said, used to frequent us, he asked if they could have, you know, we didn't have a restaurant then, I used to cook in in our little kitchen in the house, he asked if he could start coming up with his wine group [Bacchus Club], blah, blah, blah. And we did some special stints. And then Margo, you know where Russell's Pizza is in Willunga, when Russell sold his business but still owns the property, He's famous for having his books on, on wood ovens and so forth, Russell gave the front of the restaurant, the pizza area, everything, there's a little white cottage, and he gave that to Margot Kellet, who had a providore [business that provides provisions, especially fine or specialist food and beverages, often with a focus on high-quality, fresh, and locally sourced ingredients] there and she used to get a beautiful bread from Melbourne, I think. But this, this Maltese family or something ended up finishing their business and somehow she asked if I could make some bread for her providore, and it was a great success. And then we were invited to the first Willunga market. This is going back when David Suzuki opened the Willunga market, I'm not sure what year it was [Willunga Market opened in 2002 at the Alma Hotel carpark, and later moved to the Willunga Town Square in 2007], but we were the first to have a stall with bread and my daughters and my ex-wife used to run the stall. It was around our lasagna, our bread, our sauces, and that was a great success. And

then all of a sudden I'm making bread for a lot of restaurants and wineries, and it just grew from there.

01:38:05 GG: So, these days, do you regard yourself as a Baker or as a Chef or?

01:38:11 AC: Well, I'm not a chef, I'm a cook. I haven't had any formal training, but I've helped beautiful chefs in Switzerland and in Geneva. The, yeah I'm a bit of everything. Like the, where I ended up in the kitchen was at the Maylands Hotel. We, when we bought the Maylands from the Tonkin family, there was a situation where there was some young kids running the restaurant in the little, what we turned into a private room later, and it, we just couldn't work with them. It was a Sunday; they had lots of bookings in the beer garden for a function or something, and they just didn't rock up, the chefs didn't rock up and one of the owners of this sort of setup, and they just did not rock up. They probably had a big show somewhere the night before, I don't know, but dad and I had to jump into the kitchen and so we had to finish that agreement up with them and I've been in the kitchen ever since.

01:39:25 GG: So, it was purely by chance.

01:39:27 AC: Well by necessity, we had these bookings and then, which was great because in those, in nineteen eighty-seven [1987], hotels were serving up very basic food. And dad and I transformed not only to that little restaurant, but we didn't keep that little restaurant going, we turned it into the front bar, the saloon, the beer garden, the bistro, all the same food they had, they had the menu for each area. It was so complicated. We just ran our place like a big restaurant and it was a great success. The great Max, the great writer, he used to write for The Australian had with names today, Max, I remember in The Australian doing a big spread. Two-page spread on the Maylands Hotel and the *Clappis* family and he talked, the heading was something about 'an eclectic menu' because I was doing Thai Fish Curry, whole nannygai coming from Port Lincoln on a Thursday being flown over, they would be transported from the Adelaide airport to us, we would scale, gut them, this is from the Valenti boat in Port Lincoln, and then Friday was our Thai Fish Curry day, *Pla tod Kamin* and I was, I was making my Thai Curry paste fresh. There was one Thai restaurant in Adelaide at the time and that was amazing how we had people come from all over Adelaide, even Salisbury, a real estate guy, he used to come with the great artist Basil Hadley. They used to come every Friday to have Thai Fish Curry.

01:41:24 GG: Where did you learn all these dishes?

01:41:26 AC: And when we had our place in, in between our restaurant, dad and I went into a partnership. That's how I really got to know Anna because she was working with us in Rundle St, Ariete. We went into a partnership importing kitchenware from Italy. We had a little you were talking about me and girls and stuff and dad decided that it was a good idea if we'd have a rest from the restaurant game because he thought I wasn't socialising out of the family business, which I was, he didn't real, mum and dad didn't realise I was going into town with some friends late at night, anyway when we had out we met this beautiful Thai chef

and he taught me, he taught me some things, I used to ask questions and so forth and that's where I got the idea. But there was one Thai restaurant in Adelaide. It was on Glen Osmond Rd, on a corner of Glen Osmond Rd and a and a little Street, it's called Siam something. So, we were ahead of our time. But not only that, we used to do a lot of Slovenian dishes. We used to do, you know, cabbage roll, Sarma. We did a lot, mainly Italian food, but I also did a Malaysian Curry with lamb. And so, we, all of a sudden, our hotel is just getting all these beautiful people from all over the world coming to eat our food. And the bread, the bread, yeah, just became so popular.

01:43:16 GG: OK. Let's move on to 'Our Place'. How, you got out of the business, you got out---

01:43:23 AC: Yeah we came up here, we looked at the Top Hotel [Hilltop Hotel], made an offer, not sure how that was undercut from us, but I looked at the Top Hotel, not wanting to have it as a hotel because we just sold the Maylands Hotel and you know, it was a great success, and, and, but I didn't want to be in the hotel game because seven days a week with a young family, I wanted to turn that into a restaurant. But that didn't eventuate, somehow something happened that we, I don't know, I never even heard from the offer, it was really weird that there's something funny went on there, but we lost, we didn't gain that. And then like I said, Darry and all these wine makers from the region, Nick Hazelgrove, was my neighbour, and Nick at the time was the president in two thousand [2000], around two thousand [2000], he was the president of the Bacchus Club with elite wine maker wine group and he was the president. He asked if we could have the black-tie affair here, that room that where the restaurant is, it wasn't even completely walled up. So, the weather was coming in a little bit. Anyway, successfully I pulled off this black-tie affair and it just went from there. It was by demand that this turned into a restaurant.

01:44:40 GG: And they haven't looked back at you ever since. OK, well we covered most of your life with what I'm interested in. The final bit is the idea of heritage and identity. Now you, you come from a very colourful background in the sense Istria, Slovenia, Italian and so on. What do you regard yourself as?

01:45:13 AC: *Un poco di tutto*, a bit of everything. I sometimes feel so Australian, sometimes I feel so Italian and at times I even feel Slovenian. It really is a melting pot for me, the way I feel. Love it all, love all the experiences, all the connections, and I think that's the best way I could say that.

01:45:40 GG: So, you've gained from more, all---

01:45:42 AC: I think so.

01:45:43 GG: All the interaction with your family and your family's family and so on now.

01:45:49 AC: I've got a beautiful partner that's Vietnamese.

01:45:53 GG: So, we've got the Asian influence as well.

01:45:58 AC: Not just Thai Fish Curry.

01:46:02 GG: How do you feel about Italy?

01:46:04 AC: Italy in in what sense?

01:46:07 GG: Well, in the sense of your background, in the sense of Italy as a political entity, you know a lot of us that come from an Italian background and grew up in Australia, we have an affinity with our heritage, which is Italian, but we are also citizens of Australia. How do you balance that?

01:46:31 AC: How do you balance it? Well, I loved it when I visited Italy. I'm well overdue, well overdue. I something I haven't learnt in this game is how to make time for myself. My business here, the bread making, the restaurant, the functions just takes up so much of my time. Something I've never been taught by anyone is how to allocate more and have some time off. But I haven't really got regrets about that either. But I think I have to start seriously thinking about trying to, trying to change that a little bit, even if it's one month, a year, maybe closing and catching up. What I've I was, I was the first one to really travel in the family and I'm well behind all everyone now.

01:47:30 GG: So how do your children feel? Do they feel Italian, do they feel Australian?

01:47:36 AC: They love the stories of especially of *nonno* and *nonna* [grandfather and grandmother] where they were born and where they were brought up. My girls are very open minded to, I think, I think, I really think at times they feel a bit like me, like a melting pot, which is I think, beautiful. Like I said, *Celandine*, the oldest one, she's homeschooling her children at the moment while they're travelling and yeah, she's doing Italian with them, which is beautiful.

01:48:14 GG: OK, I think I probably covered every aspect of your life. Is there anything else that you feel I'm missed out on or that you should tell me about?

01:48:28 AC: Well, it's been a beautiful experience meeting you and Jenny. I really mean that from the bottom of my heart, the way you're, you know how many people over the years have told me you've got to get some memoirs down of your father. You've got to get someone and, and the great Tony McCarthy, who used to be on ABC radio, he wanted to do something about that. I've, I, I get approached by people. We really should, but nothing eventuated. Then you come along, Joe, and my family owes you.

01:49:02 GG: Well, it's been a pleasure to explore your background and with me this is a passion, is not a work-related thing anymore. It's a really a passion and I'm a persistent little bugger.

01:49:18 AC: A beautiful Homo Sapiens and my life has been enriched to know you.

01:49:25 GG: Thank you for that and thank you very much. Yeah, that was a lot longer than I anticipated, but no, it's been good.

01:49:39 AC: I mean that from the bottom.

01:49:40 GG: What we do need is photographs, of course. Documents, photographs.

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Interview conducted by Giuseppe Geracitano

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