

Gaudenzio (Enzo) Clappis



The King of Offal

~

From Broken Borders to Bountiful Delicacies:
A Refugee's Culinary Legacy in Adelaide.

Edited by G. Geracitano

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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

GAUDENZIO (ENZO) CLAPPIS

CONDUCTED BY

GIUSEPPE (JOE) GERACITANO

11 DECEMBER 2023.

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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 Gaudenzio (Enzo) Clappis whose journey began in the turmoil of post-war Europe, when he fled as a refugee from Istria to Trentino, Italy and ultimately to Australia in search of safety and opportunity. Arriving in South Australia as a 17-year-old, he carried with him not only resilience but also a deep love for food and tradition. Through his work as a chef, Clappis introduced authentic Italian flavours to a community still unfamiliar with Mediterranean cuisine. His dedication helped transform South Australia's dining culture, inspiring a greater appreciation for fresh ingredients, family-style dining, and the vibrant culinary heritage of Italy.

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

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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.

The story of Gaudenzio (Enzo) Clappis illustrates how he transformed South Australia's dining culture by introducing flavours that were once unfamiliar to local palates. He popularised dishes like calamari, turning it from an overlooked catch into a restaurant favourite, and earned the title "King of Offal" for his skill in preparing dishes that celebrated the richness of humble ingredients. At a time when the state's cuisine was still conservative, Clappis brought authenticity, creativity, and a Mediterranean spirit to the table. His influence helped expand South Australians' tastes, embedding Italian food into the heart of the state's culinary identity. 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

FROM VENEZIA GIULIA TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA: A JOURNEY OF DISPLACEMENT AND RENEWAL

The story of Venezia Giulia, a borderland at the crossroads of Italy and the Balkans, is one marked by shifting borders, war, and human displacement. Before the outbreak of the Second World War, this region, encompassing Trieste, Istria, and parts of Dalmatia, was home to a complex mosaic of ethnic Italians, Slovenes, Croats, and other minority communities. Italian rule, cemented after World War I with the Treaty of Rapallo (1920), brought tensions between the Italian administration and Slavic populations, but Venezia Giulia remained deeply Italian in its cultural and civic life.

The Road to Yugoslavia Annexation

World War II fractured this delicate balance. After Mussolini's fall in 1943 and the German occupation of northern Italy, Venezia Giulia became a contested territory. In May 1945, Tito's Partisans entered Trieste before Allied troops, asserting Yugoslav claims over the region. The Paris Peace Treaty of 1947 formally ceded Istria, Dalmatia, and parts of Venezia Giulia to Yugoslavia, while the Free Territory of Trieste was established under divided Allied and Yugoslav administration until its later partition in 1954.

The outcome was devastating for the Italian population. Between 250,000 and 350,000 Italians, known as the *esuli istriani* (Istrian exiles), were forced to leave or fled voluntarily amid persecution, intimidation, and episodes of violence such as the *Foibe* massacres. Families left ancestral homes behind, often carrying little more than suitcases, becoming refugees in their own country and beyond. The majority of these refugees were initially settled in camps across various regions of Italy. Many encountered profound challenges, particularly in areas with strong communist affiliations, such as Bologna, where they were often stigmatized and mischaracterized as fascists.

Resettlement and Global Migration

Italy itself struggled to absorb such large numbers of displaced people. Refugee camps such as those in Trieste and later at Latina and *Padriciano* [Trieste's Refugee Camp in *Padriciano* from 1954 to mid-1970s was mainly for Istrian refugees] overflowed. To ease the humanitarian crisis, international agreements were struck to resettle Italians abroad. Many were allocated to countries like the United States, Canada, Argentina, and Australia under assisted migration schemes.

Australia, in particular, emerged as a key destination. Post-war Australia was eager for new workers to fuel its ambitious "populate or perish" immigration policy. Between the late 1940s and early 1960s, thousands of Italians, including Istrian exiles, arrived by ship, often after long voyages from Naples or Genoa. It is estimated that in the early 1950s Australia received some 6,000 refugees from this source of which some 1,500 settled in South Australia.

Reception in Australia

Migrant Hostels and First Impressions

On arrival, many Italian families were sent to migrant hostels scattered across the country. In South Australia, hostels such as those at Woodside, Pennington, and Glenelg became temporary homes. The hostels were basic, rows of Nissen huts or ex-military barracks with limited privacy, communal kitchens, and shared facilities. For families who had left behind established homes in Istria or Trieste, the conditions were a shock. Yet, despite overcrowding and discomfort, these hostels became the first place where new arrivals learned English, built friendships, and began adapting to Australian society.

Work Programs and Labour Demands

The Australian government directed many migrants into work programs essential to the nation's post-war reconstruction. Italians were employed in railway construction, sugarcane fields in Queensland, and large infrastructure projects like the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme. In South Australia, men found work in manufacturing plants, construction, and agriculture, particularly in vineyards and market gardening, while women often contributed through textile factories, domestic service, or food processing. The occupational background of these refugees included professionals, clerical workers, and a high proportion of skilled workers.

Though the work was physically demanding, it provided stability and wages that allowed families to eventually leave the hostels and buy homes. Over time, Italians established small businesses, fruit shops, delicatessens, cafés, and restaurants, that became stepping stones to financial independence.

Overcoming Prejudice

Despite their contributions, Italians faced prejudice in the early years. They were often referred to disparagingly as “dagos” or “wogs,” and their accents, food, and Catholic traditions set them apart in what was still a strongly Anglo-Celtic society. Children were sometimes bullied at school, and adults struggled with limited English and unfamiliar customs.

Yet resilience, work ethic, and community solidarity helped Italians overcome these barriers. Churches, Italian clubs, and cultural associations provided networks of support. Food also played a vital role in softening prejudice, what was once viewed with suspicion (garlic, olive oil, pasta) gradually won over Australian palates. By the 1960s and 70s, Italian cafés and restaurants had become fashionable, and Italian migrants were increasingly respected for their hard work and contributions to Australia's prosperity.

In South Australia the impact on the Italian population of an influx of 1,500 Giuliani refugees where in 1947 there were only 2,428 Italians in the state was considerable. Their economic integration appears to be rapid and some even went into business. Thus, *Roberto Masi* and his partners at one stage employed 50 people in a tow-truck and repair business on Port Road. *Carlo Rosenberg* ran a repair shop, a petrol station, then with another refugee, *Roberto Corradini*, repaired cars and boats. *Mario Flego* had the Italian Video Centre and HiLo, and *Guido Voivodich* established Alfa Emporium in the Italian corner in Hindley Street [southwest corner of Hindley and Morphett streets] which sold Italian papers, periodicals, books, and records. These refugees also played a pivotal role in popularizing Italian cuisine

beyond its regional roots. In this context, three Istriani refugees stand out for their notable contributions.

Pioneers of Hospitality: Clappis, Benuzzi, Fornarino

Among those who left an indelible mark were individuals such as Gaudenzio (Enzo) Clappis, Ettore Benuzzi, and Clemente Fornarino, all of whom carried with them the resilience of exile and the creativity of Italian tradition.

- **Gaudenzio (Enzo) Clappis** arrived as part of the refugee wave and quickly became a figure in South Australia's culinary circles. Through his work as a chef, Clappis introduced authentic Italian flavours and techniques, bringing sophistication and flair to Adelaide's dining scene at a time when Australian cuisine remained largely Anglo-Celtic. His restaurants and hotel became cultural bridges where Italians and Australians alike discovered the power of food to connect communities.
- **Ettore Benuzzi**, another refugee turned restaurateur, played a pioneering role in broadening South Australia's hospitality industry. By blending Italian hospitality with local produce, Benuzzi's establishments helped shape a more cosmopolitan dining culture and paved the way for the Mediterranean culinary boom that swept the country in later decades.
- **Clemente Fornarino** similarly embodied the migrant spirit of reinvention. He contributed not only as a skilled professional in hospitality but also as a mentor to younger Italians entering the field, ensuring that traditions were passed down while adapting to the tastes of the broader Australian public.

These men, and many like them, not only rebuilt their lives after forced displacement but also enriched the cultural identity of South Australia. Their contributions illustrate how the trauma of exile was transformed into creativity, resilience, and community-building in a new land.

Legacy

Today, the story of the *esuli* from Venezia Giulia is commemorated as both a tragedy of forced migration and a testament to survival. In South Australia, their legacy is visible in the vibrant Italo-Australian community, from wine regions influenced by Mediterranean viticulture to bustling cafés and trattorias that remain central to Adelaide's identity.

What began as displacement and loss ultimately gave rise to cultural renewal, an enduring reminder that even in exile, communities can find ways to flourish and profoundly shape the societies that welcome them.

Giuseppe (joe) Geracitano
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From Refugee to Culinary Icon: The Journey of Gaudenzio (Enzo) Clappis

In the sweeping story of migration that reshaped South Australia in the mid-twentieth century, few names resonate as strongly in the world of food and hospitality as that of *Gaudenzio* (Enzo) Clappis. His journey from a displaced refugee in Italy to a celebrated chef and restaurateur in Adelaide reflects not only personal resilience but also the transformative impact of Italian migrants on South Australia's cultural and culinary life.

Roots in Displacement

Gaudenzio (Enzo's) story begins in the fractured world of post-World War II Europe. Born in *Pola* in the region of *Venezia Giulia*, a territory caught between Italy and Yugoslavia, he grew up in a place where borders shifted and families lived under constant uncertainty. The war and its aftermath uprooted thousands of Italians, forcing them into refugee camps and uncertain futures. For *Gaudenzio* (Enzo) and his family, the dream of stability seemed distant.

The international resettlement programs of the late 1940s and 1950s provided a lifeline. Australia, then in the midst of an ambitious immigration scheme to 'populate or perish,' welcomed thousands of displaced Europeans including Italians. Though the transition was rarely smooth, these migrants carried with them traditions of hard work, resilience, and above all, a deep connection to food and community.

Arrival in South Australia

When *Gaudenzio* (Enzo) arrived in Australia, he, like many assisted migrants, was placed in a migrant hostel. These hostels, scattered across the country in places like Bonegilla and Mount Barker, were basic and often isolating, but they provided a temporary home as newcomers adjusted to Australian life. Italians arriving at this time faced both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, the booming post-war economy offered jobs in construction, farming, and factories; on the other, they were met with suspicion, prejudice, and the daunting task of adapting to a new culture and language.

Food quickly became one of the bridges between cultures. Italians introduced South Australians to the flavours of garlic, olive oil, cured meats, pasta, and seafood prepared in ways unfamiliar to the Anglo-Australian palate. *Gaudenzio* (Enzo) was at the forefront of this quiet revolution.

Building a Culinary Career

Gaudenzio (Enzo's) journey into hospitality was forged through determination and talent. Growing up in a boarding school in *Brescia*, *Gaudenzio* (Enzo) discovered an early passion for cooking. At just 13, he was taken under the wing of *Maria*, who prepared meals daily for 500 boarders and 50 staff. She taught him a lesson that would become his lifelong mantra: 'bravery in the kitchen is making a lot with nothing, not nothing with a lot.' That guiding principle shaped his approach to business and remained at the heart of his culinary philosophy. On arriving in Adelaide his talents were utilized at *Emma Floreani's* boarding house where he was employed part time to cook for 35 boarders. It was there that he

introduced for the first time in Adelaide *calamari*, an experiment that was not very successful. At the time *calamari* was regarded as poisonous suitable only as bait.

To fulfill his contract with the Australian authorities, *Gaudencio (Enzo)* had to take on a range of jobs, from grape picking in South Australia's Riverland to positions at General Motors Holden and BHP in Whyalla. With hopes of returning to his culinary roots, he sought work in hotels as a qualified chef. However, his efforts were unsuccessful; in mid-twentieth-century Australia, Italian cuisine was still unfamiliar to many and had yet to gain mainstream acceptance.

Gaudenzio (Enzo's) path into hospitality in Adelaide was shaped not only by talent and determination, but by loss, loyalty, and love. In 1966, the sudden passing of his dear friend *Chef Fontana* left a void but also opened a door. With the heartfelt financial support of *Ilario Lamberto*, who believed in *Gaudenzio (Enzo's)* vision, he was able to purchase the restaurant that once belonged to *Fontana*. What followed was not just a business venture, but a tribute: *Gaudenzio (Enzo)* transformed the space into *Buonasera*, Adelaide's first truly authentic Italian restaurant.

From its earliest days, *Buonasera* was more than a place to eat, it was a place to belong. For 59 years, it has stood as a beacon of Italian hospitality, resilience, and warmth. Its legacy is woven into the lives of generations who gathered around its tables, nourished not only by food, but by the spirit of a man who dared to dream in the face of grief.

Over the decades, *Gaudenzio (Enzo)* opened and managed a number of restaurants and a hotel that became landmarks in Adelaide's evolving dining scene. Among them were:

- **Enzo's Restaurant Burnside Village.** In 1970, *Enzo* realized a lifelong dream of owning his own restaurant with the opening of *Enzo's Restaurant* in Burnside Village, devoted to authentic Italian flavours and heartfelt hospitality. Meanwhile, *Buonasera* flourished under *Ilario Nesci's* visionary leadership, becoming an icon in its own right. Together, these two establishments stood as twin pillars of Adelaide's Italian culinary heritage, each reflecting *Gaudenzio (Enzo's)* enduring passion and leaving a lasting imprint on the community's cultural and gastronomic landscape.
- **Enzo's Restaurant Kent Town.** In 1978, *Gaudenzio (Enzo)* opened a new chapter in a converted art gallery, this time at the urging of the Mayor of Norwood and the Premier of South Australia, who persuaded him to bring his culinary talents into their jurisdiction. Their invitation was both a tribute to his growing reputation and a strategic gesture to enrich the local dining scene with his authentic Italian flair. The move marked a significant moment in *Gaudenzio (Enzo's)* journey, blending artistry, politics, and gastronomy in a space that would soon become a beloved destination.
- **Maylands Hotel:** In 1987, *Gaudenzio (Enzo)* fulfilled a lifelong dream by purchasing the Maylands Hotel, despite a struggling industry. With culinary flair and bold innovation, he introduced restaurant-quality food at hotel prices, replaced happy hour with free pizza nights, and installed South Australia's first hotel espresso machine. These changes transformed Maylands into a vibrant, welcoming destination. For 14 years, the hotel thrived under the family's care, earning a

cherished place in the community. Their decision to sell was not financial, but principled. They opposed the introduction of poker machines, choosing integrity over profit and preserving the spirit of hospitality that defined Gaudenzio (*Enzo's*) legacy.

- **Our Place @Willunga Hill.** In the later stage of his career, Gaudenzio (*Enzo*) and his family purchased a property in Willunga which his son, Andy, who has been Gaudenzio (*Enzo's*) shadow developed into a unique dining experience. Set in the picturesque McLaren Vale wine region, the restaurant embodies everything Gaudenzio (*Enzo's*) journey represents hospitality, generosity, and a passion for food as a shared experience.

The King of Offal

One of Gaudenzio (*Enzo's*) boldest culinary contributions was his championing of dishes unfamiliar to most South Australians in the 1960s and 1970s. *Calamari*, now a staple on nearly every hotel and restaurant menu, was once regarded with suspicion. Gaudenzio (*Enzo*) introduced it with confidence, demonstrating its versatility and delicate flavour.

Even more famously, he earned the title “King of Offal.” In a country accustomed to steak and chops, *Gaudenzio (Enzo)* showcased the depth of Italian cooking traditions that prized nose-to-tail eating, from tripe to liver and beyond. While offal was inexpensive and often overlooked, he elevated it into delicacies, earning both admiration and curiosity. For adventurous diners, tasting one of *Enzo's* offal dishes became a rite of passage.

A Broader Impact: Migration and Dining Culture

To understand Gaudenzio (*Enzo's*) significance, one must situate him within the broader wave of Italian migration to South Australia. By the 1970s, Italians were the largest non-British migrant group in the state. They worked not only in construction and agriculture but also in hospitality, opening cafés, delicatessens, bakeries, and restaurants.

These contributions reshaped Adelaide's dining culture. The idea of eating socially, lingering over a meal, and enjoying wine with food came directly from Italian influence. Pasta, pizza, espresso coffee, and seafood became mainstream thanks to pioneers like Gaudenzio (*Enzo*). What was once considered exotic is now integral to South Australian identity.

Legacy

Gaudenzio (Enzo) Clappis's story reflects the migrant journey marked by resilience, transformation, and cultural pride. Through his restaurants and hotel, he introduced South Australians to authentic Italian flavours and fostered a shared multicultural identity. His legacy lives on in every hotel calamari and long family lunch. For Gaudenzio (*Enzo*), food was memory and connection, a way to bring home to a new land, and build community through hospitality.

Giuseppi (Joe) Geracitano
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Pola—Stemma

1918—1943

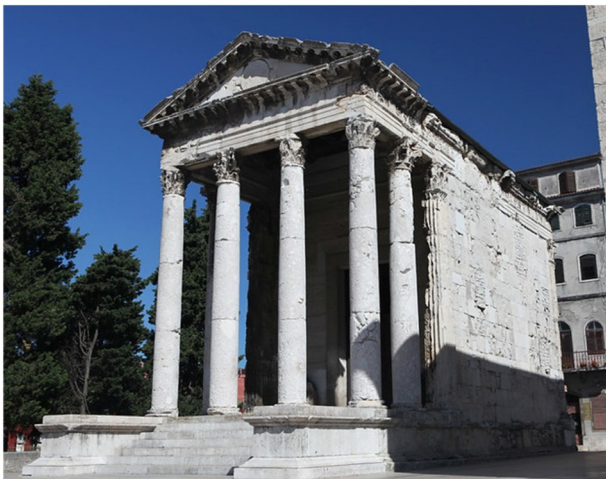
Italy



Pola Italy (now Pula Croatia)



Istria, Fiume & Dalmatia History of Pola



**The Temple of Rome
& Augustus**



**The Pula area is only
remaining Roman
amphitheatre to have
four sides**

The Journey Begins



Naples



Port of Naples 1950

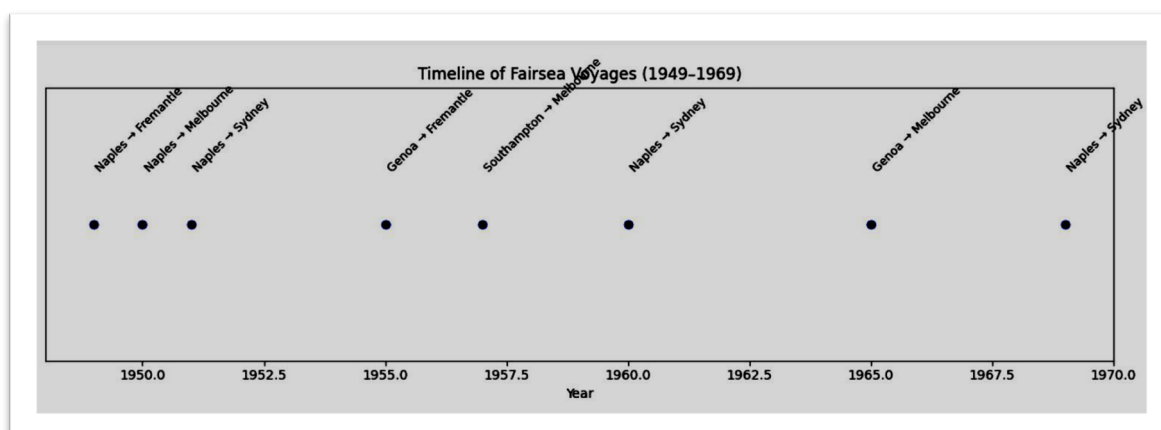


Bagnoli (Naples)
displaced person camp
run by International
Refugee Association in
1950



Fairsea 1950

Sitmar Line from 1949 to 1969,





**Enzo first Identification
Photo**



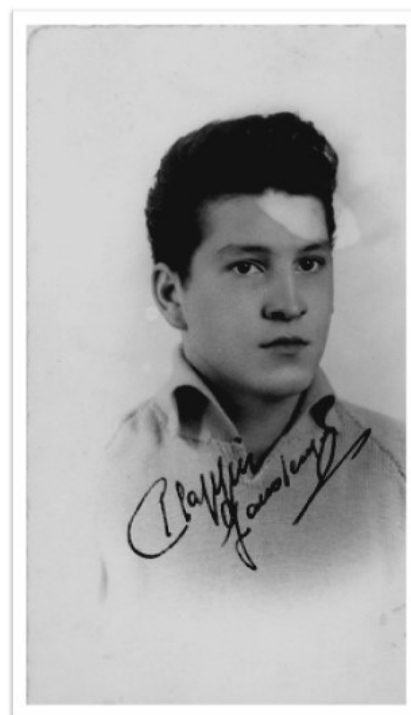
**Enzo (17) and Aldo in
Padova on 12th February
1950**

1754		Serial No. 226 703	
Surname <u>CLAPPIS</u>		Christian Names <u>gennensio</u>	
Nationality <u>Yug.</u>	Age <u>16.33</u>	Sex <u>M</u>	Religion <u>F.O.</u>
Date of Arrival <u>23 JAN 1951</u>	Marital State <u>S</u>	Description	
Ex Ship <u>F. Dea 6</u>	Height <u>5'7"</u>	Weight <u>154</u>	Complexion <u>fair</u>
Date of Departure <u>7/2/51</u>	Build <u>born</u>	Eyes <u>born</u>	
Destination <u>AUSTRALIAN DRIED FRUITS ASSOCIATION, RENMARK, SA 7210</u>	General <u>med.</u>	Scars	Specimen of Signature <i>Clappis gennensio</i>
Trade	Standard of Education	Address of Next of Kin (If known)	

Bagnoli (Napoli) 6-11-950

Gara mamma
mi sento più che mai
vicino al tuo cuore,
tuo
Enzo.

**Note sent on back of
photo to his mother just
before he left for
Australia—1950**



**Enzo just before he left
for Australia in Bagnoli
(Napoli) on 6th
November 1950**

Life in Italy

Antonio Clappis 20/9/1900 - 2/12/44

Born in Santa Dominica d'Albona, Istria

Annunciata Bertotto 23/3/1900 - 17/8/93

Born in Cherso (island between east coast of Istria and The Dalmations

Arrived in Australia on Neptunia 1953



Enzo at 6 months old



CLAPPIS FAMILY - Family Clappis , some friends minus Ottaviano who drowned at 12 and Claudio.

Children -

- 1. LUIGI (Gino) 1923-1988 - arrived 1953 on Neptunia**
- 2. ALDO 1926-1963 - arrived 1954 on Oceania**
- 3. AIDA (twin) 1927-2014 - remained in Italy**
- 4. ANTONIETTA (Etta) (twin)1927 -2018 - arrived 1953 on Neptunia**
- 5. ANTONIO (Nino) 1931-2011 - arrived 1951 on Fairsea**
- 6. GAUDENZIO (Enzo) 1933 - arrived 1951 on Fairsea**
- 7. ROMANA 1934 - arrived 1953 on Neptunia**
- 8. FRANCESCO (Franco) 1935- 2000 - arrived 1953 on Neptunia**
- 9. MARIA NIVES (Mariuccia) 1937-2019 - arrived 1953 on Neptunia**
- 10. SERGIO 1939-1985 - arrived 1953 on Neptunia**
- 11. CLAUDIO 1940 - arrived 1953 on Neptunia**
- 12. OTTOVIANO 1943-1954 - arrived 1953 on Neptunia**



Enzo at 6 years of age.
As a child during WW11,
Enzo begins cooking,
making gnocchi.



Enzo in Male (near Trento) with siblings top left: Franco Top Right: Claudio, Middle Left: Nino Middle Right: Enzo and Bottom: Sergio.



Enzo with Siblings : Enzo far right, Romana, Mariuccia, Aldo, Franco and Gaudenzio (Enzo)



Enzo holding a child in high school 17th May 1949.



Enzo—Brescia—1946—Where Enzo begins formal cooking apprenticeship at age 13.



Collegio Orfani di Guerra

Arrival in Australia



In the **1950s**, **Emma Floreani** ran a well known **boarding house** in **Hurtle Square, Adelaide**, which became a vital refuge for newly arrived **Italian migrants**, especially **single men** escaping post-war Europe.



Picking fruit in Renmark





**Enzo in Hindley Street Adelaide —
3rd from Left.**



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



**Enzo on his wedding
day, 23rd March 1952**



**Enzo and Zofka (Sonia)
in Whyalla, 1952—1953**

Gaudenzio (Enzo) & Zofka (Sonia) Clappis The next Chapter.



**Enzo and Zofka (Sonia) Citizenship in
Waikerie, 1958.**



Family Life :
"A lifetime in
little moments."

**Enzo and Zofka (Sonia)
 Mariuccia (Enzo baby sister)
 and Stane (Zofka brother)
 wedding**



**Enzo and Zofka (Sonia) on right
 Ettore Benuzzi (on left) of Sorrento
 Restaurant, Hindley Street
 Adelaide.**



**Enzo working in a rubber
 mill on South Road
 1957—1958.**



"It began in 1950—with a spark, a stove, and a dream."



"The front entrance of Buonasera Restaurant, once known as Chef Fontana, stands on Glen Osmond Road in Glenunga. It was here that Enzo Clappis first lent his hands to the art of hospitality. In 1966, alongside travel agent Ilario Lamberto, Enzo purchased one of Adelaide's earliest dining establishments and gave it a new name—Buonasera—a place where tradition and taste found a home.

Buonasera Restaurant



Enzo making cappuccino at Buonasera Restaurant



Enzo delights his guests with exceptional wine service and warm hospitality.



Enzo and Zofka actively participate in birthday celebrations, creating memorable moments for their patrons.

Enzo Restaurant Burnside Village 1970



Always ready to support Enzo during the busy dinner rush, Zofka is a dependable presence behind the bar.



Patron enjoying a meal inside Enzo's being served authentic Italian cuisine . His bold approach to food and hospitality helped shape the regions dining culture.



Enzo pioneered outdoor dining in South Australia establishing his presence at Burnside Village in 1970.



A charming Italian restaurant vibe! The cozy wooden ceiling, festive Italian flags, classic Chianti red wine from Tuscany. tables are dressed to impress and the balloons add a cheerful touch, ready for the evening dinner guests.



Enzo—Street View of Enzo Restaurant 1978

Enzo Restaurant Kent Town 1978



Patron having a drink at the bar, before being seated to experience classic italian dishes like house made pastas, seafood and slow cooked meats.



1987 Enzo and Zofka (Sonia) purchase the Mayland Hotel introducing espresso machines and restaurant quality food at pub prices.



Enzo at the front counter in reception on Opening night in 1980



Entrance to the grand Victorian villa built in 1889. Enzo Restaurant quickly became a local landmark due to its elegant architecture and so close to Norwood.

Mayland Hotel 1987



Construction work begins in the beer garden, at the Mayland Hotel.



Zofka (Sonia) Apple Strudel served in all restaurants and Maylands Hotel.



After completing the beer garden at the Maylands Hotel, Enzo and Zofka relaxed with guests, soaking in the atmosphere and enjoying the fruits of their hard work



Enzo and Zofka (Sonia) embrace their guests in a spirit of joy and celebration, making every visit feel like a cherished gathering.



Zofka (Sonia) shares a joyful moment with her daughters, Vivien and Suzi, as they engage warmly with patrons at the Maylands Hotel.



Christmas activities in completed beer garden, that was well received by Patrons.

"A Journey of Togetherness: The Clappis Family Story"



Enzo and Zofka (Sonia) Clappis, children, eldest son Fred (born 1954), followed by daughters Vivien (born 1956) and Suzi (born 1959) and youngest son Andrew (Andy, born 1961).



Hectorville Home

Enzo and Zofka (Sonia) enjoying a quiet moment at home with their children a well earned pause from a lifetime dedicated to hospitality, family, and the flavours of Italy.



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.



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.

"It began with a lunch... and from that simple gathering, 'Our Place' was born. On Willunga Hill, Enzo and Zofka (Sonia) found their final flavours, crafting a chapter steeped in warmth, memory, and the soul of hospitality."



Enzo and Zofka (Sonia)

Early 2000 Enzo Purchases property at Willunga Hill and so begins the dream of "Our Place"



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



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



**Looking at the property at Willunga
Hill**



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



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



***Enzo preparing food at Willunga
Hill***



***Enzo's enjoying a delicious dish
he and Andy prepared together .***



***Enzo's enjoying a delicious
glass of wine after long
luncheon***



Enzo and Andy enjoying a good glass of wine at the Fleurieu Food Festival



Enzo's preparing his famous gnocchi



Enzo's always eager to help alongside Andy with the preparation of bread

Preserving the Flame ...

At 92, Enzo still stirs the soul of tradition — teaching his great-grand children the art of Italian cooking, one recipe, one story, one memory at a time. In his hands, the past is preserved, and the flame of heritage continues to glow.



Enzo, poised with quiet charm at Our Place Willunga Hill, in front of the bar—where rustic elegance meets the warmth of local hospitality.

Migration Story from Tempo | Winter 2013

"I WAS WORKING IN THE KITCHEN, EARNING GOOD MONEY. AND BEST OF ALL, I WAS IN NAPOLI! IT WAS A GREAT LIFE. WE HAD MUCH MORE FREEDOM THAN THE CURRENT LOT OF REFUGEES HAVE!"

It is rather ironic that a dish which is now a fixture on most menus in Italian restaurants was the cause of the loss of valued customers; this was Adelaide in 1950's. The offending dish was calamari when meat and three vegetables was the staple diet. It was only one of many memories Enzo and Sonia Clappis, a delightful pair of octogenarians shared with me on a wintery afternoon in front of a roaring fire.

Enzo and Sonia have been in the restaurant trade for over 60 years and with son Andy are still actively involved in the restaurant 'Our Place', nestled on Willunga Hill in Southern Vales wine region South Australia.

As we enjoyed delicious lunch 'Spaghetti aglio olio e peperoncino', they recounted their life story and their experience as migrants who arrived in Australia following the Second World War.

Sonia was born Slovenia small town province Ljubljana and moved to Italy with her family in 1942 as a 12-year-old. We lived in an apartment in Mantova. Life was good and people made us feel very welcome We couldn't have asked for more!

Enzo's family was forced to leave their home following the communist insurgence

'We had to escape Pola to Italy in 1947 when Tito's communists occupied the city. My father was killed following an air raid which left my mother a widow with nine children.'

Before the war our family owned a small business, a knitwear factory. It was seized by the Yugoslav communists which meant that we were reduced to extreme poverty.

Enzo remembers how the Italian government helped his mother enormously 'We were sent to live in Male a small town outside Trento very close to the Swiss

border right at the top of the mountains. I was then sent to a boarding school for orphans in Brescia'

In 1949, the two families separately received a letter from the International Refugee Association which was under the auspices of the United Nations inviting them to emigrate to Australia. Enzo was 17 and his brother Nino 19. His oldest brother Gino having just completed gynecology studies at university, was also emigrating with his family. To his dismay he was to find as many others did that his qualifications were not recognised by the host country.

At the time, prospective migrants were sent for assessment to a displaced persons camp at Bagnoli, a district on the western outskirts of Napoli run by the International Refugee Association to be assessed. Enzo remembers these as the happiest three months of his life. "I was working in the kitchen, earning good money. And best of all, I was in Napoli! It was a great life. We had much more freedom than the current lot of refugees have!" He counts himself fortunate that he learnt his culinary skills at the school in Brescia which would also serve him well on his arrival in Australia.

Sonia was in the same camp with her brother Antonio, but for only ten days before receiving telegram advising that they had been accepted to emigrate. For Sonia, who was the only girl in the family with five brothers it was a bitter, sweet moment "When my father accompanied me to Bagnoli he was crying, saying that this would be the last time we would see each other. It was very sad because they didn't want me to go, and I never saw him again."

Bremenhaven in Germany is where refugees all boarded the ship which would take them to the other side of the world. Many of the passengers on the ship were people who have become household names and made an enormous impact in their new homeland.

Sonia and Enzo met almost immediately on the ship, but romance did not bloom. Enzo recounts "we were friends, but her brother was very strict! When I went dancing, I would ask the Ursini family 'Where is Sonia?' and they would respond ' Oh Tony won't let her out of his sight.'"

On arrival in Melbourne, they were immediately dispatched to Bonegilla Migrant Reception and Training Centre, a camp for receiving and training migrants to Australia during the Post World War II immigration boom. "They put us on a train and took us to Bonegilla. I was very upset when I saw the place," said Enzo. "Mamma Mia! It was very, very sad. Our only consolation was that we wouldn't be there for long."

It was here that their paths would go in different directions as the men and women were separated. Enzo was sent to Renmark and Barmera to pick grapes and once the fruit picking season was over, onto Adelaide. Sonia's destination was Kyabram, in the Goulburn valley, to work at the IXL factory, manufacturers of jams, preserves and sauces.

Assisted migrants were contracted to the government for the first two years and so could be asked to do any of a variety of jobs. Enzo did a stint at GMH where many other Italians were working but soon moved to Cappel Brothers fishmongers because there he could earn more money to send his family in Italy. But before long his astute and industrious young man started up his own small business.

"When my brother and I went to live in a large boarding house in Mocatta Place in the heart of Adelaide, my brother Nino said since you know how to cook, if you cook for me, I will do your washing." Enzo couldn't believe his luck as he started to cook for his brother Nino. Very soon other offers came flooding in, in exchange for his skills - cigarettes, even offers to pay his rent. "That's how it all started and then when Emma Floreani, the landlady heard what I was doing she asked if I could cook for the seventy or so boarders she packed into her establishment."

Emma who was herself an astute businesswoman suggested that they go one step further and put a couple of tables under the veranda to attract some Australian customers. Enzo was rather skeptical saying "Emma, Australians don't like Italian food".

Not discouraged her reply was "But I will tell you what they like." There was no stopping her. She had a huge team behind her. In a single week she changed everything and provided me with all the facilities I needed. Not many people knew

that Emma owned as many buildings as a well-known property landlord, Con Polites, the difference being that while he put his name up on all his buildings, she kept everything close to her chest.”

Eventually some Australians did arrive and Enzo says he still remembers this day a certain family, husband, wife and two children, who used to visit every Saturday morning on their way to the Central Market, which was only a stone's throw away. From his small menu they chose fish and chips for the children and steak and eggs for themselves. “Then all of a sudden they stopped coming and I said to Emma, perhaps with my bad English I might have said something to offend them.” A week later when I went to the Central Market, I saw the husband who said in answer to my concerns “no you haven't done anything, my wife has been sick after you put those things on the menu. She's afraid that you cook the steak in the same frypan.”

"I had had the nerve to include calamari on the menu. Not a single person came back to eat there. I always say that my biggest mistake was to have been the first person in Adelaide to have calamari on the menu which at the time, together with cockles, was only used for fish bait even though ours was a boarding house, not a restaurant. However, some good did come from this experience as other Italians went on to open their own restaurants having learned how to prepare dishes from me."

Sonia's brother, who was living at the same boarding house had been battling with the Immigration authorities to enable her to join him in Adelaide because he didn't like her being alone in another state. He asked Enzo if she would be welcome to eat meals with them at the boarding house. And that is when their romance blossomed. However, their time together would be short lived as the authorities advised Enzo he was being sent to Whyalla. “I went to the Immigration office and told them that I had started a small business and was therefore unable to go.” Their response was “you signed a contract, and your business means nothing us! Whyalla is the place for young people”.

The first letter Enzo wrote from Whyalla expressed the desolation that many Europeans felt when they first arrived in that barren town. “For me Whyalla was

the end of the world, i cried, i hated it. I remember writing to Sonia saying, you just can't imagine it, but Whyalla is where Jesus Christ said "Enough, this is the end". And then Sonia joined me in 1952, we were married same year our first child".

Three years later the young couple were joined by their siblings and respective mothers who were overjoyed to find that they would finally be able to feed their families with an unrestricted amount of whatever food they liked. They particularly impressed when Enzo would bring home a plentiful supply of calamari saying, "if it is the last thing i do I will teach these Australians how to eat calamari, to which my mother would reply 'no, no because if you do, there won't be enough for us!' There was plenty for everyone. With one giant squid I could feed a family. They were great times."

After Whyalla, the family moved and settled in Glenelg and again, Enzo's culinary expertise was much sought after. One of his first jobs was at the Mocca Bar in Hindley Street, in the west end of the city.

I worked in the kitchen, waited on tables, served behind the bar, I did everything I was never home. The Mocca Bar was open until 6 am. We closed the doors at 6 am and then reopened at 11 am. Restaurants were sprouting up like mushrooms and then just as quickly disappeared. What I tried to do was to try and learn from everyone's mistakes".

Buonasera was the first restaurant Enzo went into partnership with and it soon built up a good reputation. He was there for only four years when approached by three well known businessmen, Bob May, Richard Cohen and Tom Matters, who had bought some land to create Burnside Village.

"I went to see what they were developing and fell in love with idea immediately; I sold my share of the business to the current owner Ilario Nesci who was my barber; a good boy; I stayed with him for six months to teach him the ropes. He was very apprehensive at first because he didn't know how to cook but i told him not to worry, that would leave all my good women in the kitchen."

The first Enzo's restaurant (not to be confused with current one on Port Road) opened in 1970 at Burnside Village. Among the clientele were many of Adelaide's

elite including the then Premier Don Dunstan who, apart from politics, was very interested in food and would later go on to publish a cookbook and open his own restaurants. He became a regular at the restaurant after tasting one Enzo's specialties on the menu "tripe cooked in white wine".

"Don loved offal" recounts Enzo. "I was renowned for my offal recipes subsequently, when we had the Maylands Hotel a group of 25 regulars wanted to found the 'Offal Club'.

Mine was the only establishment in Adelaide to serve testicles on the menu. It was almost impossible to find a regular supplier because they were all being exported to Belgium. Don used to come in to taste them and was forever asking me for my recipes which naturally remained my secret. I had once learned my lesson when I gave a recipe for our 'Tortellini alla Mantovana' well known pasta maker who then published it as his own. I was very angry and didn't forgive him for a very long time."

Sonia recounts how she learned to make one their specialties Tortellini alla Mantovana.

"It was in the home Tazio Nuvolari, the F1 Champion. During the war I used to look after his children and their cook taught me how to make them." As a child this was not the only fascinating experience for her through those difficult times. During bombing raids, they were often serenaded by Tito Gobbi, the famous operatic baritone. Sonia was often asked to deliver his suitcases which she came to discover later, were full of money, because no one would suspect her."

The couple continued to run the restaurant in Burnside Village for five years until Don Dunstan played a role in their next move. One Sunday Don visited the restaurant to inform them that Victoria House, an art gallery in Norwood, was up for sale and he said to Enzo "I need you in Norwood. The following day the Premier sent his car to take him to inspect the gallery. At the auction the other bidder was none other than property magnate Con Polites. "I had come to know Con when he was in Port Pirie and I was living in Whyalla. He was a very shrewd businessman, a good friend if you had him as a friend. I helped him a lot. When I

came to Adelaide on my motorbike to buy provisions, I would stop at Pt Pirie where he had a large continental deli, and I taught him where to source Italian products. There were a lot of Italians living in Port Pirie and no one was selling Italian food products. I helped him source things he didn't even know existed. As soon as Con found out that I wanted to open a restaurant there, he withdrew and so we opened Enzo Norwood in 1978.

The restaurant was a great success and then what they thought would be their final move they bought Maylands Hotel in 1987 where they spent the next 14 years and the whole Clappis clan became involved. The Hotel became an institution as probably the first pub to introduce fine dining, a proper coffee machine and as being one of the last bastions against poker machines.

On selling the hotel they moved to Willunga Hill fully intending to retire. "We used to organize a lot of parties for friends, for family and that is how the business here was born, slowly, slowly. Then Andy started baking bread and everyone wanted it. It was almost like watching a rose bloom. It was not something which was planned, it just happened" it how they explain their current activity.

It is quite evident that Enzo is proud and satisfied with what they have achieved." I never wanted to be unemployed; In Loxton I bought a vegetable farm I became a share farmer, I had never worked on the land in my life, I knew nothing about the land. If it hadn't been for Sonia's mother who was not well, we would have stayed there, we loved it. I've always said one day we will go back". "I cried and cried when we left Loxton, we left a lot of friends behind" Added Sonia.

"I cried when I arrived in Adelaide the first thing I did when I arrived in Adelaide, I went to Rundle Street to see if I could buy coffee and it wasn't even coffee, it was essence, there was chicory it was bitter. I remember needing to buy olive oil. They sold small bottles of 100ml or 120ml made by Faulding's at the chemist shop. I looked at the bottle and asked have you got any bigger ones? The answer was "No, but how many would you like? "Enzo reply of three or four dozen was met with great consternation. "Before I give them to you, you had better see your doctor". He was not to know that at the time it was sold as a laxative!

The reaction was even worse when he told the chemist that he used it to dress salads. It was the first time he heard ‘bloody wog’ from the lips of the middle-aged woman from behind the dispensary. “When I was referred to as a wog, I responded by calling them kangaroos, but I didn’t treat it as an offense, rather as a joke. Occasionally I would counter with I was invited to come here; I didn’t come to this country wearing a ball and chains.”

“At the end of the day I think we have paid our dues to Australia. We have had four children, 12 grandchildren and we are expecting our ninth great-grand child. After 63 years I am probably more Australian than Italian. But you never forget your roots. Italy is like my grandmother; I love and respect her. I like to visit her every now and then, however, Australia is my home, and it is where my family is but, in the end, I am still Italian”.



The story of Enzo and Andy, who serve Italian food from the Gods

A pioneering restaurateur family is filling McLaren Vale's belly with Italian fare of godly quality and portions, writes Nigel Hopkins.

In Daily Archive

May 16, 2018, updated May 14, 2025



Enzo and Andy Clappis at their McLaren Vale restaurant Our Place. Photo: Tony Lewis / In Daily

This was supposed to be a story about Andy Clappis, McLaren Vale baker, but along the way it was hijacked by his father, Enzo, one of the pioneers of early Italian dining in South Australia.

You'd expect visitors to McLaren Vale to go home enthusing about the wines they'd tasted, but an awful lot of them remember the bread they've eaten in the region's wineries and restaurants. That would be Andy Clappis' artisan style, homemade bread.

It's symptomatic of a broader truth: the Barossa got the Germans, McLaren Vale got the Italians, and the extended Clappis family exemplifies the influence Italians have had on the collective culture of the region.

The Clappis' weren't by any means among the earliest Italians attracted to McLaren Vale, and there's a long list of those, but anyone who's experienced one of Andy and Enzo's Our Place Sunday lunches up on Willunga Hill has had a thoroughly authentic taste of what a large, in fact very large, Italian family lunch is all about.

But the story starts with Enzo, now 85 and still in the kitchen every day, and his wife Sonia. Both were refugees escaping post-war communism in Yugoslavia as part of what was called the Istrian exodus, when around 350,000 Italians left Slovenian Istria. The couple met on the boat bringing them to Australia in 1951.

While a refugee in Italy, Enzo had worked in kitchens in Brescia, northern Italy, but the deal then for refugees was that they worked wherever the government wanted them to work, usually in factories – as did Enzo, although at one point he found himself in Whyalla as a night cart operator – quite literally a shit of a job.

Initially it was helping Emma Floreani, who ran a boarding house in Hurtle Square for 35 single migrant men just like Enzo. Bravely, he put a few tables and chairs on the front verandah and welcomed all-comers: “We have to teach people to eat Italian,” Emma had told him.

Enzo bought his meat from Luigi Caon, a butcher and father of Primo and Giocondo, who went on to become very significant restaurateurs. But it was when he put calamari on the menu that all his Anglo customers disappeared. He'd been feeding them steak and chips; in 1951 this was asking too much.

Olive oil also posed a problem. In search of coffee, he'd been sent to Birks Chemist in what is now Rundle Mall: “I cried when I read the label,” Enzo says. It was chicory essence. But he returned again in search of olive oil.

Sure, they had olive oil – in tiny little bottles produced by Faulding: “The colour looked great, not like the coffee, so I asked for three dozen bottles,” Enzo recalls. “The chemist suggested I really should go and see a doctor, as this was what they used as a laxative.”

As he tried to explain, in his not very good English, that it was for a salad, he heard the chemist's wife, who'd been listening, mutter “Bloody wogs.” It was not an easy time to be an Italian in Australia: squid, olive oil, wog food.

By the early 1960s he was helping Mario Fontana at Chef Fontana, where Buonosera Restaurant is now on Glen Osmond Road. Mario had a difficult relationship with his wife, who eventually killed him by pouring boiling oil on him, and in 1966 Enzo, in partnership with then travel agent Ilario Lamberto, bought the business and renamed it Buonasera.

It was so popular that when the Cohen family opened Burnside Village, they lured Enzo across in 1970 to open his own eponymous restaurant, Enzo's. Buonosera was subsequently sold to Ilario Nesci, who continues to run it very successfully.

Enzo believes he was the first restaurant owner in South Australia to promote outside dining, which he did at Burnside Village. "Hardly anyone would sit there," he says, "except for (then Premier) Don Dunstan and his partner Adele Koh. He'd sit there even if it was raining, with an umbrella."

But Enzo also had his eye on a grander property at the foot of Norwood Parade, at that time an art gallery. He eventually bought the property in 1976, the same year he sent Andy, then aged 17, to upgrade his hospitality skills in Switzerland. As a junior in a Gstaad hotel, Andy would serve fondue or debone a quail for the likes of Elizabeth Taylor, Audrey Hepburn and David Niven.

Enzo had planned a fine diner, hence Andy's spell overseas, but when he opened Enzo's in Kent Town in 1980, he settled for a more homely and familiar style of Italian cooking. The fine dining had to wait two years when the property was sold to Nick Papazahariakis, who opened it as Chloe's, such is the intertwined and almost incestuous nature of Adelaide's restaurant scene.

After a spell selling upmarket kitchenware, Enzo and Sonia bought the Maylands Hotel in 1987, which they held for 14 years and is where many Adelaide diners first came across Sonia's fabulous, homely Veneto-style cooking. It was there that Andy began teaching himself how to bake bread.

"Everyone thought we were mad, but the price was good, and I knew what I was going to do," Enzo says.

"We introduced restaurant food at pub prices, and we were the first pub in Australia to have an espresso machine in the front bar. We gave Andy's bread away, with butter not margarine, and everyone said our customers would have no room for food, but you'd be surprised by how much they drank.

"There's an old saying that you have to give in order to receive."

Under pressure to install pokies, which they resisted, Enzo sold the Maylands in 2000. Along the way, in 1994 the family had bought a substantial landholding on Willunga Hill with the intention of raising cattle, and where Andy had since made his home.

It was an invitation in 2003 to cook lunch for the local McLaren Vale Bacchus Club that proved transformational.

“We had nothing here,” Andy says. “No kitchen just sheds with heaters under the tables. But it was a great success. And it just went on from there.”

Andy installed a commercial kitchen in 2007 and started making bread for local wineries and restaurants: “It just grew and grew, it’s still growing,” he says, reeling off customers such as The Star of Greece and Victory Hotel, and a string of major wineries. It has been sold at local providore Minko, which is closing, but will now be available at the Willunga General Store.

His staple loaf is long and flat, longer than a traditional ciabatta.

“It’s just a simple pane casalinga,” he says, which he calls a “Fino”.

Although not a true sourdough, it is still based on a sourdough starter Andy started more than 30 years ago. He uses Laucke’s Wallaby baker’s flour – at least half a tonne a week – fresh compressed yeast, rainwater and just one secret ingredient – unrefined golden salt from the River Murray.

Crusty and tearable, and totally delicious when served warm, it’s a staple component of his Sunday lunches for up to 120 guests. These are genial, generous and gentle events graced with much good humor and a menu that goes on and on. No wonder this is a place where Italian men bring their mothers, confident they’ll eat much more than they ever expected.

The beef, lamb, goat, eggs, chilies and herbs all come from the Clappis farm. Much of the wine that is consumed comes from Andy’s celebrated cousin, the winemaker Walter Clappis and his *The Hedonist* label.

Thin slices of baked chickpea flour – *la farinata* – are passed around, salty and crisp, quickly followed by squares of pizza margherita and bowls of baccala paste to go with Andy’s bread, hot from the oven, served with Nangkita olive oil. But not just any old baccala paste is used. This is a recipe given to Sonia in Italy by famed Italian Formula One racing driver Tazio Nuvolari, for whom she once worked while a refugee in Italy.

Then a salad to lighten up: tomato and basil (both “from an Italian guy down the road”) with fennel and mozzarella, followed by prosciutto and salami made by a mate, also great with the bread.

By now most guests are experiencing a sense of alarm. They’ve already eaten too much... and there’s more. Ah, it’s just a plate of lightly floured and fried, ever so tender, calamari. No problem. Except that now there’s also a platter of risotto with radicchio and fresh chili and another of fat gnocchi with almond and basil pesto.

And then there’s the pig, a 34kg grass-fed Berkshire pig cooked upright on a stand in Andy’s big oven and wheeled out for all to admire. Andy says its crisp skin is now like rice paper, its meat

like butter. And it is. It comes with a platter of roast potatoes, carrots, red capsicums and steamed broccolini, but by now no one cares. Except that now a plate of crisp, fresh *cannoli Siciliana* appears, and suddenly everyone cares.

Some years ago, after the local Ferrari club had had its fourth annual lunch there, a comment was left in the guest book: “This is proof that God must be Italian.” Who could argue with that?

The pioneering restaurateur, who introduced squid to many Adelaide diners, still works alongside his son Andy at their eatery Our Place at Willunga Hill. Here Enzo shares memories of arriving in SA in 1951, the mark he made on the local restaurant scene, and introducing pig’s testicles to Premier Don Dunstan.

On Sunday June 4, 2023, Enzo Clappis celebrated his 90th birthday. The surprise bash was organised by his son, restaurateur Andy Clappis, and the shindig happened at their hilltop restaurant Our Place at Willunga Hill. Enzo had no idea the party was happening; he was too busy in the kitchen, preparing what he thought was a usual Sunday service. Our Place only opens on Sundays, and Andy and Enzo’s overwhelmingly generous hospitality has a devoted following of “in the know” regulars.

There is no menu. Instead, the father-son duo prepares dishes on a whim, each one inspired by Enzo’s past, from his childhood in Pola (now Pula, Croatia) to his cooking apprenticeship in Italy, and finally Australia where he and his late wife Zofka (known as Sonia in Australia) arrived in 1951 as post-war refugees.

The pair went on to pave the way in Italian dining in South Australia, including Glen Osmond Road’s Buonasera, the former Enzo’s restaurants at Burnside Village and Kent Town (which eventually became Chloe’s), and the Maylands Hotel, which they sold because the Clappis family didn’t want to be involved with poker machines. Now, with Andy by his side, Enzo shows no intention of slowing down.

After nearly eight decades in the kitchen, he shares his thoughts on hospitality – then and now.

When and how did you start cooking?

I was 13 when I started my apprenticeship in Italy. When all my friends used to go and play soccer, I used to go in the kitchen and learnt to cook. When it was time to leave for Australia, my teacher said, “Enzo, don’t forget that bravery in the kitchen is to do a lot with nothing. Not nothing with a lot”. This year, I’ve been in the kitchen for 77 years. Unbelievable.

What was the boat journey like in 1951?

It was a very good trip. The boat was an ex-army American boat and it was beautiful because we were treated as if we’d paid for the trip – and that’s where I met my wife. I befriended her

brother and he introduced me to her. I was 17 and she was 20. She was wonderful. We lived together for 71 years.

We had to sign an International Refugee Organisation contract to agree that we'd work wherever the government here in Australia sent us. For two years, I had a contract in Whyalla working for BHP. I slept in a shed and when we had our first baby, he slept on top of a suitcase, but we loved it because we were in such a wonderful country. Eventually, I got my mother and the rest of the family over here and I went to Adelaide to cook.

Was finding work in kitchens difficult?

It was very hard to make a living by cooking because people wouldn't touch anything continental. My first job was helping Emma Floreani, who ran a boarding house for 36 young, single refugee men. When she found out I did my apprenticeship in Italy and I was a qualified cook, she said, "Please cook for my boys".

What were Australians eating in 1951?

Australians didn't eat squid. They used to say that squid was poison and just good for catching fish. When I introduced it, they thought I was a mad wog. Don't get me wrong, Australian food was good, just very simple. We taught the Australians to use olive oil because they just used dripping. When I had my first restaurant, people used to touch the plate and say, "This plate is not hot!" I couldn't understand because back home we used to use the plate at room temperature. One day, I woke up and understood why; the dripping would immediately get stuck on a cold plate.

Did anything else surprise you?

When I was in Whyalla, I caught a giant cuttlefish and couldn't believe it. My friends from BHP thought it was poison, but I said, "You must be joking, if we had something like this in Italy, we would have been rich". I took this cuttlefish home, cleaned it, cooked it, kept the black ink and made a beautiful black sauce. I made risotto for 25 people with one cuttlefish.

When the Vietnamese and Chinese came to Australia after the war in Vietnam, you used to find a lot of things in Adelaide Central Market that you couldn't find before. The first thing that I found was the [parson's nose](#). I rang my mother and said, "Mum, I found the chicken bums!" We used to love it. One day, I found rooster testicles and she thought Christmas had come.

How did you win hearts, including former South Australia premier Don Dunstan's, with offal?

Where I come from, offal is a delicacy. Australians cooked tripe with a white sauce but I didn't like it, so I cooked it my way with white wine. Oh, yes. Don Dunstan used to come to the restaurant regularly and couldn't believe it. He said, "This is the best tripe I ever had ... and I've been around the world a lot." Don used to bring politicians to the restaurant for offal.

When we had the hotel I said, “Don, I’m going to give you what you’ve never had before”. He said, “Come on, you should know that I have everything by now.” I gave them pork liver, brain, and then the surprise. Testicles. Don Dunstan had never eaten pig testicles before.

How do you cook a pig’s testicle?

First of all, you just poach it a bit and you take the skin away. Then cut it in half and you breadcrumb it like you would with brains, and fry very delicately in butter. It’s unbelievable.

How did Our Place at Willunga evolve?

We built it slowly, from nothing. Andy and I bought 500 acres at Willunga Hill and thought we’d retire up here. Andy started this as a joke and I’m still in the kitchen! Sonia helped me at all my restaurants, until she had a fall and she never recovered. She used to say, “With love you can do anything”. She was amazing. I miss her so much.

Where did you get your work ethic?

My mum had 12 children, that's why I'm a workaholic. I worked hard all my life. Sometimes I'm surprised what I can do at 90. I'm lucky that I can still drive. I still live in my beach house in Port Noarlunga and every morning at 7.30am, I give Andy a ring and if he needs anything, then I do some shopping for him. I'm here seven days a week. It must be in my genes. My Aunt Etta died last year at 108 and she was very sharp.

What is it like to work alongside your son?

When Andy was seven years old, he used to cry because he wanted to come with me to my first restaurant. We’ve been together ever since then. He said, “Dad, if anything ever happens to you, I’ll close [Our Place at Willunga]. I wouldn’t be able to go on without you.” It’s amazing. We have such a beautiful relationship.

What is the secret or the key to great hospitality?

You’ve got to love what you’re doing, and every client should be a friend.

Wining and Dining SUNDAY MAIL 22/3/81 (Restaurant Sold at time)

Italian service at its best

We had settled down quite happily with the menu at Enzo's place, where Fullarton Road meets the Norwood Parade.

The pasta looked as tempting as it should in an Italian restaurant; there was the prospect of a fillet steak cooked in foil with red wine, of lobster in their own manner, of brains and tripe, as well as the general array of fish and meat.

Then along came the waitress. "We have some specials tonight," she said brightly. I'll say they had.

There was a pate, a hearty baked soup, mushrooms; prosciutto ham with melon, Mum's pasta; oxtail, chicken breast. marinated flounder.

We abandoned the basic menu for a delicious meal based on the specials.

First, though, let me tell you about Enzo's in general. Although taking its name from the father of the family, the other members of the Clappis clan play just as important a role in making this formal, family restaurant to my mind the best place for Italian food in today's Adelaide.

A sometime villa, sometime gallery, it has been converted by them into four dining rooms and a bar furnished in the Burnside manner.

Here the bourgeoisie may take its ease and its nourishment.

Below stairs for those who want to make the exploration is a cellar that reflects some careful and rewarding buying over the years.

Also hanging from the ceiling was a prosciutto ham. They prepare it themselves, a measure of the seriousness with which the Clappis approaches the business of running a restaurant. The service complemented the setting. They were friendly, they were helpful, and they maintained just that touch of distance you want when you are having a good night out with good friends.

Back to the specials. Mum's pasta, as it was endearingly called, was little filled envelopes with and pumpkin flavoured with nutmeg and served with a rich, creamy ricotta sauce.

The baked mushroom entree was simplicity itself: three mushrooms with ham, but the flavor was lovely in its freshness. Use good, fresh ingredients don't adulterate them, and you win every time.

Eating Out: MAYLANDS A fine Italian accent

In Baker heaven, there's a pub on every street corner. It is impossible to pass one on account of the enticing smells and the revelry of good companions from within. It is hell to leave because here cosily you take your ease in a perfect democracy.

Waiting for heaven, I'll settle for lunch at the Maylands.

Enzo Clappis came to Adelaide from Venice rather a long time ago and for years ran some of Adelaide's leading Italian restaurants.

Then the Clappis family bought the Maylands, a nice enough near- Norwood suburban pub, but definitely in need of care and attention. That it got. The century-old building has been renovated and given snug appeal, lots of polished wood and those small touches that make for character. They avoided the bogus colonial look with the result they got the real colonial feel. There are good beers on tap and good wines by the glass.

The setting is as South Australian as Beehive Corner but there is an Italian warmth as well. You smell it in the coffee, see it in the display case of sundry chocolates and other delicacies for those who don't automatically think of pubs in swill terms.

The Clappises Enzo and Sonia, Andrew, Fred, Suzie, Vivien and Anna with family and friends, decided from the outset that they were as much a restaurant as bars. The dining room was expanded again with a colonial feel. The lawn became a beer garden; a side space became a pavilion for functions. Viewed objectively, the Maylands is a big pub but such is the attention to detail it has an intimacy.

I think it obvious from all of this that the flavors definitely lean towards Italian. That is not entirely true since one speciality is a formidable plate of kranjske sausages and sauerkraut, and another is snapper with a Thai red curry sauce. They also do a solid line in trad pub tucker.

But to get the essence of Maylands, you should seek that Italian accent.

You must begin with the bread. They make it themselves from unbleached flour, spring water and fresh yeast. It comes piping hot and is utterly irresistible.

A mix of good atmosphere, food, beers and wines... Enzo Clappis at the Maylands Hotel.

THE MENU STARTERS

Pate \$5.50

Soup \$4.50

MAIN COURSE

Lasagne \$9.50

Kranjske \$10.90

Thai snapper \$13.50

Tortellini mantavana \$11.90

DESSERT

Sonia's strudel \$4.50 Brandy cake \$4.50



As well as the aforesaid pleasures, they make a point of daily specials, so I perhaps should add that tomorrow is risotto day, always a good day chez Maylands.



TONY BAKER

Sunday Extra

It was one of those warm spring-like days of summer perfect for eating al fresco.

And there are few better places for such eating than the Maylands Hotel.

They do it in great style.

Indoors, there's polished wood with airy glass-walled eating spaces which would be fine on a cool or wet day.

But the focal point is the grassed court- yard with central fish pond, complete with pink water lilies.

You are surrounded by high bougainvillea, wisteria and assorted shrubbery which has a cooling and calming effect. This is dotted with tables each under its own umbrella. Here and there is a polished pew.

There's a sort of half- way house, too, where the eating is al fresco in style but under a huge roof.

A stone bar in the garden serves both outdoors areas.

This is the sort of venue Adelaide deserves. And there's a bonus. The food is terrific.

There is an eclectic choice. There were blackboard specials, including an entree of vitello tonnato (\$5.20), the northern Italian dish of veal, tuna, mayonnaise and capers.

Also on offer for the day were grilled pork liver and onions or rolled turkey breast with almond, chestnut and plum stuffing served with a cherry sauce. We sidestepped these and went for a creamy duck pate made with muscat and topped with a rosy, pink jelly.

One of us took the pesce savor, a cooked fillet of hake pickled in vinegar, olive oil, lightly cooked onions and herbs and served cold. He thought it delicious.

Hotel cool haven for DINING al fresco fare

Others started with what they thought was a very good vegetable soup.

For mains, one of us had a skinless, boneless chicken wrapped around a stuffing of spiced breadcrumbs with ham and cheese and served with a light cream sauce. She liked it a lot.

Others had the fried calamari with chips and salad which they thought had been done well.

I could vouch for the Malaysian beef and potato curry. It was hot but full of flavor, with plenty of gravy and heavily spiced with one of my favorites, poppyseeds.

That was served with steamed rice and a light but sharp and hottish sambal of tomato, onion and chilli.

I have been tempted by the krajnsky, pork sausages served with a homemade sauerkraut served with potato and sweet red cabbage. But it seemed to me more like a cooler-day- sort-of-dish.

The Clappis family runs the hotel and its experience and inclinations show.

Italian drift (spaghetti, lasagna and so on).

Sonia Clappis, who is Yugoslav, inspires the strudel (which our Czech krajnsky and the apple tablemate thought was pretty good compared to his grandmother's). Son Andrew likes cooking Asian food and is obviously responsible for the curry.

Service was swift and extremely pleasant.

There is a good and extensive wine list as you might expect of a hotel which attracts a number of winemakers to its lunch tables. Incidentally, there are also snacks, sand- wiches and bread rolls to Enzo gives the menu its be had

TOP: The Maylands Hotel... perfect for eating al fresco. ABOVE: A family enjoys Spaghetti alla Chitarra Maylands.

Sunday Extra

DINING

Sol Simeon's GOURMET GUIDE

Hotel cool haven for al fresco fare

IT was one of those warm spring-like days of summer — perfect for eating al fresco. And there are few better places for such eating than the Maylands Hotel.

They do it in great style. Indoors, there's polished wood with airy glass-walled eating spaces which would be fine on a cool or wet day. But the focal point is the grassed courtyard with central fish pond, complete with pink water lilies.

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There's a sort of half-way house, too, where the eating is al fresco in style but under a huge roof. A stone bar in the garden serves both outdoor areas.

This is the sort of venue Adelaide deserves. And there's a bonus. The food is terrific.

There is an eclectic choice. There were blackboard specials, including an entree of stiletto tuna to \$3.50, the northern Italian dish of veal, tuna, mayonnaise and capers.

Also on offer for the day were grilled pork liver and onions or rolled turkey breast with almond, chestnut and plum stuffing served with a cherry sauce. We sidestepped these and went for a creamy duck pate made with muscat and topped with a rosy pink jelly.

One of us took the peace server, a cooked fillet of hake pickled in vinegar, olive oil — lovely cooked

onions and herbs and served cold. He thought it delicious.

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The bill

WHERE: The Maylands Hotel, 67 Phillips St, Maylands. PH 962 1810.

WHEN: Lunch Monday to Sunday, noon to 2pm. Dinner Monday to Saturday 6-8pm.

WHAT: Two soups, two pates, one peace server, two calamari, one chicken, two curries, cheese platter and apple strudel. **Total: \$76.20.**

TOP: The Maylands Hotel ... perfect for eating al fresco. ABOVE: A family enjoys Spaghetti alla Chitarra Maylands.



STONES MAYLAND S Service with a smile- and clothing. Vivienne Clappis serves drinks at the Maylands Hotel, one of the eastern suburbs pubs which likes to keep its barmaids covered.

Fine food better than bare breasts By PAULA BRINKWORTH –

GOOD food, service and family entertainment - not bare breasts are keeping eastern suburbs hotels alive.

While many western suburbs hoteliers are outraged at the ban on topless barmaids and fear for their hotels' survival, pubs on the city's eastern side are continuing to reap the rewards of a new-age pub which has been encouraging more women and families.

The Maylands Hotel is an example of a pub trying something new to meet the demands of a new generation.

Owner Enzo Clappis has replaced pool tables, TAB service and Sky Channel with coffee machines and chocolate displays.

"We've converted this place to a family hotel with the flavor of Italy," Mr Clappis said. "Other publicans come here and

"People are different over here, they're more established and more older people that don't need that sort of stimulation, or titillation"

they can't understand how we can survive.

"I think businesses need to look at change, it's no good hanging on to the past

" Mr Clappis said his hotel often attracted many women to the hotel who simply wanted a place to meet, have a coffee and chat.

The owner of Magill's Tower Hotel, Randal Dry, believed there was not a demand for topless waitresses in the eastern suburbs, but he could understand the concern of many western suburbs publicans if topless waitresses were forced out of hotels.

"We've got a more older type of clientele," Mr Dry said.

"People are different over here, they're more established and more older people that don't need that sort of stimulation, or titillation.

" Paradise Hotel manager Chad Davis said his 170-year-old hotel would never consider topless waitresses because it was targeting families. "I would rather concentrate on other things rather something more negative," he said.

Mr Davis said that during the recession, the hotel had begun a Rhythm and Blues afternoon on Sundays, was offering special dinner nights for families and was promoting its beer garden.

"We've built up our business through more positive ways," he said



‘TOASTING OUR ACHIEVERS

At your service! Vivienne Clappis

pours beers for Maylands Hotel

patrons.

Maylands pub service the best, bar none

THE beer stopped flowing, the dart game came to a halt and everyone craned their necks as the horses bolted.

The temporary interruption of the Melbourne cup in an otherwise fine day of best hat competitions and champagne provided a well-earned peak for the Maylands Hotel’s bar staff.

Even the best bar staff in SA would need a rest after dealing with a hotel full of fevered punters. :

The Maylands Hotel has won the 1993 Hotel Industry Award for best bar service and presentation. But Anna Clappis, spokeswoman for the family-run pub, said the awards were still something of a mystery. ;

She said the award was presented for customer service, convenience, efficiency, and cleanliness, but the hotel would never find out how it managed to win. Judges were shadowy figures who appeared at the hotel incognito and sampled its wares. Nobody knew who they were or how many times they came.

Anna said the message to the winner was really just to keep doing what it was doing.

But the hotel’s win was not entirely surprising. The Clappis family has been involved in the restaurant trade since 1969.

Enzo Clappis opened Buonasera which was one of the first Italian restaurants in SA. “When we put together our first Italian menu customers would look at it and then ask for steak and chips,” he said. Why did he swap from restaurants to pubs? “The grass is always greener — but I’ve found out it takes a lot of hard work.” —CRAIG COOPER:

The Advertiser,

Wednesday, January 30, 1991

In search of new Aussie tucker

By NIGEL HOPKINS

SUPPOSE I could have stayed at home and cooked some damper on the barbie and washed it down with billy tea. That might have been the right thing to do on Australia Day.



Somebody had even sent in a sample of Instant Success (very Australian aspiration, hat) damper mixture; just add milk (milk?) and maybe mashed pumpkin or creamed corn! Not quite what a pioneer bullock driver would have kept in his tucker bag.

There were even recipes for mint and pate Hamper and pecan and fresh dates damper

Well, damn the damper, I thought; our pioneers would never have made it over the Blue Mountains on this sort of fluff.

The restaurant at Tandanya Aboriginal Cultural Institute then. Good tucker there, eh! Some smoked emu maybe, with a few Kakadu plums or some of those pungent little feral tomatoes crushed into a sauce, followed by wattle ice-cream and stewed quandongs. Yep, I've had some quite good tucker there. But it was closed on Australia Day- although the phone gave an engaged tone, as it did all the next day.

Well, if old Australia was out of the race, it would have to be new Australia.

The Maylands Hotel, in fact, a finely- restored 1880s suburban corner pub run by a whole tribe of Yugoslav/Italian Australians the Clappis family. And at least I was sitting under a corrugated iron roof, although one of the reasons for choosing the Maylands is that it has a very superior garden dining area.

Some of you may remember Enzo and Sonja Clappis from the late 1970s when they ran Enzo's restaurant, now transformed into Chloe's at the foot of Norwood Parade, and before that the Buonasera restaurant, which Enzo started.

Now their two sons and daughters, and various husbands and wives, are all enjoined in the business, making it a truly family affair.

The Maylands follows pub tradition in that it has a couple of very cosy bars, all wood-panelled and cushioned, with a very comforting wooden bar top on which to rest and about seven of all the right beers on tap. You could be made very happy just going there for a drink.

But then the Maylands gets quite deviant and clever. There's an espresso coffee machine, for instance, and a glass case full of chocolates and cakes. This also is a place for very civilised elevenses.

Then you look at the various blackboard menus and wine lists hung on just about every wall and you see why people keep coming back to this place for a good feed. It's mostly basic Italian, with a dash of Yugoslav and a lurch into several Asian dishes because son and co-chef Andrew Clappis has a passion for Asian cooking.

There is a solid smell of authenticity to the cooking. Sonja Clappis, for instance, learnt to make her regular Tuesday special, tortellini Mantovana, as a child in the kitchen of her neighbor in Mantovana, the famous racing driver Tazio Nuvolari-whom Fangio is said to regard as the greatest driver of all time. The handmade parcels of pasta filled with pumpkin and cheese might well have contributed to this.

On Wednesday the regular special is homemade spaghetti with crab-meat, fish, local cockles and fresh New Zealand mussels.

The rest of the week there is just the regular menu, which hasn't changed for as long as I can remember (presumably because there's no need), and specials which come and go according to the whim of the kitchen.

One of these worth watching for is the vitello tonnato, Enzo Specialty, in which he takes great pride. He takes the eye of a silverside of veal, lean and tender, which he marinates with Riesling, onions, celery and cloves. The meat is poached in this brew and allowed to cool in its own broth. Thinly sliced, it is spread with a homemade mayonnaise blended with tuna and anchovies, and served with toast and capers.

This is a classic norther Italian dish and a great one. Its Simplicity of style belies the effort which goes into it.

The rest of that veal silverside goes into the beef and potato. Malaysian curry, which is Andrew's specialty. Most pub curries are limp, one-dimensional things lacking complexity of flavour and usually insipid enough to feed to your budgerigar.

This one makes no compromises at all, as my neighbours in the back stall of the Chelsea cinema an hour later probably discovered to their regret

It was very hot - the waitress, watchful and used to the reaction, brought a tall glass of water with alacrity. The spicy sauce was thick with flavors, the spices having been freshly roasted and ground in the kitchen. It came with a large helping of fluffy yellow rice and a small bowl of hot fresh tomato sambal, as if it needed more heat.

An enormous helping of lasagna napolitana (an alternative Bolognese sauce was available) was a collaborative effort with sheets of egg pasta made by Andrew, a fresh tomato and herb sauce made by Enzo, assembled by Sonja who layered it with bechamel sauce and cheese. It was excellent, melt-in-the-mouth pasta, served with a small but adequate mixed salad.

Other specialties include the soup, a vegetable broth filled with finely diced vegetables and such nourishing flavors you'd swear it was based on a substantial meat stock, which it isn't; and the Slovenian-style krajnske sausages of coarsely-ground pork served with homemade sauerkraut, boiled potato and red cabbage. That's the Yugoslav connection and it's the sort of thing any bullock driver would have been delighted to have in his tucker bag, had he heard of Yugoslavia.

The menu includes duck pate and pickled fillet of hake in olive oil with onion and herbs among the entrees; the mains include a couple more pasta dishes, schnitzel, Bolognese, fried calamari, roast pork and cod fillet sauteed with fresh tomato, onion and herbs.

Desserts include Sonia's "famous apple strudel" hot and spicy served with ice cream and a very good apricot cheesecake made by Andrew's wife, Anna.

This is not trendy food but its good, solid fare with an authentic Italian bias, soundly cooked and at the right price.

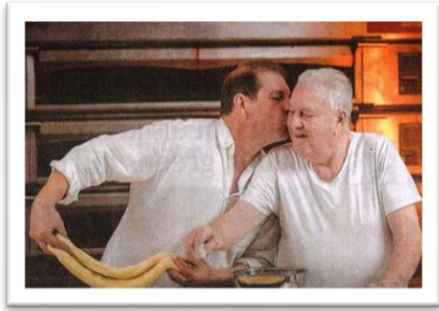
Two courses for each of us and an upmarket bottle of Ingoldsby's gutsy cabernet sauvignon at \$22 came in at \$46, which is good value in anyone's book.

The wine list has plenty of variety and is keenly priced; Geoff Merrill's Mt Hurtle grenache, for instance, comes in at \$12.70 and Tim Knappstein's Rhine Riesling is \$16.

The delicious Wilson chardonnay pinot champagne is available by the glass.

The main dining room is a noisy bustling sort of place in peak flow, with bare tables and polished jarrah floors. Big windows overlook a small park over the road and the rear garden with its large, enclosed fishpond and conservatory style dining area. On a hot night, this is the place to be; there's even a sign saying "children welcome".

Hard work, sure footed management, good value... there's not enough of it around but on Australia Day it was good to find a pocket of it alive and well in Maylands.



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

BY HANNOH DOWEN

Food and family are intertwined for restaurateur Andy Chappis.

The chef and owner of Italian restaurant Enzo's in McLaren Vale, near Adelaide, has been cooking up traditional pasta, breads and pizzas for more than 50 years.

Despite being "refined", dad Enzo Chappis, 87, who arrived in Australia from Italy - which was in pre-war Italy and now modern day Croatia - in 1951, is always on hand to help.

The Chappis family's inspiring journey from immigrant migrants to celebrated restaurateurs has found Andy and Enzo a place in the National Australia Day Council's art campaign to celebrate Australia Day on Sunday.

Food great grandfather Enzo worked in fruit orchards around Australia before moving to Adelaide to pursue his passion for food with Andy's Slovenian-born mother, Sonia, who passed away at 50, years-old in July. The pair opened several restaurants. "One of the reasons I left with my wife came to Adelaide was his love of food. It's why we (SA) there was no prospect of getting involved in the industry," he said.

"He said he started cooking for men in a housing house and then he got some jobs working in one of the best Italian pizza bars and restaurants before he started his own restaurant in 1966."

"He opened Enzo's Restaurant in 1970 and the premise at the time, Don Dunstan, he used to frequent the restaurant when he was doing, and he struggled to get people to eat outside and (the former premises) used to sit out there under a covered terrace."

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 @Widunga (40) 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 Calabrian in better conditions 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-Hungarian influence, a lot of our words and food is similar to them. We love horseradish, we ferment our own sauerkraut."

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TOMORROW IN THE AUSTRALIAN

AUSTRALIA DAY

Full coverage of who got going plus searchable lists online.

Profile

A place in the heart

A little piece of Italy fell to the ground on the top of Willunga Hill eight ears ago and, like a fertile seed, is now bearing fruit thanks to careful ending from the energetic members of the Clappis family.

Story Amanda

Ward Photography Randy Larcombe

Recipes Clappis family

In traditional Italian style, Andy Clappis, his wife Anna, Andy's parents, his children and siblings all play a role in the life of 'Our Place @ Willunga Hill', a function centre born of a desire to share their collective passion for exceptional food in an atmosphere of celebration.

To understand this business, it helps to know a little of the history of the Clappis clan.

Enzo's biggest mistake

Andy's father, Enzo, arrived in Adelaide via Melbourne from an area south of Trieste, in 1951. He worked as a grape picker in Renmark until securing a position at General Motors and lived in a boarding house. Rather than eat what was on offer, Enzo started cooking for himself and a few friends in the evenings. As the aromas of northern Italian food escaped from the kitchen, more and more displaced Italians began to ask Enzo to cook for them and a little business sprang up.

"I used to work all day at GM, come home and go straight into the kitchen," recalls Enzo.

Enzo's future wife Sonia, or Zofka, her Slovenian name, was also missing the flavours of home. The couple had sailed on the same boat from Italy and Sonia's brother was one of the fortunate few enjoying Enzo's evening meals and she wanted to eat too but being the only woman, wasn't keen to join the swarthy throng in the dining room. Enzo invited her to eat in peace in the kitchen and before long she was helping out, at first with the dishes, but soon showing her skills as a pasta maker and cook.

The little business was booming and the woman who owned the boarding house suggested Enzo try placing a few tables out on the front verandah to attract Australian diners.

"When they came in and asked for fish and chips for the kids, I made for them," remembers Enzo, recalling how wary Australians were of 'foreign' food in the 1950s. "When they asked for steak and egg, even though it wasn't on the menu, I made for them. Then I made my biggest mistake.

One day I cooked calamari - I lost them all," he laughs.

Enzo and Sonia went on to open several successful restaurants in Adelaide, starting with Buonasera in 1966 and fondly recall introducing Australian diners to delicacies such as seppie (cuttlefish) and grappa vecchia, the aged grape spirit referred to affectionately by some of Enzo's early customers as "highly sophisticated kerosene".

The yet to be famous Max Schubert was even his wine representative from Penfolds from 1966 to 1968, initiating a friendship that endured until the great winemaker's death.

A boy in the kitchen

The couple has now been married for 57 years and their pride in raising four children who have subsequently rewarded them with 12 grandchildren is obvious.

"They all grew up in the kitchen," beams Enzo. But it was Andrew, the youngest boy, who shadowed his parents in their



—//— The Maylands Hotel Welcomes..... —//—
The Australia Day Council

—//— Menu —//—

Zuppa di Pesce - Consommé of seafood, with flaky pieces of fish & croutons.

Vitello Tonnato - A classic northern Italian dish. Cooked veal embraced with tuna, capers & our own egg mayonnaise.

—//—

Pesce Pescatore - Fillet of hake lightly sautéed with a light, fresh tomato, sliced onion, whole olive & herb sauce.

Tortellini Mantovana - Hand made egg pasta parcels with a pumpkin & cheese filling & topped with a panna sauce.

Chicken Deboné - Baked skinless breast of chicken wrapped around a prepared stuffing of fresh breadcrumbs, ham, cheese & selected herbs & spices. Topped with a delicate cream, vegetable & cheese sauce.

Schnitzel Bolognese - A tender piece of schnitzel topped with a bolognese sauce.

—//—

Cheese Platter & Coffee

—//—

Wolf Blass Yellow Label Rhine Riesling
Wynns Coonawarra Estate Hermitage 1989

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Buon Appetito!



Starters :

- Vitello Tonnato *↪* classic northern italian cold dish. Cooked veal embraced with tuna, capers & our own egg mayonnaise. \$6.90
- Herb & Vegetable Soup *↪* \$4.70
- Pâté de canard au muscat *↪*
Duck liver pâté, made with a sincere Victorian muscat. \$6.50
- Tortellini Mantovana *↪* hand-made parcels of egg pasta, filled with nutmeg, pumpkin & cheese. Served with a panna (cream, butter & cheese) sauce. \$8.20

Mains :

- Chicken Deboné *↪* skinless breast of chicken, delicately stuffed, baked & topped with cream, cheese, vegetable based sauce. Served with seasonal vegetables. \$11.90
- Peppered Steak *↪* thick & tender Rump steak with a 'real' freshly made black peppered sauce. Served with your choice of seasonal vegetables or freshly tossed salad. \$16.20
- Fritto Misto *↪* a selection of fresh seafood, calamari, cod & prawns. Floured & crumbed, & deep-fried to perfection. Served with salad. \$14.50
- Pla Tod Kaeng *↪* baby whole red snapper with a HOT Thai red curry sauce, \$14.90 steamed rice & salad.

... MERRY CHRISTMAS & WELCOME
STIRLING MASONIC LODGE ...

MENU
...

Riso in Brodo

-beef broth with rice... or...

Herb & Vegetable Soup



Turkey Surprise

Breast of turkey with a surprise stuffing of apples, prunes, walnuts and brandy with cherry sauce... or...

Rolled Roast of Pork

Sliced tender roast of pork rolled with sage, rosemary and garlic, served with freshly made apple sauce... or...

Schnitzel Bolognese

Tender crumbed schnitzel, topped with lashings of bolognese sauce & a sprinkling of parmesan cheese... or...

Pesce Pescatore

Fillet of hake, lightly sauteed with tomato, onion, fresh herb & olives.



Christmas Delight

Boiled fruit pudding with brandy sauce & cream... or...

Sonia's Apple Strudel

Served warm with ice cream & cream.

Coffee

Suzi'93



MAYLANDS

Hotel

Lasagna

Home made egg pasta, bechamel, fresh tomato & herb sauce with a sprinkle of parmesan cheese. Topped with your choice of two sauces: a rich "BOLOGNESE" sauce or ideal for the vegetarian "NAPOLITANA" sauce. Served with a freshly tossed salad.

Penne Porcini

Macaroni pasta with a delicate "VEGETARIAN" cream sauce. Mushrooms, peas, capsicum and spring onions help to create this dish in our kitchen. Served with a freshly tossed salad.

Spaghetti Puttanesca

A medium-hot dish. Olives, capers, anchovies & chilli in a fresh tomato sauce, over spaghetti. Served with a freshly tossed salad.

Spaghetti

A choice of 'ONE' of three sauces. A rich "BOLOGNESE" sauce, or for the vegetarian "NAPOLITANA" or "PESTO GENOVESE". Served with a freshly tossed salad.

Schnitzel Bolognese

A tender piece of schnitzel topped with bolognese sauce. Served with chips, and freshly tossed salad.

Calamari Fritti

Floured squid rings, deep fried in vegetable oil. Served with chips, freshly tossed salad and our own tartare sauce.

Pesce Pescatore

A fillet of cod (hake), lightly sautéed with a light, fresh tomato, sliced onion, whole olive & herb sauce. Served with a freshly tossed salad.

Chicken Debonè

A baked skinless breast of chicken wrapped around a prepared stuffing of fresh breadcrumbs, ham, cheese and selected herbs & spices. Topped with a delicate cream, vegetable & cheese sauce. Served with vegetables.

Krajnske

Slovenian style pure pork sausages served with our own fermented sauerkraut with juniper berries and caraway seeds. Served with potato and red sweet cabbage. Choice of either Dijon mustard, Hot English mustard or horseradish cream.

Rolled Roast of Pork

Sliced tender roast of pork rolled with sage, rosemary and garlic, served with roast potato, vegetables and freshly made apple sauce.

Lamb & Potato Curry

Tender lamb with potato, embraced with a traditional Malaysian curry made of blended spices freshly roasted and ground in our kitchen, with an interesting addition of white poppyseeds. Served with steamed rice and HOT tomato sambal

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Happy Valentines Day

Welcome to the American Women's Association of S.A.

Menu

Tortellini Mantovana....

Fresh egg pasta parcels filled with pumpkin, nutmeg & cheese, finished with a true panna sauce..... or.....

Lasagna Napolitana....

Layers of fresh egg pasta, salsa napolitana & bechamel. All prepared in traditional fashion.

Served with Andrew's delicious Bread.



Chicken Debonè....

Skinless breast of chicken wrapped around a delicate stuffing, baked, finished with a cream, cheese vegetable glaze..... or.....

Pesce Pescatore....

A sauteed skinless fillet of hake, with a tomato, onion, fresh herb & olive salsa..... or.....

Rolled Roast of Pork....

Prepared with selected fresh herbs and garlic, served with freshly made apple sauce..... or.....

Braciola.....

Beef lined with spinach, egg, prosciutto, and cheese, attractively arranged on a lake of salsa napolitana.

Served with Vegetable Platters and Insalate.



Velvety Rich Chocolate Mousse

Pots of Espresso Coffee



Buon Appetito!





God Bless Nadia

Appetiser → Antipasto di Casa & homemade bread

Entrée → Pasta bowls to share

Main → please choose:-

Lasagna

Home made egg pasta, bechamel, fresh tomato & herb sauce with a sprinkle of parmesan cheese. Topped with your choice of two sauces: A rich "BOLOGNESE" sauce or ideal for the vegetarian "NAPOLITANA" sauce. Served with a freshly tossed salad.

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Sliced tender roast of pork rolled with sage, rosemary and garlic, served with roast potato, vegetables and freshly made apple sauce.

Lamb & Potato Curry

Tender lamb with potato, embraced with a traditional Malaysian curry made of blended spices freshly roasted and ground in our kitchen, with an interesting addition of white poppyseeds. Served with steamed rice and HOT tomato sambal

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
- EC – Enzo Clappis, interviewee

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

Digital Interview

Of

Gaudenzio (Enzo) Clappis



TRANSCRIPT

Interview Conducted by:

Giuseppe Geracitano

President

Italian Historical Society of South Australia Inc

Recorded

Monday 11th December 2023

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

00:00:02 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. Interviewer Giuseppe Geracitano, president of the society. Interviewee: Enzo Clappis recorded on Monday eleventh of December two thousand and twenty-three [2023] at Our Place @Willunga Hill. One thousand, nine hundred and eighty [1980] Brookman Road Willunga South Australia five thousand, one hundred and seventy-two [5172]

00:00:37 GG: Good morning Enzo.

00:00:39 EC: Good morning.

00:00:41 GG: For the record, can you give me your full name?

00:00:46 EC: *Gaudenzio Clappis*

00:00:48 GG: And when were you born?

00:00:52 EC: I was born in *Pola*, Italy, which is part of Croatia now (city renamed *Pula*), in 1933, the 1st of June.

00:01:05 GG: Can you tell me the name of your father?

00:01:10 EC: The name of my father was *Antonio Clappis*.

00:01:14 GG: And when was he born?

00:01:17 EC: My father was born in nineteenth thousand. Yeah, at the beginning of nineteenth thousand, I don't remember which.

00:01:31 GG: Exact date and where was he born?

00:01:35 EC: He was born in *Istria*.

00:01:38 GG: And can you tell me the name of your mother?

00:01:41 EC: My mother was *Anunciata Bertoto*, and she married *Clappis* and she was born in *Cherso*, an island in between Venice and my city, *Pola*.

00:01:56 GG: And do you remember the date of your mother's birth?

00:02:03 EC: Not really. She was the same as my father, nineteenth century. They would have been a hundred and twenty-four [124] now.

00:02:12 GG: And do you remember any of your life in *Pola*? Do you remember any of your life in *Pola*?

00:02:25 EC: Yes, I was practically eleven [11] years old when we run away from the communists of Yugoslavia, and I remember that *Pola* was destroyed by the bombardment of the war and my father lost his life on duty. He was a *carabinieri* [national gendarmerie of Italy who primarily carry out domestic and foreign policing duties and are a division of the military] in those day and he tried to get people into the bunker and people always very funny. And when finally, he got everyone to go into the *refugio* [shelter], he turned around and a little boy was running out and he run behind the little boy and he kicked him in the ass and the little boy start screaming and go inside the bunker. But in that moment a bomb exploded three metres from my father and he lost his life.

00:03:32 GG: And did you have any brothers or sisters? Did you have any brothers or sisters? Any brothers or sisters?

00:03:43 EC: Yeh I got, I'm in the middle, five older and six younger than me, twelve kids. Mum had twelve kids [mother conceived twenty-two times, but only twelve survived].

00:03:51 GG: Twelve.

00:03:52 EC: In those days Mussolini used to give them, they didn't pay tax if they had a lot of kids.

00:04:05 GG: That was a good reason. And how did you feel like about leaving *Pola* and running away? How did you feel about running away and leaving your childhood area?

00:04:20 EC: Well, in nineteen forty-seven [1947] when the communists took over my city, we didn't agree with the communists, so we ran to Italy. And that was very sad because we had to leave everything behind. We lost the house, we lost everything. My mother used to have a knitting factory and in, just before the war a hundred girls used to work for us, so we were very well off, but when the Communists took over, they took everything away from us, from well off we were automatically we were very, very poor.

00:05:00 GG: I can imagine. And so, you're refugees. You ran to Italy, what is now the borders of Italy. Where did you end up?

00:05:15 EC: Well, we finished up in *Trentino* just out of *Trento* and because my mother had so many kids, the premier of Italy, *De Gasperi* [Prime Minister of Italy 1945 to 1953], which was a very good friend of my father, he went to see my mother and he said *Nuzzi*, we gonna put all the little one in college, and I was among them. And the government paid for the college because we were orphans of the war, and that when I got in college, all my friend that used to go and play soccer, and I used to run in the kitchen because I wanted to learn to cook. Yeah, and the lady in the kitchen, *Maria*, she used to kick me out and I keep going back and one day she said Mr *Clappis*, they used to call us by the surname, *Clappis* I don't know, I mistreated you, I kick you out and you still come back. I said *Maria*, I want to learn. She hugged me and she teach me for four years. That if I were to go to the cookery school, I would not learn what I learned with *Maria*. She had ten people in the kitchen that used to work for her. She used to cook

for five hundred kids and fifty teachers, five hundred and fifty people every day. Think about what I learned there.

00:06:50 GG: I can imagine. And so, you went there the age of eleven. You got taught for four years, so you were fifteen when, so once you left school, what did you do?

00:07:04 EC: When I finished in college practically, we had a letter, myself, I was seventeen. I had a letter from the Australian government, because in those days people that used to run away from the communists were very special, and they were invited in America, Canada, South Africa, and Australia. And in those days, Bob Menzies [Robert Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia, 1939-1941 and 1949-1966] that used to be the premier, he sent a letter to myself and my youngest brother, eh my oldest brother *Nino*, if we want to migrate in Australia. And we took the opportunity because Italy was completely destroyed by the war. And I remember when I left the college, *Maria* hugged me and she said, *Enzo*, you are a qualified cook. Don't forget the bravery in the kitchen is to do a lot with nothing, not nothing with a lot. And that's what made me go into business and doing very well, for the teaching of *Maria*.

00:08:18 GG: OK, now where did you get the boat in order to come to Australia?

00:08:26 EC: I got. The boat went to Melbourne. From Melbourne we were sent to Bonegilla, which was camp for refugee, and from Bonegilla the Australian government sent us to different place of Australia and we had to sign a contract for two years that if the government would have sent us in the middle of the desert, we couldn't refuse.

00:08:53 GG: Tell me about Bonegilla. Tell me about Bonegilla.

00:08:58 EC: Bonegilla was, used to be an army type of thing during the war and was I think a hundred and ten different nationalities there. And when they found out that I did my apprenticeship in Italy as a cook, they put me in the kitchen and I start to cook in Bonegilla. And all the chefs in Bonegilla were Polish, and when they found there that I was Italian, oh, you got to cook for us Italian, but the only meat that the government used to give us was sheep, mutton, really, really mutton. And gee, I couldn't stand that strong

sharp flavour. and I remember that outside of Bonegilla on the paddock used to be hundreds and bloody hundreds of rabbits. I got a big stick and I used to run behind the rabbits and clob [slang for clobber] them and we used to eat rabbit nearly every day. Beautiful days.

00:10:13 GG: And so, how long were you in Bonegilla?

00:10:16 EC: In Bonegilla we were I think about three months and then we were sent into South Australia. The first job was in Remark picking grapes and fruits, and from, when we finished the season in Remark they sent us in Adelaide and the government put me in General Motors Holden, and in those days General Motors Holden used to be in Woodville. And I remember that on the big boarding house that I used to live, the lady was *Emma Floriani*. She was one of the Floriani family that they start terrazzo and concrete in, in South Australia. And when she found out that I was a cook, she asked me please cook for my single men so they don't leave, because she couldn't cook for thirty-six single men. So that was my second job, one meal in the night. And I used to collect all the extra money and send to my mother in Italy, that she needed very badly.

00:11:43 GG: So, you came with your brother and left all your sisters and brothers and mother in Italy. When did they come? Did they come out to Australia or did they stay?

00:11:54 EC: My mother? Yeh, eventually she come in nineteen fifty-four [1954] with all the family. Yeah, with the rest of the family, and in that time I was in Whyalla, because the government sent me, Whyalla, and I couldn't refuse, so I had to leave my job on the big boarding house and we went there, myself and my brother, we went to Whyalla, worked for BHP [Broken Hill Propriety Company Limited]. They used to build ships in those days. So, when I got my mother I got it in Whyalla.

00:12:33 GG: Now, before you tell me about Whyalla, let's go back on the ship. Did you meet anybody special on the ship? Did you meet anybody special on the ship?

00:12:43 EC: My wife.

00:12:45 GG: Yeah, they were about.

00:12:46 EC: I was seventeen. She was twenty and I thought she was sixteen, but when we found out that she had three years bigger than me, we didn't care and we lived together for seventy-one years. We had a beautiful family, four kids: My youngest son, Andy, that I'm helping here at Our Place is Sixty-four, my daughter Suzi, sixty-six, my daughter Vivian, sixty-nine and my oldest son seventy-one. And then I have twelve grandchildren. Ruben is the youngest one, he's thirty. My oldest son [grandson] Matthew is forty-nine. And then I have eighteen great grandchildren, the oldest one already sixteen. So, I'm a very proud, great grandfather.

00:13:44 GG: And where did your wife come from?

00:13:46 EC: My wife was Slovenian. She ran away from the communist Yugoslavia in thirty-nine [1939] [she was 12 years old] and they went to Italy and she was in *Mantova* [city in Lombardy] and she spoke Italian; she wrote Italian without going to school and she used to feel more Italian than Slovenian because she spent her youth in Italy and she used to love Italy. Really, really.

00:14:19 GG: Did she come out as a refugee too?

00:14:21 EC: Yes. I was very good friend with her brother on the boat and then he introduced me to his sister which I start to like it very much, she was a wonderful girl and eventually we got married in Whyalla.

00:14:39 GG: Before we get there, when she arrived in Australia, where was she sent?

00:14:46 EC: When we arrived in Australia she finished up in Kyabram in Victoria on a big fruit factory and her brother was sent to South Australia with me. He wasn't very happy, he said, I come with my sister, they separate me and he did everything in his power to get his sister to come to South Australia and that's when I reconnected with my wife.

00:15:21 GG: Now going back to your cooking at the boarding house, did you cook by yourself or did you have help? At the boarding house, did you cook by yourself or did you have helpers?

00:15:33 EC: Well, *Emma Floriani* used to help me. And then one of the men that used to be, living there, *Mario Bellati*, he was an officer of *La Decima MAS* [10th Assault Vehicle Flotilla, an Italian flotilla with marines and commando frogman unit of the Royal Italian Navy created during the Fascist regime] during the war and he said, *Enzo* I got my wife in Woodside [Migrant Accommodation Centre] and I got five kids and I need the extra money, you think I can help you in the kitchen? And I make little bit and I used to have *Mario Bellati*, they used to teach me. He was from Naples and he learned in the kitchen very, very quick. And then eventually when the government sent me Whyalla, well, I said *Mario*, unfortunately I'm leaving. I got to dismantle everything. Oh, please, he said, *Enzo*, don't, give it to me the first time, the first money that I make, I gonna pay you for all the equipment. And I'm still waiting for the money anyway. And then eventually, when all the single men go to house, girlfriend and the boarding house shut down, *Mario Bellati* with my equipment, start the first *pizzeria* [pizza bar] in Adelaide in, on the corner of Morphett St and Hindley St and it was called *Marina Pizza Bar*. That was the first *pizzeria* in Adelaide, no *Marcellina* or any, he was the first one with my equipment.

00:17:26 GG: Do you remember what year that was?

00:17:29 EC: That was, oh, crickey, I was in Whyalla, so would have been nineteen fifty [1950], about nineteen fifty-two [1952] (*Marina Pizza Bar* opened in 1964).

00:17:41 GG: Nineteen fifty-two [1952]. So that was the first *pizzeria* in Adelaide without a doubt?

00:17:46 EC: Yeah. He called it *Marina Pizza Bar* he named it after his little girl, *Marina*.

00:17:53 GG: Do you know how long that pizza bar went for?

00:17:57 EC: No, eventually *Mario* got sick or something, I don't know. Then they disappear. But uh, I was in Whyalla, so I don't know much about it.

00:18:08 GG: In Whyalla what did you do?

00:18:11 EC: I used to work as a plumber, assistant plumber on the boat that BHP used to make for themselves. Yeah.

00:18:24 GG: So, you were there for two years?

00:18:26 EC: I was there for, yeah, for two years,

00:18:30 GG: For two years. That's the duration of the contract?

00:18:34 EC: And because of my training in the kitchen Whyalla wasn't very good to start a restaurant or anything, So I come back in Adelaide, and even in Adelaide I wouldn't made a living by cooking, and every time that I used to apply in the kitchen, they used to ask me what sort of a kitchen, I used to say Italian. Only English. In those days they were very parochial. They wouldn't touch anything continental, so to boost myself I used to drive. In nineteen fifty-four [1954] I used to drive taxi in Adelaide and then eventually I went to work for a big company that used to buy scrap, W. Brown and Son, and I start to drive semi-trailer and I used to go up to Northern Territory and everywhere and when the owner found out that I was that good, they hired me to teach young driver how to drive a semi-trailer. So practically I did everything in this, in the book to make a living.

00:19:58 GG: Now in the time you came back to Adelaide nineteen fifty-four [1954], were there any Italian restaurants then?

00:20:08 EC: They used to come up, but they used to disappear straight away because people wouldn't go out to it.

00:20:14 GG: So, there wasn't a lot of clienteles?

00:20:17 EC: And then eventually I think was in nineteen fifty.....fifty-nine [1950.... 59] I found a little restaurant that used to make very well, his name was *Mario Fontana* and his restaurant used to be called *Chef Fontana* and when he

found out that I was a qualified cook he used to ask me to help him because he was always busy. He was, might be the only restaurant, Italian restaurant in Adelaide and eventually poor *Mario*, he passed away and he left the family with six kids. The oldest one was his daughter. She was seventeen [17] and I felt that sorry for the family because they had a mortgage on the House, they had a mortgage on the restaurant and I went to see a friend of mine, a lovely *Calabrese* [Calabrian], *Ilario Lamberto*, that used to have the travel agency and we were very good friends, and I said *Ilario* what a tragedy with *Mario Fontana*. I want to help the family; he said what can we do? I said I want to buy the restaurant but pay top money so that the family can pay all the mortgage because his wife wasn't very well. She was in a mental health, actually she killed *Mario Fontana*, not intentionally, but she was sick. And when *Ilario Nesci*, *Ilario Lamberto*, thought what I was going to do, he hugged me, he said *Enzo* you are wonderful. So, we both put money to buy the restaurant, he was my silent partner and when I took over the restaurant of *Mario Fontana*, I changed the name to *Buonasera*.

00:22:25 GG: OK, where was the restaurant?

00:22:28 EC: It's still going in Glen Osmond, road. [295 Glen Osmond Rd, Glenunga South Australia]

00:22:31 GG: And---?

00:22:32 EC: Still, it's run by *Ilario Lamberto's* cousin *Ilario Nesci*.

00:22:41 GG: Now why did you call it *Buonasera*? Why did you call it *Buonasera*?

00:22:46 EC: Because I wanted to give a good Italian name, and *Bonaser*a was like when people used to come, especially in those days, they used to go out late to restaurant in the nighttime, hardly in the daytime, and I used to say *Bonaser*a [good evening]. It's like greeting people not only by saying good evening, but *buonasera* in Italian.

00:23:18 GG: And what year was that?

00:23:20 EC: And that was in nineteen sixty-six [1966].

00:23:23 GG: And how did you change the menu? Was it different from *La Fontana*?

00:23:28 EC: Well, I had to change the menu a bit because *Mario* was a very good chef with game. He used to even go and shoot game and I wasn't very good with game, so I made the menu all from what I knew like *scallopini al vino*, *saltimbocca*, *risotto*. I was the first restaurant, not even *Mario* used to do *risotto* in a restaurant, that is difficult, and I used to make a lot of *gnocchi*. I still do it now, and it was an instant success, and eventually three of my good clients.

00:24:15 GG: Before we get to there, what sort of clientele did you have? What sort of clientele did you have? What sort of people came to the restaurant?

00:24:24 EC: Oh, mainly businesspeople, yeah, businesspeople used to go out a lot, because they used to put whatever they used to spend in a restaurant on tax.

00:24:38 GG: Were they Italians or were they?

00:24:42 EC: Oh, I had the Italian consul, *Giorgio Marcuzzi*, which was the general manager of *Alitalia Airline*, and then eventually Paul, *Paolo Nocella* took over, and I used to have all the businesspeople that used to have different businesses, Italian businesspeople. They all used to come to my place.

00:25:11 GG: And what about non-Italians? Were there a lot?

00:25:14 EC: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. A lot of businesspeople, in fact those three gentlemen that I used to talk about they were on the real estate. Their name was Bob May, Richard Cohen, and Tom Matters. There were three friends that used to have the biggest real estate business in Adelaide and when they bought the land in Burnside they wanted to start Burnside Village. They had in mind to have a beautiful modern village with a restaurant in the middle and they come to see me and they said, we know that you have a silent partner here, why don't you go on your own and take

over our restaurant? I wasn't very keen, but when I saw the project I fell in love. I went to see my silent partner, *Ilario Lamberto*, and I said, *Ilario*, I got this opportunity. I want you to buy me out, and I said you can put someone to run the place. Oh, he said, *Enzo* I'm going to miss you, but can you teach my cousin *Ilario Nesci* to run the place and *Ilario Nesci* is still there today after fifty more years.

00:26:54 GG: So, what, what year was that?

00:26:57 EC: That was in 1970 [left *Buonasera Restaurant* in 1969 and opened *Enzo's* at Burnside in 1970] I start my first *Enzo's Restaurant* in Burnside Village. And eventually Don Dunston [Premier of South Australia, 1967-68 and 1970-79] that used to be a very good client of mine, he said, you know *Enzo* the Victoria Kraitzen's art gallery in Kent Town is for sale and I want you to buy the place and convert it in a restaurant so I have you in my district.

00:27:27 GG: OK, before we get on to Kent Town, Burnside Village and Glenunga are fairly close together. How did it, how did your new restaurant affect *Buonasera*?

00:27:47 EC: It did. It did because, people didn't say when they used to go to the *Buonasera*, they didn't say we go to the *Buonasera*, we go to *Enzo's* and when I started *Enzo's* at Burnside Village automatically the *Buonasera* went down, *Ilario Nesci* eh *Ilario Lamberto* come to see me and he was devastated, he said we got to close down because all the clients come to you, and I said *Ilario*, I still have my heart at the *Buonasera*, let me do something and then we see how we go. I asked my daughter, Suzie, to write a big note and put on my restaurant in Burnside Village. We [are] closed on Sunday but please go to the *Buonasera* restaurant that is open and have my blessing. And people thought that I had both restaurants. So automatically the *Buonasera* start to lift up and *Lamberto* come back to me, he hugged me, kissed me, said not even my brother would have done what he did. So, both restaurants used to do very well because people thought that I was on both restaurants.

00:29:19 GG: And was the menu at *Buonasera* and the menu at the new restaurant the same?

00:29:25 EC: I changed the menu, so that I didn't conflict with them and eventually because I was that busy, I had a young family and it was very hard for me to run this big restaurant. So, I had to hire a chef and I hired a boy that used to go to school with my kids, *Jacques Bossy*. He was a French chef and when I hired him, I teach him all the Italian dishes, but he used to do a lot of French dishes also, so was a combined and that we used to do very, very well, yeah.

00:30:19 GG: And the people that used to come to your restaurant were they the same people that went.....?

00:30:24 EC: Yeah they used to come to me and go to the *Buonasera* because the menu was a bit different.

00:30:32 GG: Yeah, fair enough. And how long were you in Burnside?

00:30:39 EC: Uh, then I was four years in Burnside. Then I bought the property in Kent Town and I converted to a restaurant, and I had my second *Enzo's* restaurant, and I sold the lease to Sports Girl. They let me take everything from the restaurant, even the urinal I put in, in Kent Town, and was instant success, even in Kent Town. And eventually when the family grow up, they didn't want because they had kids and the restaurant was not very good for them to help me. So, I decided to sell the restaurant, and I sold the restaurant.

00:31:34 GG: Before we get to that, tell me the process of buying the new property and then converting it into a restaurant.

00:31:42 EC: Yeah, it wasn't very easy because it was very expensive to convert, but I had a friend that.

00:31:55 GG: Before you, before you, you say about converting it, how did you buy it?

00:32:02 EC: It's amazing. I went to Todo Bruce that had the auction of the premises, Victoria Kraitzen her husband was sick, he was very sick with cancer, and they come from Sydney and her family, all the kids were in Sydney, and he

wanted to go and die in Sydney and that's why Victoria Kraitzen decided to sell the Villa [Victoria House, an art gallery in Norwood], beautiful Villa, and I went to Theodore Bruce, that Don Dunston instruct me to go there, he said, make an offer so they don't go for auction. I spoke with Theodore Bruce and I made an offer, but he said no Victoria Kraitzen definitely want to go an auction to get the best of the money. So, at that stage my younger son, Andy, just come back from Switzerland. I sent him in Switzerland that I had an opportunity through a businessman and he come back with a de rang chef from the *Gstaad* [Gstaad Palace, a luxury 5-star hotel in Switzerland frequented by the rich and famous], and we went to the auction. And Andy was very disappointed that everyone used to bid and I didn't do any bidding and that, Andy said, 'dad when you're going to make a bid', I said it's only a waste of time, I said look in the corner, it's *Con Polites*, he used to buy everything in Adelaide *Con Polites*. He had properties all over Adelaide with his name. I said we can't compete *Con Polites* look, Andy was very disappointed, young boy eighteen, please dad make at least one offer. So, when they reach eighty-nine thousand [\$89,000], I put my hand and I said ninety thousand [\$90,000]. Everyone turned around and they said, oh *Enzo* start now you want this for a restaurant. And I felt a bit unease because people start to talk about me wanted for a restaurant, and *Con Polites* comes straight away to my corner, he said. '*Enzo*, do you want this for a restaurant?' I said '*Con*', I knew *Con* from Port Pirie, I said '*Con*, I can't beat you'. He said, 'do you want this for a restaurant?' I said I wish. He instructed his man not to make any more bidding, and the hammer went down at ninety thousand [\$90,000]. *Con Polites* come back, he said, 'now the reserve price is much higher than this, they're going to drag you in and they going to con you to put more money, tell them the hammer went down, if they're not happy, put it back on the market again'. And he instructed me so exactly like this, they dragged me in and they said, Mr *Clappis*, the reserve price is much higher than that, we got to come to an agreement. I said no, the hammer went down, ninety thousand [\$90,000], if you're not happy, I said, go back on the market. And Victoria Kraitzen went in the corner with Theodore Bruce, they talk about, Theodor Bruce came back, he was a good client of mine at the restaurant, he shakes hand, he said congratulations, they decide to give it to you, and I bought it for ninety thousand [\$90,000]., thanks to *Con Polites*.

00:36:29 GG: Where was the property?

00:36:31 EC: Is still there in Kent Town, it's called *Chloe*. Eventually I sold it to *Nick Papazahariakis*.

00:36:41 GG: That's on the corner of Fullerton Rd...?

00:36:44 EC: On the corner of College Rd and... hum College Rd and...oh.

00:36:57 GG: Is it Fullerton Road or The Parade?

00:36:59 EC: On the corner College Road and, or *Madonna*(dear). Uh, it's a big road anyway.

00:37:12 GG: I think it's Fullarton Road [33 College Rd Kent Town, South Australia].

00:37:14 EC: I'm getting old.

00:37:18 GG: OK, so it was a---

00:37:22 EC: A beautiful villa.

00:37:23 GG: It was a beautiful villa. You had to convert it into a restaurant. Tell me how you did it.

00:37:31 EC: Well, when I bought it, I rang up my account, *Paolo Aramataris*, and I said *Paolo*, I bought the Villa. He said you are mad you can't afford it, and I said *Paolo*, I did it. I rang up my bank manager, Ian Font, which poor bagger is in a nursing home now, I said, Ian, I bought the Villa and we're gonna find the money. You mad; you can't afford it. And I was up to here with debts [motioned over his head] from my first restaurant. So, eventually, we didn't know what to do, I thought that the deal going to go, because I can't find the money. And I remember that I used to have Ian Fitzner, he used to be the manager of the National Bank in Magill Road, and he used to love my cuisine and he always used to say to me, *Enzo* when we're gonna do business. And I thought, I go and see Ian Fitzner. So, I went up in Magill Road to the National Bank that he used to run, I told the girls that I want to see Ian Fitzner, and she said, you got an appointment. I said no, just tell him that *Enzo* from *Enzo's* restaurant is here and I want to talk to him. So, she went and when she come back she smiled and she said yes, he wants

to see you straight away. So, I went in and Ian said to me, *Enzo*, what a surprise, what can I do for you? I said, Ian you always told me that you want to do business with me. I told him straightforward what my bank manager said, what my account, and what I did with the property. He looked at me and he said, I like you, I like your cuisine, and I gonna help you, and we're gonna try to do through an insurance. He was very clever. And he said, if ever you are in trouble you come and see me, we work it out, wouldn't have been for Ian Fitzner I wouldn't have been able to buy that property. So, he helped me out.

00:40:16 GG: OK, so how did you convert it? Did you employ people? Did you?

00:40:22 EC: Wasn't easy to convert it because it was very, very expensive to do. But I had a friend, and he built my house through a company, *Giorgio Trotta* that used to be a builder and he was a good client of mine also, but he also built my house, and I went to see *Giorgio Trotta* and I said *Giorgio*, that's the problem. Do you think that you can help me? He said *Enzo* what we gonna do, I gonna get all my kids to help. We want, we're going to spend the minimum that we can and the family going to help. So, *Giorgio Trotta* practically converted the Villa with a minimum of cost and I will never forget that because in those days I had so many friends that helped me out and I'm very proud that I I've been able to do what I did.

00:41:33 GG: Very good. And when did you open the new *Enzo's*?

00:41:38 EC: I open the restaurant, I think was, I don't remember the day but was full, open house and we had people on the lawn, everywhere, was an instant success. They even, the police, had to be on the corner of the road for the traffic because so many people used to come. I remember that we went through about nearly two, two hundred and fifty bottle of very, very expensive champagne. Everything was free, but it was an instant success when we start the restaurant.

00:42:32 GG: And again, what are some of the important people that came to the restaurant?

00:42:38 EC: Well, the most important one was the Premier, and not only the Labor Premier, Don Dunston, but also the Liberal Premier, David Tokin. They

used to love to come and see me, and the Italian Consul, in fact the Italian Consul in Payneham Road on top of his desk he used to have a note, 'if you want to be treated like at home go to *Enzo's* restaurant'. So that was the best compliment that I could have from the Italian Consul.

00:43:26 GG: And again, what sort of food did you.....?

00:43:33 EC: I had one of my favourite dishes that people used to love was *Lobster Enzo*, my own recipe, and I used to make *Scallopine al Vino*, they used to *Scaloppine* and *Marsala* that people used to love in those days. Also, I was the first one to have *Risotto*, *Gnocchi* in those days, and also I used to have *Saltimbocca* and prawns, I used to do Garlic Prawns and I remember that people used to come, was a lady that used to make me laugh, she said I want garlic prawns without the garlic. But one of my good customers was Eileen Hardy that used to be the matriarch of Hardy Wines and I met Eileen and a family in Waikerie when I used to work in Waikerie and Eileen used to love my cuisine. When my wife was in hospital sick with hepatitis, she used to go and see my wife and always take a bottle of champagne and drink with my wife and the, and the nurses. Eileen Hardy, unbelievable. I'm a very, very blessed man for all the friends that I had and I always gain more and more friends.

00:45:25 GG: Now I also believe that you introduce the cooking of *calamari* (squid). Tell me about it.

00:45:32 EC: *Calamari*. It's something that I learned to cook from my grandfather. He was a good fisherman and also he was a good cook, and he teach me when we used to catch *calamari*, never ever cook *calamari* when they are fresh and you just caught them, put them in ice for a few days and then start to cook them. That was my grandfather's advice and even today people complimented me for the beautiful and tender *calamari*. Never ever cook them fresh. Always let them stay on ice or in the fridge for few days to freshen.... my grandfather used to say it's not marinated but to rest, to....to rest.

00:46:39 GG: To rest, and that was *calamari* usually cooked in Australia when you came?

00:46:46 EC: No, no, I remember, I start to teach them to eat *calamari* at the *Buonasera* and people thought that I was mad. And it's amazing that maybe six months ago someone, my, my granddaughter, Andy's daughter, she has a boat and they catch a lot of cuttlefish [cuttlefish is a cephalopod that is related to squid and octopus. The taste is more flavoured than squid but not as rich as octopus. It's a valued food in Japan, Korea, Italy, and Spain]. And I decided to instead of cooking *calamari*, to cook cuttlefish. And I remember that Andy said today my father cook cuttlefish instead of *calamari*. My, for a lot of you people probably the first time that you ever had cuttlefish. And when the cuttlefish come out and people try it, oh was a success. And I remember when I came out to sit on my armchair, a lady, there was in a little table, she grabbed my hand, she said, Mr *Enzo*, I never had cuttlefish, nice and tender and sweet, she said. Unbelievable. Thank you, I said, it's amazing, I said, seventy odd years ago I teach you people to eat *calamari* and seventy-three years after I still teach you to eat cuttlefish. It's amazing, never stop.

00:48:36 GG: Talking about cuttlefish---

00:48:41 EC: Cuttlefish is not for everyone, because a lot of people said to me, oh, we're going to buy cuttlefish. You got to know how to clean, and from the cuttlefish you don't throw away anything, even the skin that's dark, I put on the side and I make the black sauce with the ink and all the stuff from the cuttlefish that normally people throw away, I use on the black sauce. And I remember that my daughter, Suzie, when she went to Italy the first time they went in Genoa [it was in Venice] and she saw spaghetti with the black sauce of the cuttlefish. And she said, oh, my favourite when my father used to do, and when she went in she said, oh I want spaghetti with a black sauce because my father used to do always for us. And when she had, she said was alright, and she said to the waiter my father do better, amazing in Genoa [Venice].

00:50:02 GG: And what are some of the other exotic things that you introduced?

00:50:11 EC: One of my favourites was, I used to do a lot of offal, and that's when I attracted Don Dunston, because Don used to love offal. He used to call me the King of Offal. I introduce Don Dunston with pork liver, because here everyone used to eat the lamb liver but in Italy we don't use lamb liver because too strong in flavour, either pork or veal. And Don Dunston when he tried my tripe, that's where he never left me anymore, he said,

oh, tripe, when I see tripe, I always ask for tripe, and he asked for tripe, and I had tripe with *polenta*, and when the dish came out he called me back, he said I asked for tripe. I said that's what you got, he said no tomato, I said, I do my way, what I learnt in, from *Maria* when I used to cook, only with white wine, but the flavour, because the tomato can take away a lot of the flavour of the tripe. But if you cook the tripe the way I do, I was the only one in Adelaide, with just white wine it's a superb dish. That's when I start to be called the King of Offal. And I remember one day when we used to have the Maylands Hotel, Don Dunston rang me up, he said. *Enzo*, I got five, five politicians from England and six from Canberra, twelve of us. I told them about the King of Offal and we're going to be there next week on Saturday and we want the private room; I used to have a private room. I said, Don, I'm glad that you rang me because I found something that you never had before. Come on, *Enzo*, by now you should know that I have everything in my life, everything offal, I said, I doubt. You never mention that. So, the day came, and I cooked the brains, I cooked the tongue, I cook everything that they knew. And then I gave them my surprise, and I said, now you like offal, people come from England, can you tell me what you had? And they said everything but what it was. And Don Dunston said, come on, we give up. What the hell you gave us? I said, I told you never had that before. That's pig's testicle. Oh, everyone starts to clap because in Italy, testicle, bull testicle, pig testicle, rooster testicle, everything. it's a very, very special, in France too. So, I introduced something that no one ever would have had the guts to put it on the menu.

00:54:00 GG: And OK, now when you came out and you start cooking in the 1950s, how did you find the ingredients? Were that? How did, where did you get your ingredients from?

00:54:16 EC: When I get what?

00:54:16 GG: Your ingredients?

00:54:19 EC: Oh, wasn't that easy. Wasn't very easy. The meat that I used to buy I used to go in Flinders St to *Primo* and *Giacondo Caon's* father, he used to have a butcher shop, and I befriended him, and he used to give me all the cuts that I wanted. And as far as concerned, the other stuff wasn't very easy, but someone said to me, if you go to Virginia [market garden growing area dominated by Italians], you gonna find everything. And when eventually I

got someone to drive me to Virginia, I found Little Italy. Virginia was covered with *Calabresi* [Italian migrants from the region of Calabria]. I found olive oil, garlic, *pepperoncino* [hot chillies], everything that I needed, like in Italy, but you had to know where to go. So, I was very, very blessed that I could do my dishes the way I wanted because in the shop you wouldn't find anything.

00:55:31 GG: Now tell me about olive oil.

00:55:34 EC: Oh, the beginning of the olive oil was funny because when I come in Adelaide, my brother, *Nino*, he said *Enzo* if you cook for me, I do the washing. And I was very happy. So, I used to cook for me and my brother *Nino*, and my brother Nino used to love big salad. He always used to ask my mother to make big salad. He, he would have lived with salad and I remember that I went to the Central Market and I bought everything that I could put in the salad. Beautiful fresh stuff. And I put pepper, salt, vinegar, but I couldn't find olive oil and I said what can I do? And when I gave the big salad to my brother, he said beautiful salad but doesn't taste properly, where's the olive oil? I said, look, I can't find olive oil anywhere. And I said to some of the people that we used to live in the hostel, I said you people don't use olive oil. Yeah, I said where you buy olive oil. Oh, at the chemist. So, I said, at the chemist? Oh gee, and I said to the chemist, I went to the chemist, Burke's chemist in in Rundle Street [now Rundle Mall] and when the chemist saw me, he said, can I help you? I said they tell me that you sell olive oil, and he laughed. He went on the back; he came back with a little bottle. I don't remember how many mls [millilitres] but very little, and I look, I didn't have to try, by the look of the colour I knew that was top, and I'll never remember, bottled by Faulding [F. H. Faulding & Company, pharmaceutical company], Faulding closed a couple of years ago after 100 years. And I said the colour; I don't need to try. I said, do you have big bottle a flagon? Everything was in dozen those days, so I worked out if my brother wants a bloody salad every day, and I couldn't carry very much, so I said, can I have three dozen? He looked at me and he said, no way, you got to see your doctor before I give it to you. I said, why should I go and see the doctor? He said, you probably don't know, but this is laxative. I said, where I come from we use castor oil for laxative. He said here too, but a lot of people don't like the strong flavour of the castor oil, so they use olive oil. I said no, I'm Italian and we Italians use olive oil to dress the salad that Australians never put anything, not even vinegar. They used to have just the salad, like grass. He looked at me. He went behind the counter; I think was his wife, and that's the first time that I've been called 'bloody wog' [laughs]. And that was the first time that I was involved with

olive oil. But then in Virginia, I used to have the *Calabrese*, they used to give me flagons. Yeah.

00:59:40 GG: That's very good. Now you sold, you sold *Enzo's* in Kent Town, what year?

00:59:51 EC: I sold in nineteen eighty-two [1982].

00:59:56 GG: And what did you do then?

00:59:59 EC: Then, I went with my wife in Europe and when we come back I invested in, I met a chappie that used to have Ariete Australia, used to sell the kitchen equipment, and I went in partnership with him, was a very bad partnership because I lost a lot of money with him, he was a crook. And eventually, after we got out of the partnership from Ariete Australia, I wanted to go back into business, but not restaurant, I bought an hotel.

01:00:51 GG: Now when you sold *Enzo's*, who bought it?

01:00:56 EC: When I sold *Enzo's*, a very good client of mine that used to have a pub, Jim McCauley, he wanted to buy my business, not the premises, for his son. His son always used to complain, why you had to have an hotel, why not a restaurant? And the son was going to leave him and go in Sydney and to keep his son in Adelaide, he said, if I buy your business, I can put my son in and you can coach him a bit and I won't lose my son. And when he bought my business, and he used to have a pub in, in Norwood, and his son start to be involved with the restaurant, but he didn't know how hard was to run a restaurant. So eventually his son still goes to Sydney and poor Jim, he was left with the restaurant himself. And he wasn't a good restaurateur; He was a good publican. And I remember that he called me one day, he said, *Enzo*, he said, I got to get out, I'm not able to pay your rent and what can we do? I said that we can try to sell it. And eventually I got this Greek staff, he was a good chef, *Nick Papazahariakis*. He used to work for *Primo Caon*, and he come to see me, he said, I want to buy your restaurant. I said, you got to buy the business too. And he said yes, but I want to buy the premises and to help Jim Macaulay, I decide to sell the premises that I should have never done, and I save Jim Macaulay to lose a lot of money. So, *Nick Papazahariakis* bought the place. He changed from *Enzo's* restaurant to *Chloe*, which was the name of his little daughter. And

practically, he's still there. Yeah, they told me that is thinking of closing down because a restaurant of that type, like silver service, they're not, they're not any more profitable. [*Chloe Restaurant* closed 30th of June 2019]

01:03:55 GG: Right. Now you decide to buy a hotel. Now the hotel business and the restaurant business are very different.

01:04:03 EC: Oh, I always wanted a hotel and run it my way. When we decide to buy the Maylands Hotel, because me and Andy used to go to the Maylands Hotel a lot, we used to love that little place, and I remember when we made an offer, they agreed to sell it, and people thought that I was mad because all the pubs used to do very bad. That was before the poker machine came out, and in those days was very trendy with places like, not a restaurant but café. They, people used to go to those trendy cafés. And I still wanted to buy the restaurant, my family was behind me and all of a sudden, because we bought the pub for a good price, it was going down. And when we bought it we lifted it up. I changed the cuisine and all of a sudden we were the talking point of Adelaide. And all my publicans they used to come to my restaurant, they used to come and see me. What the hell you do that we don't, we all doing bad and everyone just talk about this Maylands Hotel? I said, first of all, I'm not publican; or we know that; I said when I come here I introduce restaurant dishes at pub prices and that's a plus. And they couldn't have done it. And so that was it. I changed from pub dishes to restaurant dishes, top dishes at very cheap prices and all my publican friends used to say yes, but look you, you don't make profit with the food. I said no, but you'd be surprised how much a bloody drink. So that was it. And we had that Maylands Hotel for nearly 14 years.

01:06:42 GG: What happened with the happy hour?

01:06:46 EC: Ah, we used to have happy hour and I wasn't very happy because we used to have these young kids, they used to come already drunk for a free drink. And I said to my son, Andy, I said, Andy, I'm not very happy with happy hours, we're going to scrap happy hours. And Andy then they said that you can't. This is something that been going on in England hundreds and hundreds [of] years, it, it's an institution, happy hours in hotels. I said, still, I don't want it, because we get those kids that come here for a free drink, they're already drunk and they abuse the girls, especially my daughters. I said, Andy, we're going to scrap happy hour. Dad, dad you're

going to go broke. I said no, I want on Wednesday and Friday, I said, instead of having happy hours, Wednesday and Friday Andy you are good with bread, because you used to make bread, you going to make big pizza. We going to have free pizza for everyone, and Andy said might be a good idea. So, we start with free pizza Wednesday and Friday and people used to come. We didn't know where to put them for free pizza, and some of my public friends used to say, *Enzo*, but you give away a lot of pizza and then people don't eat. I said, but you'd be surprised how much they drink, ha-ha.

01:08:36 GG: And that's where the money was.

01:08:37 EC: And when the poker machine came out, we didn't want to be involved with poker machine, so we decided to, as a family, to sell the hotel. And myself and Andy we bought 500 acres here at Willunga Hill, and we thought we're gonna retire on the land, and then Andy start a function place, as a joke, and we're still in the kitchen.

01:09:10 GG: At 90 years old, you still cooking?

01:09:13 EC: I've been in the kitchen now seventy-seven [77] years. I was thirteen [13] when I start to learn how to cook, amazing. I'm very proud of what I can do at ninety [90]. Very proud.

01:09:27 GG: Very good. Now you keep talking about Andy. He followed your footsteps.

1:09:35 EC: Yeah.

1:09:36 GG: How? How did you introduce him to? How did you introduce--?

01:09:39 EC: Well, when I started the *Buonasera* in nineteen sixty-six [1966], Andy was seven years old and he used to love the kitchen like I used to do and he used to cry that he wanted to come with me to my restaurant, but my wife wasn't very keen to let him come because we used to come home very late. And I remember that Andy was seven years old and he was nine years old when he starts to make the first coffee on the coffee machine.

And he was nine years old when he started to open his first bottle of wine in the dining room. And people used to clap. So, we've been together for many, many years. I know if anything happened to me, he is going to be destroyed. In fact, he said to me when my wife died, he said, I miss mom, but if anything happened to you I close down, I hope he doesn't because he made an institution. But I can understand that after so many years together he be destroyed completely without me.

01:11:02 GG: And he's a qualified chef?

01:11:04 EC: He's a qualified chef, even went to Switzerland in *Gstaad* and he come back with a Chef De Rang Diploma [A chef de rang is a professional waiter who manages a specific section or station within a restaurant, typically in a fine dining or upscale establishment]. I remember when I send him there he was eighteen, and in those days to go to Europe was very, very expensive. People were still travelling with boats and to go with the aeroplane a ticket to go to Europe and come back was two thousand dollars [\$2000], and in nineteen seventy-eight [1978] two thousand dollars [\$2000] was a lot of money, and I used to have a very good customer of mine that he even married a second cousin of mine, *Giorgio Marcuzzi*, and *Giorgio* was the manager of *Alitalia Airline*. And I said, *Giorgio* I got this opportunity to send Andy to Switzerland to a good business for a while, and I said that I can't afford the ticket, can you give me a very discounted ticket? And *Giorgio* said, *Enzo* I spend more time here than in the office or at home, don't tell Andy we're gonna do a contra deal. And that's the way that I could send to Switzerland. The first letter that Andy sent me to *Gstaad* was, dad I would never forget the sacrifice that you did to send me, here in *Gstaad*, he said, to me going be something that I gonna treasure for the rest of my life. Dad last night after I finish in the kitchen, they send me in the bar and I was serving drinks to Julie Andrews, Elizabeth Taylor, David Niven, all those famous stars from Hollywood, because they come here every year, and you don't know what this is going be for me to treasure. He said, as far concern learning, dad, I don't think I can learn much more than what you already taught me. Being on the top place of the world with food and acknowledging that he learned more from me than what he going to learn there, I had tear in my eyes. And then when he finished in *Gstaad* he went to *Padova*, to my sister, and my brother-in-law used to work in *Abano*, which *Abano* in Italy is like *Gstaad* in Switzerland. And he got him to eh to engage in *Abano* and he come back from Italy with another Chef De Rang Diploma. So, he's a very, very good, qualified chef.

01:14:14 GG: And how did he, how did he start the cooking bread? How did he start making bread?

01:14:20 EC: How we start?

01:14:22 GG: Making bread.

01:14:23 EC: Bread. Oh, that's funny. When we bought the Maylands Hotel, Andy had a job, at Tip Top, across the road. And I remember that he used to say to me, dad, I got to learn to make bread because what I see they put in this bread, I will never eat commercial bread anymore. So, when Andy went in, in Switzerland, he went also in Slovenia to see my wife's relation and my sister-in-law, *Ivanka*, used to bake bread in a wooden oven every week for the week, and he learned a lot from her. And when he starts to bake at the Maylands Hotel, he remembered what auntie *Ivanka* used to make and then what he learned in Italy and he put together and he start to make his own white bread. And he's a very, very, very qualified bread maker. In fact, many years ago we used to sell at the Willunga Market and his bread, and his wife and his daughters used to be with the big table they used to sell Andy's bread, my gnocchi, my sauces at the Willunga Market and Andy used to deliver bread every about an hour, hot bread that they used to sell and one day a gentleman that was buying Andy's bread, he said, you make the bread? And Andy said, yeah, you like it? Oh, this is the best bread I ever had in my life. And Andy said thank you. And the gentleman's wife was next to Andy, she said, young fella if my husband gives you a beautiful compliment like this you should be proud. And Andy said I am. Yeah but you don't know why, my husband used to have a bakery in Germany and here in Adelaide he teaches bakery at Regency College and if he give you a compliment like this is more than a compliment, think about it.

01:17:27 GG: Very good.

01:17:29 EC: yeah that, that's a fact.

01:17:31 GG: So, you had a very colourful life, you had a very, very varied life and what do, what do you feel about Australia?

01:17:42 EC: What?

01:17:44 GG: What do you feel about Australia?

01:17:46 EC: Ho, Australia is, I'm not saying it's my second home, I think it's my first home because I was seventeen [17] when I come in Australia and I've been here now seventy-four [74] years and I'm more Australian than Italian. But I'm glad that I'm part of Italy because of the food and the heritage that I have. But I'm very, very, very much Australian. And not only this, my grandchildren, my children, and my great grandchildren, they're all Australian.

01:18:29 GG: And what do you think about the cuisine in Australia now?

01:18:34 EC: Well, I think we are the most lucky people in the world, because especially inside Australia, we have such an international cuisine and everywhere you go you eat well. So, think how lucky we are, how blessed we are. When I come here was nothing, absolutely nothing.

01:18:58 GG: Yeah. So, we can travel the world without leaving the state?

01:19:03 EC: We are very, very lucky because the international cuisine we have here in South Australia, I didn't find in Europe anywhere.

01:19:15 GG: And how do you feel about Italy?

01:19:19 EC: Hey?

01:19:20 GG: How do you feel about Italy?

01:19:21 EC: I still, Italy is like my grandmother, not my mother, my grandmother. But Australia is my mother. Think about that.

01:19:32 GG: Yeah.

01:19:34 EC: Italy is my grandmother. I love her.

01:19:35 GG: Is there anything else you want to add?

01:19:39 EC: Not really. I'm, I'm very blessed with my family. I had a wonderful wife, a wonderful life and I'm glad that I can still enjoy my children, my grandchildren, and my great grandchildren.

01:19:57 GG: And are you thinking---

01:19:59 EC: And my friends. I got friends everywhere, never ever I lost a client, all my clients from three restaurants, from the hotel, they all become friends of mine.

01:20:14 GG: And do you see yourself as retiring? Do you see yourself as retiring?

01:20:21 EC: Retire, only when they're going to put me under, that going to be my retirement, like my wife, she retired when she went under.

01:20:32 GG: Well, thank you very much, *Enzo*. It's been a pleasure to meet you.

01:20:35 EC: Thank you very much. Sorry that I'm a bit deaf.

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From the project: “*A Trunk Full of Dreams, A Suitcase Full of Memories*”

Section: *A Tavola – Dining Out*

Interview conducted by Giuseppe Geracitano

Location: Our Place @ Willunga Hill, South Australia

Date: 11 December 2023

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