

CITY OF ADELAIDE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH

**PRIMO AND GIOCONDO CAON
LONG TERM RESIDENTS AND RESTAURATEURS**

CONDUCTED BY KAREN GEORGE

18 June 1996

Volume 1 of 2

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THE CITY OF ADELAIDE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

As part of it's concern to preserve evidence of Adelaide's past, in celebrating the Jubilee 150 in South Australia in 1986, the national Bicentennial in 1988, and its own 150th in 1990, the Adelaide City Council established an Oral History Project. The Project continues to provide a record of the past which complements the written records relating to the history of both the Council and the City generally.

Recognising the loss of many people who had personal experience of important events in Adelaide's past and the increasing use of oral history as a legitimate source of historical information, the Council sought in 1984 to establish an Oral History Project on a firm basis, and engaged an Oral Historian to carry out interviews with notable former Members and staff, and other citizens. This interview forms part of the Project.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Primo Caon was born on 25 August 1935 at Mrs. Lynch's Nursing Home in Adelaide. Giocondo was born three years later on 30 April 1938 in the family home in Fenn Place. Their father Giacinto had come to Australia as a young man, working in the mica mines near Alice Springs. In 1932 he returned to Italy, married and then came back to Adelaide with his wife, Guiseppina in 1934. After working in the quarries at Glen Osmond and then on the wharf at Port Adelaide Giacinto took over a butcher's store, "Fenn Meat Store" on the corner of Hindley Street and Fenn Place. He later moved his business to the corner of Grey and Waymouth Streets and then into Franklin Street. The family lived above the butcher shop in Waymouth Street, then in Brown Street and then moved to 237-239 Franklin Street, where Guiseppina ran a boarding house. The two boys attended the Dominican Convent and Christian Brothers College. Both helped in the butcher's shop before and after school. Primo became interested in butchering and trained as an apprentice at Maces Meat Store in Rundle Street. He also worked in his spare time as a dresser at the Theatre Royal. After finishing his schooling Giocondo travelled to Italy with his mother. It was there that he was inspired by the relaxed elegance of the Italian café and restaurant scene. After his return to Adelaide Giocondo found a potential site for "La Cantina" in Hindley Street and convinced Primo to join him in opening this new restaurant. The brothers ran this restaurant together from 1960 to 1969. This venture led to careers in the hospitality industry for both and involvements in wine and liquor sales and restaurants through to the present day.

In this interview Primo and Giocondo provide a vivid and colourful picture of life in the West End during and after the Second World War. The Italian community in the City comes alive through stories of their parents; their father's butcher shop and the boarding house run by their mother. They talk of their childhood years, schooling and of their movement into the hospitality industry. They then discuss in detail the opening of "La Cantina" and the ventures that followed on from its success.



Giocondo (left) and Primo Caon in 1940



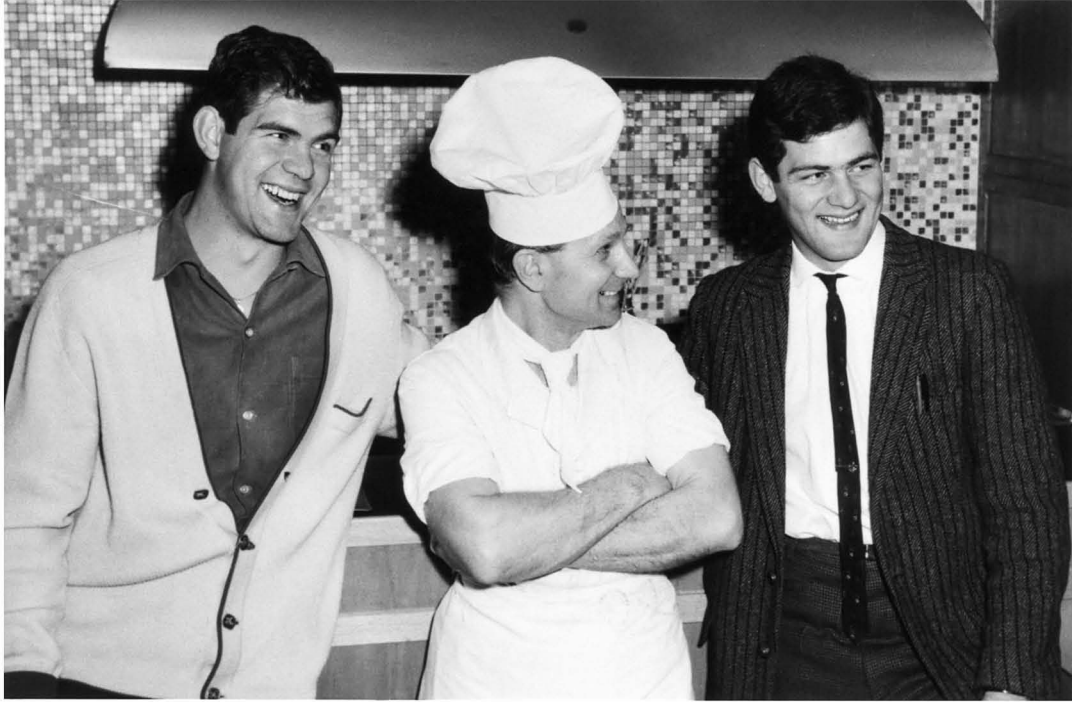
Guisseppina Caon and her children
(from left) Giocondo, Carla and Primo in 1950



Guisseppina, Carla, Giocondo and Carla's playmate standing outside the Fenn Meat Store in Franklin Street in the 1950s.



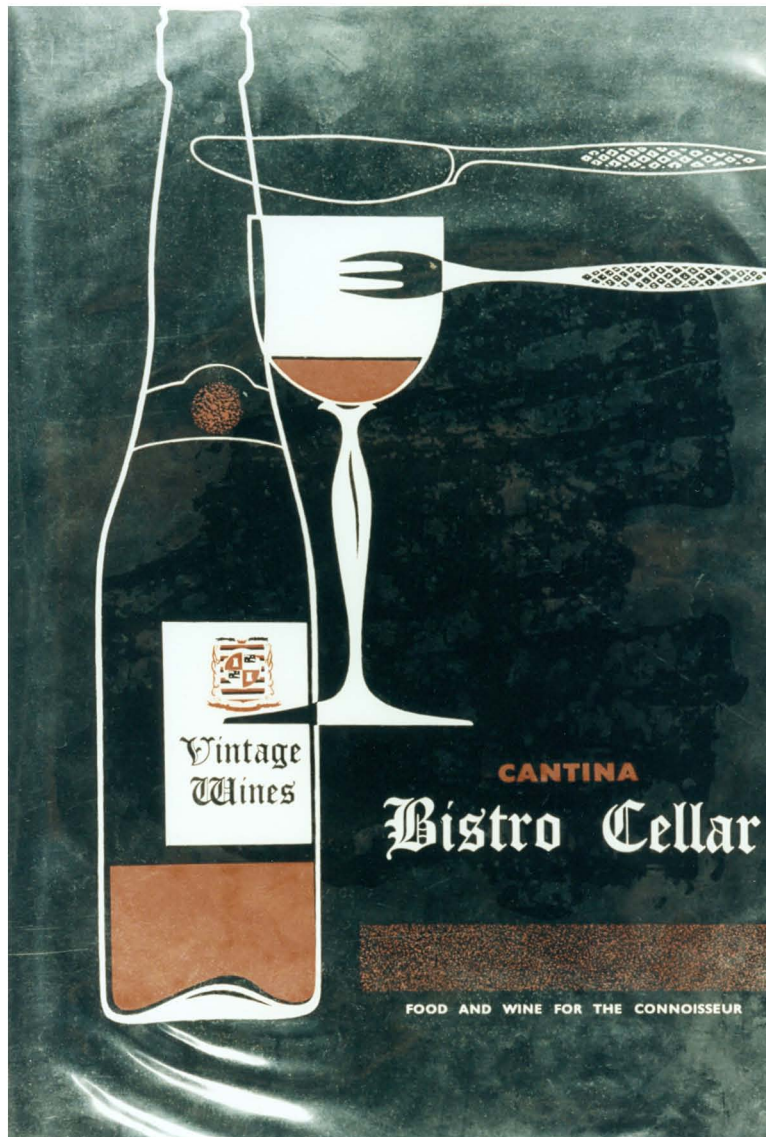
The Caon Premises 237-239 Franklin Street
Note the "Fenn Meat Store" on ground level.



Primo (left) and Giocondo (far right) with their mentor and chef Leo Froschl
in “La Cantina” in 1964



Interior of “La Cantina” restaurant showing mosaic..



Front Cover of "La Cantina" Menu

ANTI-PASTO . . . while you wait!
A light appetiser to satisfy the gourmet . . . 5/6

OYSTERS

Natural	9/6 doz. 5/6 1/2 doz.
Fried	11/6 doz. 7/6 1/2 doz.
Kilpatrick	11/6 doz. 7/6 1/2 doz.
Mornay	11/6 doz. 7/6 1/2 doz.
Angus on Hoveback	9/- 1/2 doz.

SOUPS

Asparagus	2/-
Chicken	2/-
Tomato	2/-

POULTRY

Roast Chicken	11/-
Chicken (Hawaiian)	11/6
Chicken Maryland	11/6
Fried Chicken with Mushrooms	12/6

RED MEATS

(Prime quality Beef-Steaks)

Filet Mignon	13/6
Thermidor Steak (Lobster)	12/6
Carpet Bag Steak (Oyster)	12/6
Steak Diane (Garlic)	12/6
Rump Steak	11/6
T-Bone Steak	10/6
Mixed Grill	10/6
Vienna Schnitzel	9/6

French Salad or Mushroom Sauce

SWEETS

Crepes Confiture	3/-
Banana Fritters	3/6
Apple Fritters	3/6
Ice Cream Fritters	3/6
(with cream or ice cream)	4/6
Strawberries	3/6
(cream or ice cream)	3/6
Long John	3/6
Selection of Continental Cakes	3/6

CHEESES

A tasty selection of popular imported cheeses at various prices.

APPETISERS

Seafood Cocktail	6/-
Lobster Cocktail	5/6
Shrimp Cocktail	5/6
Smoked Salmon	5/6
iced Asparagus	4/6
(with Vinegar Sauce)	

ENTREES

Spaghetti	3/6
Bolognese (Meat)	5/6
Marinara (Seafood)	5/6
Bianco (Butter and Cheese)	3/6
Macaroni (Tomato)	3/6
Mushroom	4/6
Fish	4/6
Whiting, fried and gilled	4/6
(Whiting, as a dinner)	8/6
Omelette	4/-
Plain	4/6
Ham	4/6
Cheese	4/6
(Above as a dinner)	7/6
Spiced Chicken Croquettes	4/6
Di Follale	

COLD SALADS

Ham	7/6
Chicken	8/6
Chester	8/6
Hawaiian	10/6

BEVERAGES

Cappuccino	2/-
Cinnamon Cino	2/-
Black Coffee	7/6
Black Coffee (milk)	7/6
Mocha Chocolate	2/6
Hot Chocolate	2/6
Vienna Coffee (cream)	2/6
Turkish Coffee	2/-

RED and WHITE

WHITE WINES

REISING & HOCK

Chipp, very dry white wine ideally suited to shellfish, fish and chicken.

Penfold's Minchibury (Bin.)	Bot. 12/- 1/2 Bot. 7/-
Penfold's Rhine Riesling	12/6 "
Hardy's Old Castle	12/- "
B & S Queller Riesling	11/- "
B & S Queller Hock	8/3 "
B & S Queller Moselle	5/- "

SAUTERNE

Sweet, full flavoured white wine perfect with white meats, salads or fruit.

Chateau Reynella	Bot. 11/- 1/2 Bot. 7/6
Cantina Hunter Valley	10/- 1/2 Bot. 6/6
B & S Queller	

RED WINES

CLARET

An elegant, dry red wine for full flavoured red meat dishes.

Penfold's Dalwood Heritage	Bot. 13/6 1/2 Bot. 7/6
Special Penfold's Private Bin	11/6 "
Reynella Premier Cru	12/- "
Reynella Vintage Reserve Wines	12/- "
Reynella Estate	12/- "
Woodley's Vintage Reserves	12/- "
Seppelt's Moyston	9/- "
Queller San Carlo	12/- "
Seaview Cabernet Shiraz	12/6 "
Reynella Hunter Valley	12/6 "
Hardy's Tinnara Cabernet	11/- "
Cantina Hunter Valley Claret	

BURGUNDY

This is a rich, fuller flavoured dry red wine for red meat dishes.

Penfold's White Burgundy (Bin 390)	Bot. 18/-
Hardy's Tinnara St. Thomas	11/9 "
Reynella Premier Cru	11/- 1/2 Bot. 6/3
Reynella Vintage Reserves	9/- "
B & S Queller Burgundy	5/3 "

SPARKLING WINES

Effervescent, light white and red table wines perfect with most red and white meats. An excellent choice for festive occasions or special occasions.

Hardy's Tinnara Champagne	Bot. 34/6
Minchibury White Seal Champagne	29/9 1/2 Bot. 17/9
Chateau Reynella Champagne	29/9 "
Stock Asti Spumante (Dry)	25/6 "
Stock Asti Spumante (Sweet)	25/6 "
Minchibury Sparkling Moselle	27/6 "
Minchibury Sparkling Moselle	27/6 "
Minchibury Sparkling Burgundy	26/9 "
Orlando Barossa Pearl	12/- "
Orlando Barossa Rose	12/- "
Orlando Sparkling Starwine	13/3 "
Leo Buring Sparkling Rhinegold	12/6 "

RED and WHITE MINI. BOTTLES

An excellent choice when dining alone. Try a Penfold's Mini-bottle of wine . . . two glasses in each bottle. Choose from . . .

Still Moselle, Rhine Riesling	2/6 ea.
or Dalwood Heritage Claret	

**FIRST INTERVIEW WITH PRIMO AND GIOCONDO CAON RECORDED BY
KAREN GEORGE ON 18 JUNE 1996 IN THE CHESSER CELLARS**

TAPE 1 SIDE A

O.H.: First of all I would like to thank you both very much for taking part in the oral history project and agreeing to be interviewed. So we will start with each of your full names. We will start with you Primo, if you could tell me your full name.

P.C.: Yes, it is Primo Fortunato Caon.

O.H.: And your date of birth?

P.C.: 25 August 1935

O.H.: And Giocondo.

G.C.: Giocondo. My date of birth, 30 April 1938.

P.C.: But he has a middle name called Giliante, which he never uses.

G.C.: Giocondo Giliante Caon.

O.H.: You might need to spell those names.

P.C.: It was supposed to be - that name was given to him because it was one of the great Roman warriors.

G.C.: It was a Centurion, Primo. A Centurion.

P.C.: Sorry.

O.H.: If you would like to tell me just a little bit about your parents, how they came to come to Adelaide.

P.C.: I think I will hand over to my brother because I think he has far more clarity of mind about that.

G.C.: My father was born in a little town called Ramon de Loria in the province of Treviso, not far from Venice. He did his National Service and is one of 13 children. After he did his National Service he realised that living in Italy in those years was a little bit difficult and to help the family, to help out everybody, he decided to emigrate on his own. So he came out there at the age of 22. He arrived at Port Pirie and worked around here, worked at Whyalla, Iron Knob, Port Augusta and at one stage with some friends and an old tracker, an Indian fellow, he went up past Alice Springs to a mica mine. He discovered mica ---

P.C.: If I could just interrupt for a moment. I am interested in knowing at some stage or other how many Italians were in Adelaide at that particular time. I heard three or four of them. So I'm interested in sort of just having that information about that if that is possible.

O.H.: Yes, I can find that out. Yes. There has been a new book written actually, just very recently, about Italians coming to South Australia.

P.C.: Oh, right. Great. Sorry.

G.C.: Anyway, after a few years in Alice Springs and so on - and there's a story behind the mica and all the rest of it, but he went back to Italy. Went back to Italy in 1934, met my mother and there was a lightning romance. They were introduced by my father's cousin whose name was Giocondo. In actual fact I was named after him and within a two month period my parents met, married and very quickly came back to Australia.

O.H.: Had he been to Adelaide in that time that he was in Australia?

G.C.: Oh, yes.

P.C.: In fact, I think he worked...in the quarries up here at Glen Osmond.

G.C.: The Glen Osmond quarries. In that period of time while he was here on his own he lived in Waymouth Street. There were three or four of them, all young Italian men, and...on Saturdays, Sundays, meet in backyards, make their spaghetti or try to make their spaghetti. Spaghetti wasn't available in those days but someone knew how to do things so they tried. I heard various stories of how these young Italian men tried to survive or tried to remember their home country by eating and cooking their native food. In any case, when he arrived back again with his wife...on the ship [Esquilono]...at Port Pirie and came to live in Adelaide in the West End.

O.H.: Where did they live first?

G.C.: West Terrace. There was a group of houses between Waymouth Street and Currie Street, two storey houses, and they had one of those.

P.C.: It's behind the block of shops which was Focus Video, in the corner of that whole area, a small block of shops.

G.C.: Where Focus Video is now, that was all two storey terrace houses and that's where they lived. One of his first jobs, my father then, was helping out as a wharfie. On his pushbike he would pedal down to Port Adelaide every morning to work. [Then] at the quarries and, in fact, they were living there when Primo was born.

O.H.: I think you mentioned he was involved in a strike breaking incident.

G.C.: In the Port, yes.

O.H.: Tell me a little bit about that.

G.C.: Yes. He and another gentleman. This particular morning...they went around, they pedalled around the strike area and went to work. That evening the Australian guys who were on strike saw them, they were very frightened to leave and so what they did, they left their bikes and actually waded out into the marshes and stayed there all night because they were afraid to come back. Very early the next morning they waded across, they didn't know where they were, they were terrified...They couldn't speak English very much.

P.C.: I mean the word "dago" was very strong at the time so they had that problem which faced them of course. A bit like what's happening to the Asian people at the moment.

O.H.: Did he talk to you much as boys about his first experiences in Adelaide.

P.C.: He didn't like doing that. He didn't like it at all. I mean, I don't know if he did to you.

G.C.: No, no.

P.C.: I mean, the only story that he ever told me, I think it's what's called male bravado, was when he was telling me when he - my brother's heard this story a million times - when he walked with a black tracker from Adelaide to Alice Springs to get the mica, to go and mine the mica. Because I asked him about a bruise in his arm, how he got it, and he said that they were having a camp fire this particular night and boiled the billy, the tea, which I found interesting for an Italian to be boiling tea with an Aboriginal black tracker. The fire was going and all of a sudden out of the woodwork came this great dingo with a huge mouth. So what he did, he said he put his fist right down the dingo's mouth and grabbed hold of its tail and turned it inside out. That's the sort of story, Australian stories, that you hear even now about it. The true story about it was that the markings on his arm where he rescued a Bulgarian at Port Adelaide in the chemical works there, out of one of the vats and he burnt his arm by one of the acids and that was told to me by the Bulgarian who used to come and visit him every year to thank him for saving his life. So it was a bit of a heroic story for that one. And that's all he ever talked about. He wouldn't say anything else at all of his experiences. Not to me or I don't think even to my brother.

G.C.: No, he never told me that. Getting back to the Port Adelaide strike, I think the guy he was with was a man called Ernesto Castellano, Ernest Castellan, and he's the man who was with my father at Port Adelaide. It was he who told me the story about the strike. My father never told me about anything. He was rather a shy, reserved man. He enjoyed male company but in relation to us children I always felt he had a bit of that Victorian attitude towards children and family. He was certainly the patriarch, always the patriarch. Always a little bit aside. I never ever felt a closeness with my father. You always acknowledged and you knew he was there and so on but he never showed any emotion as such. Do you agree with that, Primo?

P.C.: Oh, yes. He'd say, "I'll give you a smack" and he'd turn around and say "don't cry, stupid". You know, men don't cry. It's that sort of old traditional thing amongst men in that era, of course.

O.H.: What about your mother? What was she like?

P.C.: She was a bit of a dynamo in lots of ways and there are many stories we could sort of go on about her but he became a butcher and I'm not sure of the story how he became a butcher. You might be able to relate to that because he had the butcher's shop which was in the corner of Waymouth Street and Grey Street.

G.C.: No, the first one was Fenn Place.

P.C.: Oh, yes, Fenn Place, that's right and that's where he [Giocondo] was born.

G.C.: Fenn Place and Hindley Street.

P.C.: He was born in Fenn Place in Hindley Street which is opposite the West End Brewery and I think you've got photographs - we've got photographs of that I think. You know that story.

G.C.: Yes. My mother is a romantic...When they were living in West Terrace, Primo was born at Mrs Lynch's Nursing Home.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: The doctor was Dr Roland. Dr Roland had his rooms at the bottom of Bakewell Bridge at Thebarton. But when Primo was born my mother couldn't speak English very well, didn't like Mrs Lynch's Nursing Home because the nurses had a particular style about them and her being brought up and being born at a place called Resana, a little town...about 20 or 30 kilometres from where my father was born. She was born of peasant stock, the eldest sister of six sisters and three brothers, four brothers, sorry.

P.C.: I have to relate something here because she - pardon me for butting in.

O.H.: No, do that.

P.C.: Because she used to say, "Your father, they come from a peasant family". She said, "We are true farmers, we really understand how to pick cherries and how to grow grapes", and all this sort of thing. There was always that sort of put down from the female side. So it's still alive and well. Sorry, go on.

G.C.: My mother really was one of the early feminists. Would you say that?

P.C.: Absolutely. No question.

G.C.: So she didn't like Mrs Lynch's Nursing Home. She didn't like the way she had to do certain things. The window, the draught through the window, she had to open the windows. Other women in the same room wanted the windows down. So she couldn't communicate and so, therefore, when I was about to be born she insisted on staying home. In the corner of Fenn Place and Hindley Street, downstairs there was the butcher's shop. My father had a guy called Jack Broadstock who was a very famous ---

P.C.: West Adelaide footballer.

G.C.: ---raconteur, footballer and you had that real fierce competition of West End and North Adelaide and Norwood. He was a real personality.

O.H.: What do you remember about him?

P.C.: Oh, the stories - I mean, there are a lot of stories about Jack Broadstock. All I know is that by reputation - I may have met him just half a dozen times, that's about all, but I can't remember him very much apart from the fact that he was part of the West End and a strong supporter of the - no, he used to be a strong player of West Adelaide Football Club. But there was an association with he and the Fimmerys and the Fimmery's is another family which I think you need to sort of check that out. There's some fantastic stories about them and they're still alive as well, a lot of the grandchildren. But I don't know a lot about Jack Broadstock, only about what I've just mentioned. Fimmeri

O.H.: Do you remember him from when you were boys growing up.

G.C.: I don't. I don't at all.

P.C.: No, not really, but there used to be some betting going on around the place at that particular time. What do you call it, when you ---

G.C.: SP bookies.

P.C.: SP booking. That's what they were, and there's a possibility he could've been involved with that.

O.H.: So what are your - your memories begin in Fenn Place, do they?

P.C.: Mine don't. Obviously my brother does remember.

G.C.: From Fenn - from Hindley Street basically. We then moved to the corner of Grey Street and Waymouth Street. My father rented a property there. Again, we lived upstairs, the butcher shop was downstairs. On the - what would that be, the eastern corner - was the Nader family.

P.C.: One of the first Lebanese families in Adelaide.

G.C.: The first Lebanese families here and ---

P.C.: And they're still living there.

O.H.: All right.

G.C.: On the other corner was a woman called Imelda. Imelda - I can't think of her surname now. She was on the southern corner of that intersection. She was an Italian married

to an Australian fellow and they had a deli, grocery store sort of business. I was very small. We had a little dog and I remember that's when my father brought over his younger brother, Angelo, and a cousin called Demetrio, Demetrio Caon. So my father had two of his family basically over here and my mother and we lived upstairs. I have a vague recollection of living there.

O.H.: What about you, Primo? Do you remember - where do your memories begin? Do you remember anything about the house on West Terrace?

P.C.: Well, about here. The house in West Terrace I don't remember very much but it's about the beginning here which I can remember things quite vividly. There was a park behind the house which is now the James Richardson building and of course we both went to school at Dominican Convent which was just down the road. In fact, there's not much of that West End that hasn't changed when you look at it now. But the area I remember so much because there were a lot of Italians from the north as well. The Lebanese were there.

G.C.: Waymouth Street, you had quite a few families now. At that period of time, next to the Naders there was - I can't think of ---

P.C.: Cescato.

G.C.: The Cescatos, then there was the Stoccos.

P.C.: They had a boarding house and that was the thing I think ---

G.C.: They didn't have the boarding house then.

P.C.: No.

G.C.: They were just starting - the families came. Just the husband and wife but the boarding house situation started much later.

O.H.: Tell me a bit about what your house was like.

P.C.: I think as my brother described.

G.C.: Which one?

P.C.: The one in Waymouth Street.

O.H.: The Fenn Place you don't remember.

G.C.: No, I don't remember Fenn Place at all. I do remember a little bit of the Waymouth Street and I must have been very tiny. I must have been three years of age but I do remember the cobblestones at the back, the backyard. It was just like washed river, washed river stones at the backyard. I remember that my father had a wood fire with a copper that he used to make the dripping in...I remember the butcher's shop with all the sawdust in the corner.

P.C.: That's correct, and the old wood chopping block as well.

G.C.: A big old wood chopping block and I remember the day that we left. On leaving there we went to a little place in Brown Street which is now Morphet Street, between Gouger and Grote, number 27 and 29. Two little cottages attached together. I remember the day we left there because to me it was wonderful because we had a backyard. No cobbled street, no washed stones and flowers and so on.

P.C.: They planted a grape vine tree, the parsnips, they had potatoes and it was something that the Italians liked to have, their own little backyard of vegetables and things like that which pleased my mother no end at that particular stage. I think there were some very good moments there and it was there I remember when my father bought his first buckboard.

G.C.: No, no. The first car he bought we were living in Franklin Street and he bought a Standard Vanguard.

P.C.: Oh, no, no, no. What you're saying there but there was a ---

G.C.: He never used to drive. Dad learnt to drive when we were living in Franklin Street.

P.C.: The reason why I remember it is that I remember jumping on the back of this car - well, car, this buckboard which was an open ended thing and I thought that that was the first car that he owned and he thought he was, you know, the greatest Italian of all time. I mean, the interesting thing about that is that he was responsible for bringing out a lot of Italians here. What 100, 150?

G.C.: But that started when we were living in Franklin Street. That started much later.

P.C.: That's true.

G.C.: The early fifties, that started.

P.C.: That's true but I think - thinking back to the buckboard, I thought that was his first car but yes, he did have a Vanguard.

G.C.: Mm. That was the first car that he bought. Do you remember, Primo, he had a pushbike with a basket in front of it?

P.C.: Oh, yes, that's the butcher's shop thing.

G.C.: A butcher's bike and I remember being so small I used to sit in the butcher's bike and you couldn't see me. He used to put an apron over it. Now, I don't know how old, I would've been three, four. I remember that and he would deliver meat. I remember him delivering meat to Hindley Street. We were then living in Waymouth Street and at that time

the war was on and he was obliged, because there were a lot of interns then, a lot of the Italians were interned, and he, because he was a butcher, he used to go and work in the coldstores in Light Square, remember?

P.C.: Yes, that's true.

G.C.: He would work there for the Government or he had some sort of contract. I'm not sure which but he used to work for the Government in those days.

P.C.: Well, he used to be - there was contract work going on where what they called a boner and you were given so many sheep to strip by taking the meat off the bone and he then had to deliver it to another area. So the basket - I think he delivered it by the bike or some sort of arrangement and these bikes were just an ordinary bike with just a big basket on the front in which can hold maybe 50 or 70 pound of meat or whatever it might be. That was his weapon for delivery. But how long that contractual work lasted I really don't know but I remember all these sheep coming in off the back of the abattoirs trucks, coming into the shop and oh, 100 or 150 sheep were there and he'd be working day and night stripping all this meat down. This was for the Army of course. So how long that lasted I don't know.

O.H.: How much room did he have to store it, all that?

P.C.: Well, it was the butcher's shop. It was one of those small-type shops, probably about two thirds of the size of this room. Oh, it might be a bit bigger than that but of course every area - it was all rail, a metal rail and every area just had a - they just had hooks.

G.C.: 50 square metres, 60 square metres. It was the shop itself. You had a little room at the back. So the shop itself was 50 or 60 square metres, that's about all. Very small.

O.H.: Can you put yourself back in there mentally and just describe what it was like?

P.C.: Oh, I'm doing that now. I mean, I think I was eight at the time and to see all these sheep come down was quite an experience, just to see all that and of course he'd turn around and say, "See what I'm doing for you". That sort of thing. We were involved in bagging the meat up and putting our five cents worth into it.

G.C.: This is where he developed his name. His name was Giacinto, Giacinto Caon, but they used to call him "Tough Steak".

P.C.: Jack.

G.C.: His name was Jack and they used to call him Tough Steak, and my mother her name was Gisueppina, but she got a name called Bina.

O.H.: Why was that?

G.C.: Well, from when we moved from Waymouth Street to Franklin Street it was during the war and there was some sort of Government situation where someone who is Italian or a migrant could not purchase property and he was assisted by a lawyer, and I don't

know how it was done, I don't have it clear in my mind...however when he purchased the property, I think this lawyer held it in trust and that's the time when we moved to Brown Street when I went to the Dominican Convent so it would've been kindergarten and grade one because I had to go to Christian Brothers College in grade three...that would've been in the mid forties now. So it was during the war and just after the war. I have wonderful memories of Franklin Street which is the next street over so we were still tied in with everyone else but we lived in Brown Street. We lived in Brown Street for about three or four years.

O.H.: That was with the butcher's shop or was that somewhere separate at that time?

G.C.: We left the butcher's shop in Waymouth Street. My father ran the butcher's shop in Franklin Street and we lived in Brown Street, alright? I think that went on for about two years. Behind the butcher's shop there was a little two storey building where downstairs they used to make Hardings Crumpets there, and I think the whole house, the Harding people used to live in the house. That was a butcher shop and my father just purchased it, that business, but the Hardings used to live there, run the crumpets at the back and upstairs in the loft was where Trennery, a guy called Trennery, was living. He was an artist. I remember as a young boy going up to that loft with my Uncle Angelo and my father and they saw all these paintings and they said, "Look, this is dreadful, look at these things, children are doing this, children are painting all this stuff." And they dumped it all. Trennery, of course now is a recognised South Australian artist.

P.C.: And they named the street Trennery Court.

G.C.: No, the property that we have in Franklin Street was on the corner of Trennery Court and Franklin Street and on the other side you have the Flagstaff Hotel, Trennery Court and then the butcher shop. Next to our butcher shop there were four little town maisonettes. They were all leased but I remember ---

P.C.: To the Aborigines.

G.C.: No, the Aborigines - down the end of Trennery Court - the beauty of when we left Brown Street and moved into Franklin Street - we moved there when the Hardings left. We lived upstairs and my father rented the Harding crumpet factory to a guy called Ian Haywood he was a cooper and upstairs was left as it was for a while. That would be in late '49 or early '50, or '49/50, and my father then brought over his eldest brother's sons, two sons. That was the beginning of the exodus from Italy of all the young men coming over to Australia.

O.H.: I will take you back a bit before we move on to that period after the war. I want to talk a bit about the butcher shop. You were talking about the job that you had of bagging the meat. What did you have to do?

P.C.: Oh, I mean, stripping down a carcass, it's then thrown into a whole area there. You were given bags and the meat had to be put into the bags and then sewn. Our input was simply just assisting, just to put the meat in the bags. That's all it was. Then they were packed and then were taken away.

G.C.: I remember as a little boy I used to have to, with a rake, I used to have to rake all the sawdust every day. The first times I didn't mind it because I used to do little designs in the sawdust. Then it just got boring and boring as a little boy you had to do things all the time so I used to try and make it my garden but I used to hate that after a while.

P.C.: He didn't like the - our father tried to make us as part of the butchering Caon family. He didn't like it at all and fought every inch of the way and I persevered with it which I finished up becoming a master butcher anyway. But every opportunity he'd drag us into the butcher shop to try and clean the mincing machine to keep the place nice and tidy and to make us part of that situation. So either before school and after school he'd have us there. On many mornings he got me at six o'clock in the morning because butchers have to start early in the morning of course, particularly Fridays, and they get up at five o'clock or so and he'd have me in there with a little white coat on so I'd look the part. I was very smart but I hated the getting up early in the morning, right up until school time. Then I had to try and come back after school to try and sort of finish off because I was the eldest one. Then he showed me how the brine works which is corning beef, how you get corn beef. Then that's where he became more and more involved in making Italian smallgoods. He then got hold of this one here and then with our hands into the meat, slicing the meat, pounding the meat, mincing the meat. It was a very interesting time at that particular stage.

G.C.: Sometimes before school we had to - when we were living in Franklin Street, when we first moved to Franklin Street, so at that time Primo would've been eight or nine, you know he'd had like, for example, taking a parcel of meat across the road to Mrs Murphy or take some meat next door to Mrs Lovell. The house next door, that was Mrs Ozer, then there was Mrs Haywood.

P.C.: We were called the butcher boys, you see.

G.C.: You know, so, in fact - look, next door was Lovell, Ozer, Haywood and Quinn.

P.C.: That's right. That's correct.

O.H.: What do you remember about them?

G.C.: They were all families. The Lovells had two little girls. Mrs Ozer had two little sons. One of my best friends at the time was Ian - not Haywood - but his name was Ian and I cried when he left. I think I was in grade two. Grade one or grade two. A little blonde fellow I remember that. Mr and Mrs Quinn lived down the end and I was very jealous of them because they had the biggest cottage of all and I had to live upstairs in a room with my brother. So, you know, I didn't have my own room. I had no privacy.

P.C.: Across the road from the Convent was Stan Costello who was also a great West Adelaide footballer.

G.C.: Next to him you had Mr and Mrs Scotter, Scotter Transport, and they had three daughters.

P.C.: Generally speaking in that area, really as a butcher shop, we got on reasonably well with everybody. It was really quite good because our Dad had a reasonable good personality at the time and when he felt that he was ready, he was naturalised.

G.C.: Yes.

P.C.: That's right, he was naturalised having made the decision to - not depart from Italy but this was going to be his country. So from that moment on he then became part of being an Australian and he felt very much part of the West End scene and everybody knew him.

G.C.: The West End, the beauty of having a butcher shop is we serviced all the people in that area. We were all very friendly but also because you were Italian, Italian families coming from Lockleys or Findon or wherever, or Payneham and those places, Lockleys, Findon and Payneham, they were really in the outskirts of Adelaide, they would come and pick up their meat because my father could speak Italian. Not that he was any great butcher, he was self-taught. I don't think anyone taught him, he was self-taught, but he still had a bad accent. He never spoke, even to the day he died, he never spoke good English. He always had that little bit of accent and he was a shy man. He was always a shy man. I remember even in primary school he would ask me to write a cheque for him and I didn't have any idea how to write cheques and where you had to [put the name], I used to put the amount, and where you put the amount, I used to put the people's names. He didn't know any different anyway.

P.C.: There was one story. When I first left the family butcher's shop I was given a job to work at Mases Meat Company at Rundle Street here and that is getting from, what, the lowest to the highest if you like, which was a good move in that sort of sense and the first couple of days that I was there the head man from Mases Meat Company said, "My name's Fred Mitchell, I want you to tell me exactly what you've learnt from your father?" So, as my brother said, he was self-taught by an Australian, he was an Australian fellow who commandeered my father and sold him the business and that's how it all started. But with butchering you have to use a knife, you have to use a saw and you have to use a chopper. And so my father hardly ever used a knife - sorry, of course he used a knife but he never used a saw. Everything had to be with a chopper. So I got hold of this carcass which Fred Mitchell said to me, "Now, I want you to sort of show me what you've learnt?" And with a chopper he just split the carcass right down the centre and then you lay it on the block, you chop it's leg off and then you chop off its forequarter and then you just split everything with the chopper. In other words, you make your chops. You just go chop, chop, chop, chop and you just cut the end off and then you get hold of the forequarter and just chop it off and Fred Mitchell looked at me and he said, "Well, you've got a lot to learn, Primo." First of all he said, "We use the knife here so I'll show you." So that was a new direction of ---

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O.H.: So do you remember your father actually teaching you to do things?

P.C.: He just directed us in which way to splice this. You know, he was very, very effective with the chopper I can tell you right now.

G.C.: No, I personally don't remember him ever showing me anything as such. He expected us to know. He expected but I don't ever recall him showing me things. Like, you know: come here son, look at this, do this, do it this way, do it that way. Never. No, never.

P.C.: No, he got me by the ears.

G.C.: He loved the company of people regardless who they were and like I was saying earlier, having a sectional butcher shop, we used to service that whole area. Two streets away in Currie Street there was another Italian butcher called Mattiazzo. They, in fact, I think my father was god-father to his son and Mattiazzo was godfather to Primo. Is that right?

P.C.: That's right, yes.

G.C.: So there was a little bit of competition and in today's society you'd think: well, those two shops are a little bit close. However, because there were so many people living in the area everyone would survive. In our little section down the bottom end of Trennery Court where the shop was and when we lived upstairs - now I'm talking about the late 40s, early 50s, you had some Aboriginal families, you had a couple of Italian families. Behind us was some Greek families.

P.C.: That's right, Taliangis.

G.C.: Taliangis. Four or five - there were three or four Greek families in Grey Street, Primo. Taliangis ---

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: And you had a real mixture of people. This is in the period of the early 50s in Waymouth Street. This was when all the Italians, when a lot of Italians started to move into Waymouth Street. You had Greeks in there, you had Maltese, Lebanese. George Joseph lived on the corner of Waymouth Street.

P.C.: That's right. He was your Lord Mayor for here, for Adelaide City Council.

G.C.: In fact, he lived on the corner of Waymouth Street and Clarendon Street. Opposite him was Bolkus.

P.C.: Who is the Senator. He's doing a good job.

G.C.: Minister, Primo. He is now a Minister.

O.H.: So as children who were your friends? Did you tend to play together as brothers?

G.C.: No, Primo was always the big brother but we had a myriad of friends and we were international and it was wonderful to associate with all these different languages,

different accents. Right opposite us there was this Maltese, a very old Maltese lady and she would send a notice to my father who would say, "Go and see her, she's got some kibby for you". I used to love running over there as a little boy and having kibby. And you had this wonderful satisfaction of being able to taste all the different foods from all the different people who lived in that area. It was wonderful. We tended to mix together. We didn't have any racist problems. I never felt that.

P.C.: No, it was really - all I can say to you about that is where the society in Adelaide is at the moment. It's multicultural and we had the benefit of having all of that. That was very valuable.

G.C.: Yes. One thing that pulled us all together, it was that I always felt that we were second class people. I always felt that. I knew that my father was shy. If someone walked into the butcher shop who was well dressed and spoke very good English my father would tend to shy away a little bit, wouldn't talk to much. But when there was an ethnic you know, he was ebullient and jovial and happy and so we all had something to pull together and I think this was the beautiful thing of living in the City, living in that multicultural society.

P.C.: We had a - customers would come in from all parts of the world of course, as my brother has mentioned, and he would have his favoured term. For instance, you know some Greek would come in and he in Greek would say, "And how would you like your brains today?" Because they'd understand the word craneo, which is cranial and he knew all these things. So there was always that sort of bit of lightheartedness which made life a lot pleasant in that sort of sense.

G.C.: Yes, there was a certain amount of affection and respect. I remember and look, I really don't know how old I was but I certainly was not 10 years of age. I remember leaving home and going down to the weir. Now, from Franklin Street going down to the weir and Primo was with me. He would be diving off the weir into the river and you'd have 10, 20 boys and a few men perhaps, all swimming all around the weir where the water was coming out. I was there with four or five ---

P.C.: Of his class mates or whatever.

G.C.: Of my friends picking up yabbies. I remember as a little boy also along that road from Morphett Street to the weir, that's where the circus used to be. I went to the circus there one night.

O.H.: What do you remember about that?

G.C.: Oh, it was ---

P.C.: Worths Circus.

G.C.: Worths Circus and the first time I ever saw a lion. I was excited. I thought that was absolutely marvellous to see this great big lion, this big cat. Then I saw the horses and an elephant. In fact, it was only the other day I was walking along there and I thought: this is where they put the circus. It was incredible that they just jammed the circus there.

O.H.: So where did you play mostly as boys? Did you tend to stick to a certain area or did you spread yourselves over all the West End?

P.C.: Well, we used to - I wasn't sure about my brother but we used to go down to where the Adelaide High School is now. They were just parklands there and so we'd probably go down there occasionally. There were also some Italian families down at Thebarton and we'd probably meet, go down to Thebarton, walk down there or ride our bike or whatever and play in some of the grounds there. So there was a bit of connection between the West End and Thebarton. That was my furthest playing around.

G.C.: Mostly we used to play in the streets.

P.C.: Remember, there was no traffic at that time and I still remember at night where some of the Northern Territory guys who would be with the Newchurch Aboriginal families, would come out with whips and they'd crack whips in the middle of the road under the lights and they'd climb the telegraph posts. I mean, he did. And so you'd get that sort of demonstration of whip cracking and then every now and again a car would come across and then you'd have to stop and then start again. But football was played in the middle of the street at the time.

G.C.: In fact, Primo mentioned the - down the end of Trennery Court the last little cottage down there was the Newchurch Family. That's the boy that had that little problem.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: Alison Newchurch committed suicide, did you know Primo?

P.C.: Oh, I didn't know that.

G.C.: Yes.

P.C.: She appeared on television. I think one of her sons was the one that was ---

G.C.: He died in prison.

P.C.: In gaol maybe but she'd come in to represent the Aboriginal family at the time.

G.C.: Mm. So you had the Aboriginals right down the end. Then you had Max - the other family, the next house? Newchurch.

P.C.: No, I can't - I thought they were all Newchurchs down there.

G.C.: Newchurchs.

P.C.: Or McNally. There was a McNally maybe.

G.C.: McNally, Mrs Adams.

P.C.: Anyway, there was a bit of, as you can see there was a bit of everything there.

G.C.: So, basically we all used to entertain each other and it was real fun. There was always an element of something happening and that integration was wonderful to be involved in. You just had to - and I remember there was a period of time when the plays were radio, "When a Girl Marries". My father loved to listen to this story "When a Girl Marries". It was an ongoing soapie on the radio.

P.C.: He'd sit down there and he'd demand. Okay, because it was the boarding house, it was just starting up, and there's the little radio in the kitchen, everyone would have dinner, and it was 7.30 and of course they come over on the radio: this is episode 3466. He'd be there and he'd translate to them what the story was, what was going on with "When a Girl Marries". So that half an hour for him, he was - you know, it was sheer delight for him. That he could, sort of, command this presence of all these men and they'd say all the time, "Well, what happened now, Jack. Shut up and listen. That sort of thing. So I can still see him sitting there holding his performance.

G.C.: On place where we used to play was the continuation of Grote Street. You go through the parklands and you go to the Hilton Bridge. On the right-hand side before you get to the Hilton Bridge was the city dump. Just before that was where the council put all these great big, those big cement drain pipes. There was a whole lot of them. And often we would run down there as little boys to see who was sleeping in them because a lot of people, this was just after the war of course, people were living there. One thing that disappointed me all the time was I remember the first time I as a little boy went to the cemetery and instead of going through the front door of the cemetery, my mother thought you had to go through the front gate, the West Terrace gate. Our Catholics we had to go down the back. We had our own entrance. Again, the idea of segregation. I never forgot that and I began to ask myself the question, "Why, why can't we go through the front gate? Why because we're Catholics we have to go at the back?" I think it was that element that reinforced the unity between all the ethnics who lived in that area and it was a beautiful way to be - a beautiful way to grow up because I certainly felt enormous strength and I certainly felt reinforced, no matter where I was in the West End. Everyone knew me and I knew everyone else.

O.H.: Did you feel the same way, Primo?

P.C.: Yes, the same thing.

G.C.: We used to walk around. I never had any fear of anything at all.

P.C.: Because in those times, it's not like it is today, to the degree where you could leave your front door open and you felt safe in that sort of sense and there was none of this bolting doors. I mean, it's a great tragedy to see today the amount of old people who are being knocked over, not knocked over but beaten for their money. Now, we never had that problem. That was always - that respect was always there. Getting up in the tram or the bus or whatever it might be for the elderly people and show certain manners. Now, these manners were integrated and also we were shown that at school at the same time and reinforced all the time to show respect for the older people. Now, we didn't have any of those problems. And

there we were, you know, in the middle of the Aborigines, the Greeks and the Lebanese and whatever it was.

G.C.: I used to love the morning and as a little boy living in Brown Street, one school holiday I went around the corner, which is the beginning of Grote Street where Continental Bakery was, and this man gave two shillings for a week if I would go and help him deliver the bread. And he had a horse and a little cart and for the first day I loved it but 6.30 in the morning, you know, as a little boy is a little bit hard and I didn't mind because I loved eating warm bread. On the third day I just couldn't do it any more but I remember the baker and his cart. Then there was the bottle man with his horse and his cart full of bottles, bags of bottles. Once this man said, "Oh, little boy, you want to come for a ride?" We were then parked in front of Hubbards. Hubbards was a ---

P.C.: Electrical.

G.C.: They were on the corner of Moonta Street and Grote Street.

P.C.: Which is now the Chinese area.

G.C.: Which is now the Chinese quarter and I just sat up there on the dickie seat, the man got off to pick up a bag of bottles and I went click, click, click, click and off the horse ran and there was thirty - no, I can't say that - but there was five or six guys chasing the horse and I was just sitting up there having a wonderful time.

O.H.: What happened in the end?

G.C.: Oh, they picked the horse up - the horse actually went across the intersection of Morphett Street and Grote Street so it went quite a way and the guy was terrified. He said, "Oh, don't be afraid." I wasn't afraid, I had a ball, it was great. But you had all these horses going around. You know, the bottle-o, my father with his bike and when - I mean, Primo for the first period of time when he was old enough he had to do after school, get on the bike, deliver meat. Do you remember that?

P.C.: Oh, yes.

O.H.: How far would you go?

P.C.: Wherever the delivery had to take you because he, my father then was part of the Royal Adelaide - the ---

G.C.: The Lodge.

P.C.: The ROAB Lodge.

G.C.: The Buffalo Lodge.

P.C.: Yes, the ROAB Lodge which was the Buffalo Lodge and he was an integral part - they made him feel very welcome about all that. So then he met different hoteliers,

etcetera, which made him feel very welcome and he used to make me do these deliveries and I was the butcher boy. As he was when his turn came. But we used to make those deliveries as often as we can, particularly on Saturday mornings.

G.C.: Our father forced us to have turns but they were wonderful days in as much as you had that integration, that closeness, living in that area.

O.H.: You mentioned making your own entertainment up as kids. What kind of games did you play? What did you do?

P.C.: Well, when you say - I mean, there was always the sport of course from school.

G.C.: Footie. Footie was the big one.

P.C.: Of course I went to the Dominican Convent first, there with all the nuns, and then we went to Christian Brothers. I mean, I walked to school and introduced myself at Christian Brothers with a young bloke called Bob McNally because he used to go there and the teacher asked me, I think it was Brother Burke, said, "What are you doing here?" I said, "I'm here to come to school." He said, "Well, who brought you here?" I said, "Bob McNally." He said, "What about your mother?" He said, "I told her." But my parents didn't know how to get the introduction into school. In any case, things were accepted of course. But of course, with football and marbles, of course ---

G.C.: That was the big one, playing marbles. Everyone had their little bag with marbles in it.

P.C.: You played marbles in the gutter because you had those - they were the new concrete gutters and that's where a lot of kids used to play, spend their time playing that. But, of course, homework, of course, was also an integral part of the time. School sports and what you could make up was what it was all about.

G.C.: Handball was a big one.

O.H.: Where would you play that?

G.C.: Wherever there was a reasonable wall or amount of wall we would play handball. A football was always up and down the street. When it was cricket time we'd play cricket.

P.C.: Well, any wall was anybody's wall.

G.C.: Anybody's wall was good enough.

O.H.: So did boys and girls play together or was it only again with boys?

P.C.: I don't think the girls entered my scene for a long period of time. I think probably ---

G.C.: No, they really didn't, girls were very much stayed at home, stayed in home, play with their dolls, whatever. I don't know but there weren't very many girls associated when you had groups of boys, two or three boys around, but the girls, no.

P.C.: I think I would've been 14, 14 or 15 I think.

G.C.: That's when the girls serious started.

P.C.: Well, that's right. Yes.

G.C.: Yes, but before that no. Boys all used to stay around together. We would go down to West Terrace in the parklands, throw rocks at each other. Have gang warfare. We had swords and cross-bows. That was the period, you know.

P.C.: Hopalong Cassidy.

G.C.: Hopalong Cassidy was in. Tom Mix. As a little boy we would walk to the Empire Theatre. The Empire Theatre was opposite what is now Her Majesty's and we would go there on Saturday afternoons.

P.C.: That's right, yes. Yes, that's right.

G.C.: On Saturday afternoons we would go there and next to Her Majesty's was a little snack bar and that's where we'd all get Violet Crumbles and we'd go to the Empire. Then you'd watch the film called "The Shadow".

P.C.: That's right, or "The Phantom".

G.C.: "The Phantom" and that was a big thing and as I progressed of course, before I'd go to the Bug House. The Bug House was the Star Theatre and that was in Wakefield Street opposite the Cathedral, there was the Star Theatre. So it depend - we were allowed to go to the movies on Saturday afternoon. Certainly not Saturday night but Saturday afternoon that was our time and we all used to look forward to go Saturday afternoons.

O.H.: Why was it called the Bug House?

P.C.: Exactly just that.

O.H.: There were bugs in there?

P.C.: Exactly.

G.C.: So, you know, the Empire Theatre was my favourite because we always used to sit upstairs and stamp your feet and out would come The Shadow, we'd be all terrified. Or, you know, the ongoing saga of Tom Mix. You'd have all these little episodes every week. You know, another episode so you had to go the following week.

O.H.: What was it like inside?

P.C.: Oh, it was ---

G.C.: It was awesome.

P.C.: It was a bit of a joy to sort of go and see a movie really but you can imagine, sort of, a heap of kids of an afternoon. It was fun, you know.

G.C.: That era will never come back. All the kids screaming and talking and everything and the elders used to put up with it because that was our time and I used to look forward to Saturday afternoons. Wonderful.

P.C.: And of course the markets are still there.

G.C.: And what we used to try and do is, in the early afternoon the vegetable market would close down and all the people from the stalls, they'd take all their fruit and veg, they would leave. So we would go - run around all the stalls looking through the cracks for money and you know, we were lucky. Every week there was one particular guy I was very jealous of and his name's John Pastro. We used to call him "Ping". "Ping" Pastro and he always would find two shillings or one shilling and that was big money in those days. So when - if he found that money we'd oblige him to buy us all a Violet Crumble which we would share and sharing was a big thing. Sharing was fun.

O.H.: What do you remember about the market?

P.C.: Well, all I can say is it that was the real genuine market where the vegetables would come in from wherever and everything was just so totally fresh at that particular time and it hasn't changed much apart from the fact that it's just gone modern. That's all it is but it was really a joy to go there.

G.C.: You had a tin roof, a very low tin roof. There were four rows. There were cobblestones on the back ---

P.C.: No car park over the top like there is now.

G.C.: Yeah, there was cobblestones at the back. They had tar walkways where the people used to walk but behind the stalls there was cobblestones, big gutters. I remember the big gutters. Sometimes I remember as a little boy when it used to rain it used to rain very hard and you'd see boxes of fruit outside. So it wasn't totally covered. Not totally covered but - and you had that smell, that smell of rotten fruit or fresh fruit, of squashed fruit and there used to be stacks. Behind the stalls there were stacks where the vendors used to - stuff that just was marked or wasn't good enough or a bit rotten, they used to just stack it, throw it up there and, of course on Thursday nights it would be there and it would be there Friday morning and they would - you know, Friday night to. They wouldn't clean it up every day. So that smell was continuous and it was just added part of the atmosphere. And all the screaming, all - not like so much today but every fruit vendor was selling and yelling and spruiking and it was a much better atmosphere than it is now. It was a wonderful atmosphere.

P.C.: Today's a little on the quiet side. Then it was real noise. They wanted to sell their vegetables and that was a real, you know.

P.C.: Yes, the stall that I liked very much - in front of the market in Grote - the Grote Street side of the market there was a department store called Cashworths and everything was, you know, a halfpenny, twopence halfpenny and they had sections of that store and where Moore's - where the - I can't think of it now. On the corner.

P.C.: Peoplestores.

G.C.: Peoplestores was on - where the carparking is now, that was Peoplestores. That went all the way through. Peoplestores went all the way through from one street to the other but you had Moores ---

P.C.: That's right, yes, Moores - the building of Moores is still there of course which is the Judiciary.

G.C.: But behind - between Moores and Cashworths there was an arcade of shops, all little shops. That's where - is it Woolworths that are there now or Coles?

P.C.: Woolworths are there now.

G.C.: Yes, well where Woolworths were there was an arcade of small little shops.

O.H.: So what did Cashworths sell that you were interested in?

G.C.: They had one section - they had all lollies. All the lollies. Then they had womens lingerie and so on and then just bits and pieces, you know, but I used to love that little store. It was all cheap and I remember the first - just after the war when they sent out the first little Dinkie toys made in Japan and we were told, "You can't buy this stuff, it was made in Japan. Not good quality."

P.C.: Japanese is not much good. Boy has that changed.

G.C.: It's Japanese, not much good quality, can't buy it.

O.H.: So did you have much money, were you given much money, pocket money, or anything to buy things with during this time?

G.C.: No, never. Both of us never had pocket money.

P.C.: We had to keep asking all the time. That was it.

G.C.: If you wanted something you had to ask for it.

O.H.: What kind of response would you get?

P.C.: Oh, sometimes we were successful or sometimes but we'd sort of have to do a little job or something like that but - or sometimes we'd take 20 cents or whatever it might be but you know, that was never ---

G.C.: I would always ask for more than what I got. That made it fair.

P.C.: It was earned.

O.H.: Do you have any memories of the war time period in Adelaide? Probably you would have been a bit older then?

P.C.: All I can remember at the time when I couldn't understand why my uncle was in gaol and why my father, and I'm going back to Waymouth Street at the time, and that's obviously when my father had worked out the fact to be nationalised and so he wasn't - how can I - interned but all the Italians who were interned were those who were not naturalised of course because of course there was the problem between Italy ---

G.C.: Well, he wasn't - uncle wasn't put in gaol, he was interned.

P.C.: Yeah, well, that's right.

G.C.: But you thought it was gaol at the time.

P.C.: I thought it was gaol, I really did.

G.C.: Mm.

P.C.: But, of course, Italy and Germany had an arrangement between Mussolini and themselves and, of course, particularly up the north of Italy they were partisans with the Allies so that's why there was a lot of confusion in Italy with which way they were going because a lot of them didn't like Germany and whilst Mussolini did a few good things there they didn't like his association with the Nazis, or Germany. So, all the Italians that were not naturalised were interned and I remember the day when they walked down Waymouth Street from Franklin Street. You know, Franklin Street going that way. There would've been about 12 or 20, I'm not quite sure of the numbers, and they were singing the Italian songs of release and I remember seeing that. I remember my father saying, "Oh, here they come, isn't that great, everything's all finished, you know, everything's settled down now." And he was very happy on that occasion and that's about all I can remember, but I do remember my mother always cutting out the cartoons out of the morning paper and storing them away because of the mementos of what was going on in the war and I think at one stage I think she - in fact I'm sure she didn't think there were any more value of hanging on to them but they would've been good to have now really.

O.H.: So that was at the end of the war when you ---

P.C.: That was the end of the war, yes. Or there was one other episode with Dematrio who was our cousin, decided to leave Adelaide and go and live in the Northern

Territory and he went away there for quite some time. So that was only concern for him at that particular stage.

O.H.: Did the parents of any of your friends become interned, do you remember?

P.C.: I don't know.

G.C.: All the men were interned. All the men. My recollection and I think I would've been in grade one or grade two is along Franklin Street where Dominican Convent is now, they dug a huge trench and they put those big cement - I don't know what you call them, those big huge cement pipes, in the trenches and they had sections and different classes had to run in and so I remember the sirens would go ---

P.C.: Yep.

G.C.: ---the sirens would go and we'd all - and I thought it was wonderful - the sirens were going and all the kids jump up and the nuns, come on quick, quick, quick. And we used to run into these little pipes - into the trenches, down the trench and we used to sit there and giggle and laugh and fun. And we'd sit there for five minutes and the siren would go again and out we'd come. I remember at night time the curtains had to be pulled and my mother often - and I would pull the curtains back and she would close them and scream at me. So I'd pull them out again just to be a - just to play games. And I remember on motor cars where all the lights were ---

P.C.: Had to be half covered.

G.C.: ---were painted over and they'd just leave a little bright spot where the light would come through. But the best memory I think was when the sirens would go off.

P.C.: It was all precautionary stuff at the schools and things like that but there was very little involvement or anti-British or anti-Ally at all. Very little. It was very much pro that way.

O.H.: Do you remember American soldiers being in Adelaide?

G.C.: Yes, I do.

P.C.: I remember them marching through the streets at some stage and throwing lollies at them but that was only one occasion that I can remember with that.

G.C.: I remember sitting on the windowsill of Brown Street, number 27 Brown Street, and I had a mouth organ. I was just playing this song and this GI walked by with his arm around a young girl and threw me a note and it was a dollar note, an American dollar note. I remember that and I thought, you know, he was great, fabulous.

P.C.: No, that was about as much as the involvement in as far as the Second World War was concerned but there wasn't any animosity at all and of course dialogue amongst the Italians, what was right and what was wrong, but there was no anti.

O.H.: Had your mother started her boarding house before the war?

G.C.: No, the boarding house started after the war when the migration started. My father had his brother, his young brother, and his cousin out, Angelo and Dematrio, and his elder brother Leandro had 13 children and the eldest Duillio and the second eldest Galdino, they were the first two to come out and they came out in '49. We were living in Franklin Street at the time, 1949 and then straight after them two, came out two cousins. Danny Favretto and Lino Favretto and they all lived at Roman de Loria, they all come from my father's home town, and the four guys slept in the front room downstairs when they arrived. Immediately they worked for Albert del Fabbro, del Fabbro Cement and Terrazzo. He was a very good friend of my Dad's ---

P.C.: And very well established in the concrete business.

G.C.: And he was very well established down the bottom end of Flinders Street and this is really where after the war a little boom started so a lot of people had concrete work - this is where terrazzo work started. So these four guys immediately went to work there straight away. So my father would bring them over, or just sign guaranteed lodging, and Albert del Fabbro would guarantee work and this was the start of the boarding house affair.

O.H.: So they lived downstairs in your house?

P.C.: Yes, that's right.

G.C.: Oh, yes, yes.

O.H.: So this place isn't - the butcher shop was downstairs?

G.C.: It's a two-storey, double fronted building so on the left side you have the butcher shop. On the right side you have the lodging area and also over the butcher shop itself. All right.

P.C.: And the back area was the second storey room which is what my brother mentioned before.

G.C.: Out the back was another building. You had a courtyard or a yard out the back which was eventually concreted but that also was cobblestone and you had the two-storey premises out the back which was Hardings Crumpets and so on. So they converted that later but the first four guys to come out were those and they lived in the front room which originally was the family, the Harding family lounge room and we lived upstairs and those four guys had four beds in one room.

O.H.: So prior to that did you mum ever work in the butcher shop.

G.C.: Oh, yes, she used to help out, clean, I remember.

P.C.: She used to help out whenever she could.

G.C.: Yeah, all the time.

P.C.: That's the first one, I don't know about Fenn Place but the first one, or the second one in Waymouth Street. I remember her serving meat and wielding the chopper because my father had to go somewhere for some sort of meeting or some sort of signing of papers or whatever it might be.

G.C.: And you must understand that women were not allowed to be in butcher shops. In those days women were women and men were men, you know, it wasn't as it is today and so it was very rare and it wasn't the accepted thing. You must also remember that Angelo and Dematrio were still living with us so even though - the boarding series was another issue - but at that time her family, she was - you know, her family, she had the two sons and two other men other than her husband.

O.H.: I will just stop you there.

TAPE 2 SIDE A

O.H.: We finished the other tape, we were talking a little bit about your mum and the kinds of things that she was doing, so she was looking after people from, right from the beginning, was she?

P.C.: Which was family, really, which was my uncle and my cousin, and of course - and she - that's how they tried to make their way, you know, with whatever money she could get from them to support the family situation at the time. And I think that was the beginning of when they moved and bought into Franklin Street that she decided that she would go into the boarding house situation.

G.C.: She didn't decide, she was pushed into it, Primo.

P.C.: Well, I don't know that story, you see. I don't know whether ---

G.C.: Because when the nephews arrived, she didn't have a choice. Where were they going to stay?

P.C.: Yes, but I'm just thinking that - why did they buy Franklin Street? Is it because of the fact that it had the butcher shop, because the property there was fairly big, as were all the rooms.

G.C.: No, he bought to expand, to develop. He bought Franklin Street to develop, but he had problems buying it.

P.C.: The boarding house?

G.C.: What, the back section?

P.C.: Well, you know, the whole lot. I mean, so what you're saying is that mum was pushed into running - doing a boarding house because ---

G.C.: Yes.

P.C.: ---Dad insisted that she do it.

G.C.: The nephews were coming over.

P.C.: Okay.

G.C.: So it was just one of those things that just grew and developed.

P.C.: Yes, I understand, okay.

O.H.: So initially when you had the butcher shop and that, it was still Harding's Crumpet Factory?

P.C.: Yes, that's right.

G.C.: Yes, yes, yes.

O.H.: What do you remember about that period?

P.C.: Look, as far as I can remember, I thought this was something absolutely brand new. It was like seeing all the carcasses coming in from the abattoirs, and you walk in this back area, and there's all these oven burners - not oven burners - just all these flat plates with all the gas burning underneath it, and these crumpets being flipped out of their rings.

G.C.: And I'd never, ever seen a crumpet...because basically we were brought up, you know, just with Italian food - and it was the first time I'd ever ate and saw a crumpet, and I loved it.

O.H.: So you could actually watch them being made?

G.C.: Yes, actually watched them being made and it was fascinating. Basically it was a bakehouse and after we moved in they moved out. The Harding family, I think they moved down south somewhere, I don't know where they moved, Thebarton or Torrensville, somewhere there. I was amazed to see, when I'd go to a grocery shop or a deli, you'd see Harding's crumpets all over the place, and they would always drop in and see my Dad, and bring in batches of crumpets, and I used to love that. Burnt ---

O.H.: Was there a smell that came from ---

G.C.: Yes, yes.

P.C.: Yes, absolutely. Well, you know, fresh yeast ---

G.C.: Bakehouse, bread.

P.C.: ---it was just like a bakehouse and it was run by a lovely old lady called Mrs Harding, of course, and she was one of those wonderful cooks of old and she used to make the most fantastic cakes on the side. I'd drop in and say hello to her, how she was going, then she'd give me a slice of cake which was absolutely just sensational, which my mother didn't like cakes anyway, so there was another dimension of food that I'd discovered. And of course all these crumpets, you know, running up the nostrils, it was just terrific.

G.C.: Then Balfours were on the corner of Morphett and Franklin and on Thursday, Thursday afternoons sometimes, but always Friday mornings, you could go there and for one-and-sixpence you would buy a packet of cake. So Balfours, the factory, would make cakes. So if a cake just wasn't right, or not enough cream or whatever, they would pack them up into brown paper folds and you'd buy two or three cakes in one packet for one-and-sixpence. What my father used to do after school on Thursday, would send me up there and I used to wait in line and I'd buy four or five or six packets. I would bring them down to the butcher shop where my father would sell them for the same price to people who just couldn't go. Do you remember that?

P.C.: I do. In fact I believe that system is still going and what those packets are, or the parcels, are what cake is left over from the baking, so that it's not left lying around.

G.C.: I suppose people who have an order, or they don't want to order any more, or if they've got the cakes left over, so they just pass them over.

O.H.: What other places do you remember in your area, neighbours and the other businesses around the place?

G.C.: Well, next to - in Franklin Street was the Flagstaff Hotel. There was Mick Carmody, and she [sic] was in business with Mrs Bailey, whose son was Noel. I went to school with Noel. Eventually Mrs Bailey left, she was a widow, I think, during the war, she was widowed during the war and she left and Mick Carmody ran the hotel with his son. I can't think of his son's name. And I remember his hands, he had ---

P.C.: Arthritis.

G.C.: Arthritis on his hands.

P.C.: And gout as well.

G.C.: And gout, and the smell of beer emanating from the cellar. His daughter - that was a period of time when my mother had her brother come over, her young brother, and Mick Carmody had a daughter whose bedroom - it was upstairs, right opposite our bedroom, my brother and I. When my mother's brother came over, Gino, she put him with us. So we had one small room with three beds, and Uncle Gino used to play the piano accordion. Carmody's daughter, what was her name, Primo?

P.C.: Colleen Carmody.

G.C.: Colleen Carmody. So she would sit at the window, and he would sit at the window - and this is on opposite sides of Trenerry Court, because the windows faced each other - and he would play piano accordion to her.

P.C.: To her?

G.C.: To her. One of those little romantic scenes. That was the Carmodys. Next to the Flagstaff Hotel was Commercial Motor Vehicles. They were there for many, many, many years.

P.C.: They still are, they still are.

G.C.: They still are. Then there was a lane, and then there was Frank Hamra - not Hamra - Hondrou.

P.C.: No, Hondrou was opposite us.

G.C.: No, then he moved opposite afterwards.

P.C.: Yes, of course, you're quite right, you're quite right.

G.C.: But originally he was on the same side as Commercial Motor Vehicles. Frank Hondrou, his wife ---

P.C.: That was a delicatessen.

G.C.: That was a deli, a very busy little deli and he had two daughters ---

P.C.: And the deli is still there?

O.H.: Is it? What was it like?

G.C.: He had two daughters, Mary and Elizabeth. Then they moved across the road.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: They moved across the road afterwards, but then opposite that there was Penno's Bag Factory.

P.C.: Correct, yes, I was just going to say.

G.C.: Penno's Bag Factory, you had upstairs all the - they used to re-do bags, and sew bags up, and you had all the - this is now the early 50s, all the Greek women, and you'd have 20, 30 Greek women up there?

P.C.: Yes.

G.C.: Cleaning bags. These were flour bags, or bags for whatever, all hessian bags.

P.C.: It wasn't a processing - it was a clearing house for bags, and new bags and whatever.

G.C.: Yes, Penno's. On Thursdays when we - and the butcher shop would get delivery from the abattoirs, my father would buy all lamb...and all these women at half-past-three, quarter-past-three, they were allowed to go across the road to the butcher shop to buy their half a lamb or leg of lamb, and they would come running over, and my father would start swearing at them in Greek, and they'd laugh, and they'd cajole, and have fun and my father used to give them a skewer and one woman would come up and she would skewer one lamb and he'd write it on a piece of - just tear out a piece of paper and write her name. And so ---

P.C.: That was her portion.

G.C.: You would skewer her name, the paper, to the lamb, and so that was then put into the cool room. So the next day she would come back, when they get paid on Fridays, and she would buy her lamb, take her lamb away.

O.H.: The little deli you were talking about, what did that sell?

G.C.: Hondrou.

P.C.: Those old-fashioned type milkshakes, kitchener buns of course, all the old-fashioned type cakes and things like that. They used to make sandwiches as well as rolls, you know. Some of these delis are still around so there wasn't much of a change. And of course chocolates of course and lollies and things like that. That was all ---

O.H.: What nationality was he?

P.C.: They were Greek.

O.H.: Greek, thank you. Do you remember anything about them?

P.C.: Very close family, and very sincere people. There was never any problem - they were nice - they were just nice people, they really were, and they were fairly compatible with the rest of the nationalities around as well. There was no problem.

O.H.: I think you mentioned a Winter's Deli?

G.C.: They're in Weymouth Street. Remember that, Primo?

P.C.: Yes, I know.

G.C.: In Weymouth Street, where we were. We were on the north-western corner of Weymouth Street. Winter's Deli was diagonally opposite. There was a guy called John Winter.

P.C.: That's right.

- G.C.: He had a - that was a very famous deli.
- P.C.: He was the most successful delicatessen man. He knew his stuff ---
- G.C.: He was a good operator.
- P.C.: ---really well. Good operator.
- G.C.: Yes, good operator, and opposite him is where Sammy Savvas started his grocery business.
- P.C.: That's right.
- G.C.: And he would be the first Greek grocer ---
- P.C.: Greek grocery - no, hang on ---
- G.C.: ---that developed ---
- P.C.: You've got to be careful with that, because you've got Star Grocery in the corner.
- G.C.: No, he had the Star, but Sam was a wholesaler.
- P.C.: Right, yes.
- G.C.: Star Grocery were on the corner of Hindley and Morphet.
- P.C.: Yes, that's right.
- G.C.: They were very big, they were very big, but Sammy Savvas, he started wholesaling, but the - and who was the big Italian grocer, and they were on the corner of Gray Street and Hindley Street, on the same side as Fenn, was Rossetto.
- P.C.: Rossetto.
- G.C.: Rossetto's, that was where the Italians would come from everywhere to get their Italian product from there.
- P.C.: You could really smell coffee in that place. They had it really sewn up, that whole area.
- G.C.: They had things like borlotti beans, and they were the first with pasta and so on. Rossetto. But Sammy Savvas, he was in Waymouth Street.
- P.C.: Who was the butcher that was opposite Jackie Winter?

G.C.: Pangrazio. Was it Pangrazio?

P.C.: Dad used to call him Podgy.

G.C.: Podgy, that's right, Podgy.

O.H.: Why was that?

P.C.: Well, because he was ---

G.C.: Yes, but he - when Sammy Savvas left, that's when Podgy opened.

P.C.: I see, okay, yes, right. He wasn't next door?

G.C.: No, no.

P.C.: Okay, fair enough.

G.C.: Sammy Savvas started there, he left, Podgy Bon, that was his name.

P.C.: No, I can't place it.

G.C.: So basically nearly in every street - so my father's in Franklin Street - so in Waymouth Street another butcher shop opened. In Currie Street Mattiazzo was another butcher shop opened.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: One street, because you had the volume of people, and they were all busy, they all worked.

O.H.: Did they get on well together, do you think?

P.C.: There was that - there was a nice bit of compatibility in a sense ---

G.C.: There was a friendly rivalry.

P.C.: Friendly rivalry, quite right.

G.C.: Yes, friendly rivalry.

O.H.: In what ways, do you remember?

P.C.: Well, you know, you'd do your best to try and give the best quality meat, and if you kept your customers, that was the way to go and you didn't buy anything that wasn't incorrect, you'd try and do it, you know, the proper way, because my Dad prided himself in being a buyer at the abattoirs. He would go the abattoirs at least - no, just Wednesdays - no, Mondays and Wednesdays.

G.C.: Mondays was beef day.

P.C.: Mondays was the beef day and Wednesdays was the sheep day. So he'd go to the market on those days.

G.C.: And often he would take Mattiazo with him.

O.H.: Where would they go, where was the abattoirs?

P.C.: At Gepps Cross.

O.H.: At Gepps Cross.

P.C.: They'd have that sort of big ring in the middle and then all around the top of the ring were all the circle of seats where you would sit down and bid to the auctioneer.

G.C.: A mini colosseum.

P.C.: That's right, exactly right.

G.C.: Dad used to take you there?

P.C.: Often. Took you there too.

G.C.: Yes, I know.

O.H.: What do you remember about that?

P.C.: Simply the fact that, I mean, after the auction used to take place, after about an hour-and-a-half it would become so boring, you didn't know what was going on. Of course it was fascinating to them to sort of see what sort of cattle that they were buying and after I got bored of listening to all that, I used to ask him for what, five shillings or something, to go and get a pie with sauce, which was the best pie with sauce I've ever ever had. There was a little delicatessen down the road, or a - which was owned by the abattoirs there, I think, and I'd have that pie with sauce and a cup of tea with milk and it was just great. That was the only joy I had about it.

O.H.: So he'd buy the sheep and cattle live, would he?

P.C.: That's right.

O.H.; I see.

P.C.: Then they'd be processed and then sent to you later, but of course in the cattle yards it was also interesting to sort of see, because you'd go along these great forms, and you'd see the cattles in their own yards, and you'd see maybe half a dozen in one, maybe 10 in another one, maybe two in another one, each of course owned by various farmers around the

Adelaide hills or Noarlunga or wherever it might be and they'd prod them with electric prods to get them moving, if there were too many for the auctioning, and you're running along all the various sections to see all that.

O.H.: So what meat did your father purchase and sell in those days?

P.C.: The lot. Beef, veal - veal mainly was the big thing that the Italians pride themselves on in their cooking of young veal, particularly young Bobby veal.

G.C.: They were very hard to get in those days.

P.C.: Yes, well, they're hard to get now.

G.C.: The cuisine was very English. Everything was English. English was the mother country, whatever you had was English. You know, we used to make dripping. The Italians hated dripping, couldn't stand dripping, the smell of dripping ---

P.C.: The smell of dripping really turned them right off.

G.C.: So, you know, veal was very hard to get, so it was all beef. It was all beef or lamb, and the Italians ---

P.C.: And pork of course.

G.C.: Beef, pork and lamb.

P.C.: They had the whole range.

O.H.: So you'd make your own dripping and sell it?

P.C.: Yes, yes, absolutely. I mean, that was the demand. I mean our customers weren't all Italian and Continentals, you know, 50 per cent would've be Australian, whatever it might be. Dripping was the big thing of course for deep frying, you know.

G.C.: Cooking, deep frying.

O.H.: So how would your Dad go about making that?

P.C.: Well, all the fat that was left off the cattle would be put aside and then you'd have to put it through a mincer. Chopped it, cut it up and put it through a mincer and then you'd have to boil it and once all the fat had gone sort of slightly brown you'd wait for it to settle, then scoop the top, all the dripping off and put them into cartons which then it would go yellow, and ---

G.C.: The bad dripping, or the bad part would fall to the bottom and you would scoop up the top which is - it was not boiling but it was all melted, and that was the clear, clear dripping and then you'd pour it through a filter and pour it into little square boxes.

O.H.: What were boxes made of?

G.C.: Well, similar to those take-away things you get now, those alfoil take-away things and we used to have also containers like ---

P.C.: No, they weren't alfoil, it was a ---

G.C.: ---the upright ones like those big ---

P.C.: They were white cardboard ones.

G.C.: White cardboard, uprights, of a pint. You'd have a pint, and we used to sell a pint of dripping.

P.C.: Yes.

O.H.: Would that be one of your jobs to ---

P.C.: Absolutely.

G.C.: Yes, they were ours.

P.C.: That was part of his too, don't worry.

G.C.: It was a smelly job. That was mine, a smelly job.

O.H.: So did it continue through all your years of school that you would be in the butcher's at 6 am in the morning?

P.C.: Yes.

G.C.: Yes.

O.H.: What kinds of jobs did your father get you to do?

G.C.: After school, for example, I had to go there and clean up, because the back room, the back room of the butcher shop, which was the work room, during the day time, that's the room where they would bone things, or make sausages or mince, and you had to go there and clean up and that was an hour-and-a-half, a two-hour job.

P.C.: At least.

G.C.: You've got to understand at 5 o'clock everything closed and so Dad, at 5 o'clock he would leave because that only give him one hour with Mick Carmody next door in the pub.

P.C.: They had 6 o'clock closing then.

G.C.: So he didn't want us in the shop itself, go out the back and clean up. So we would have to go back and hose everything down, clean it all down, and then, you know, he would leave. And then at 6 o'clock, that was meal time, 6, 6.30 was meal time, because you've got to remember that at half-past-seven, "When a Girl Marries" is on. So it was all programmed and I used to get Primo and say, "Dad said you have to do it," and he would say, "Dad said you had to do it," so we used to play off each other in that way.

O.H.: What was in the back room in the work room?

P.C.: Well, the back room really is the room where you make your sausages, make your dripping and salami, or mortadella, whatever it might be, so there's a great big table, about half the size of this table here, and a mincer and everything - all the processing used to take place there. If you're going to make sausages you had to sort of put it in a big tub, throw in the flour, the bread and mix it all up with your hands and then put it through a sausage grinder and then make the sausages with the sausage skins and things. So that's messy. So that would have to be cleared and cleaned every day. If you left it for 24 hours that starts to firm up and it's very hard to - so the cleaning of the butcher - in the back room always had to be spotlessly clean at all times.

G.C.: As you walked in the back boning room, on the left hand side was this big long table which was a working table, it was made of jarrah, and stuck in a corner was a big tub and it was full of salted water and floating in the water was silverside, topsides ---

P.C.: Brisket.

G.C.: Brisket.

P.C.: Tongue.

G.C.: You might get the flap of the beef and it was rolled up like a roast beef and that was all just sitting there in salt. It wasn't refrigerated, just sitting there in salted water. Then you had the entrance going down into the shop itself, behind - there was a door there closing it off of course - behind that door there was another big working bench and in the corner was a gas-fired copper where (a), we would boil the water, you know, soapy water, to wash down the - you had to scrub the work top benches - and also that also doubled to make the dripping. You would clean it out because it was copper and all the offcuts of fat and so on would all get thrown in there and that was boiled off. Then under the table was another big work table where the mincer was, and that's where you used to make all your sausages and we tried to make fritz at one period of time, we made fritz there for a while. Dad was one of the first developers of mortadella and salami. Never successful for either, but he tried. And all the big cement floors, so it would all have to be hosed down. Is that a fair enough ---

G.C. ~~that~~: Enough of that story then.

P.C.: No, only simply because of the fact that mortadella was his big passion, you know, it's the one that got away from him.

G.C.: Mortadella is the Italian fritz, if you like.

P.C.: Exactly, and it's done with veal and pork and the thing is he went to Italy at one stage to find out how this stuff was made and the whole process, really, was part of the mincing process. The finer it became the better it was. So he was making these plates, these metal plates were probably about sort of the size of your fingernail, which was quite thick, and they were very, very fine little holes and the more you sort of put it through, the finer it became. Sometimes you'd have to put it through, two, three, four times. It would take ages to process this and when he thought he had that right, then the cooking process wasn't correct, and when he didn't have that right, it was the - when I say the cooking process, the heating process, because it's got to go into a certain gas oven which, that cooks it. He didn't get that right. So eventually he just chucked it all away. But what he really wanted, what was needed was one of those sort of blades that just keeps running through the meat and doesn't sort of stop, it just keeps going all the time. But this would've given him pain for about three years. It was hard work.

G.C.: He threw away a lot of meat, believe me.

P.C.: He threw away a lot of meat, that was the point.

G.C.: But he tried.

O.H.: So did he ever get to the point of selling it, or it never got ---

G.C.: Yes, yes.

P.C.: Eventually he did, but not in the - I mean, we developed a delivery for it to be sold to grocers, you see, but of course other companies were coming out who were far more - coming in from Melbourne actually, I mean, who was the Melbourne company who used to come in here? I can't think of their names, anyway ---

G.C.: Tibaldi was one of them.

P.C.: Tibaldi was another one, that's right. Not the ones that had anything to do with the latest problem in Adelaide here, but they had the processes going actually quite well. I think the biggest lot he ever made was something like about three or four hundred pounds which is - that is a lot of mortadella, because they're done in - they're about six or seven inches high and about two or three inches round, but he had to give it away. I felt for him.

O.H.: So would you be involved in that kind of thing, making mince and sausages?

P.C.: Of course. Yes, absolutely.

G.C.: Yes, yes, but that came - we were then in high school at that period of time. We're now talking the mid 50s now. That was the beginning of when you had the bigger influx of the Italian community and the demand was there because prior to that there just wasn't any demand, it was all personal. Indeed, even today a lot of the Italian families still make their own salami and sausage, they still go around killing the pig. As a little boy I

remember my father going to different houses and helping families - it becomes a tradition, of killing the pig. This is a peasant thing.

P.C.: Once a year.

G.C.: Once a year, they get a pig, they get a big boar pig, three, four hundred pound, and they would do all - they'd cut it all down, make salami, make sausage, make bloodwurst if you like, make all sorts of things and each family would store it, keep it throughout the year. This was a tradition from their ---

P.C.: Yesteryear.

G.C.: ---family life in Italy.

P.C.: I mean, a story ---

G.C.: Then they make wine and I remember my father went into the - in Franklin Street, he decided to make wine and he got a great big, I think, 5000 gallon tank and he cement-lined it. We went out and got the grapes from McLaren Vale and I remember we had a huge tub where we all - I don't know how old I was, but I was very little - and with our feet we're crushing all the grapes. My mother was in there, I was in there, there was another woman, I remember. I think you were in there, Primo?

P.C.: Yes.

G.C.: We're jumping on all these grapes, and I don't think they really knew what they were doing, quite frankly, and they filled up this cement-lined tank with this grape juice and this was in Franklin Street between the main house and the other two-storey house at the back, and I remember the stink for about a week when the wine ---

P.C.: Fermentation.

G.C.: ---started to ferment. The whole thing was thrown away, eventually it was thrown away, but I'll never forget that. So there was a trial to do all of that too, but the tradition was in those days to make your own wine, kill your own pig, which was ---

O.H.: I think you were going to say something about the killing of the pig or ---

P.C.: No, what I was going to say was simply the fact that - getting back to that - was simply the fact that I was speaking to Caj Amadio in Kangaroo Island at one stage or other and we talked about this sort of killing the pig and doing the salami and he said, "God, there goes a whole Sunday gone." He said, "You might as well go to the shop and go and buy one," because there's a lot of work involved in it, you know.

G.C.: A huge amount of work.

P.C.: The thing is you have to sort of put it away and you have to wait and watch it until it cures itself and it's cured by the right temperature and sometimes the temperature isn't

right and so consequently some of them go off. You might be off, you might have a third that's off and two-thirds might be okay, or you might have two-thirds that are off and you're only having a bit of a third, so he said, "Forget it," he said, "Buy your own." So there's an old tradition that's gone by the board.

O.H.: So what would your Dad go out to do? To help with the killing, or with the whole process.

P.C.: No, he would go along just to sort of assist because he was the butcher and he would show them, you know, which is the right way to strip pork off the lard, get the lard off - not the lard ---

G.C.: The skin.

P.C.: Yes, but the white ---

G.C.: The fat, yes.

P.C.: The fat.

G.C.: The lard.

P.C.: The fat off the skin and without sort of breaking the skin and not losing any of the fat, you see, and of course when you show these people how to do it, then, you know - he was the butcher, you know, so he used to help there.

G.C.: It was purely a friendly thing to do, to go around and just help out.

P.C.: I know we're getting short of time, I can see that.

O.H.: Yes, that's fine.

P.C.: But we haven't really come across my mother and the boarding house.

O.H.: No, we will definitely talk about that next time. Yes, we've got a lot to learn, yes.

P.C.: So that we will leave to another stage, because that's another story in itself.

O.H.: Yes, I'm sure.

P.C.: We're now getting into that period of time where - well, at least my memory is getting a little - a bit more understanding on what - getting a bit older ---

O.H.: Yes, next time we'll definitely focus on the beginnings, yes.

P.C.: But these are all the problems that were associated with my father at the time.

O.H.: Would you go with him when he went out and did that kind of thing?

P.C.: Occasionally I would, yes. There was no - I mean, we used to go down to Lockleys where the farms were. That's where all the vegetables used to come, to the market, and people at Lockleys would have, you know, 15, 20 acres or whatever it might be and so I always remember watermelon sessions down there and they'd, you know, do a salami session one day and then you'd try their watermelon, and a bit of that sort of, you know, swapping this for that and you'd come home with a whole heap of watermelons and oranges or whatever it might be, which was a great day for us, really.

O.H.: So did your father let you do the boning side of it as well, did you learn to do that?

P.C.: Yes, that was part of it, particularly when I eventually spent my three or four years at Mace's Meat Company, I'd come back after work and show him what I'd been taught there and of course that pleased him no end because there were certain shortcuts that I'd picked up from some of the specialists there. I mean, to see some of these boners strip these sheep off the bone, they do it in two, three minutes. It's just extraordinary, where he'd be there for 10, 15 minutes trying to do it.

O.H.: How would he do it, with the chopper as well, would he?

P.C.: No, no, with a knife, but the way he would go about it would be the too long a way, whereas they'd have a certain knife which had a solid length, where he used to prefer to have a thick knife to cut steak in one slice. Whereas when it gets to boning you'd have to have a certain knife to use that which gives you far more speed, and of course ---

G.C.: My father only ever had one knife, and that was it. I've still got that.

P.C.: And rolling roast beef was also another way they would show it as opposed to how he would do it.

O.H.: How would he do it?

P.C.: Well, he probably used too much fat. We'd use different cuts of beef rather than what they would use and combine a bit of both.

G.C.: When my father used to roll beef, an expert in doing beef, after you've finished rolling it and tying it up and there was ways of tying it, there was ways where it would be nice and firm, whereas when my father would do it, it was loose, it was floppy, so when you cut it, it would just fall apart. When Primo would do it, when Primo first came back after doing his apprenticeship, the beef was nice and firm, and Dad would always admire the fact and would always try to get him, would always push him to do the beef rolling.

O.H.: Okay, well, we're just about to run out of that side of tape anyway, so we will leave it there for today, and we will come back next week, or in a couple of weeks, whenever, and talk about the rest of it.

P.C.: Yes, okay.

**SECOND INTERVIEW WITH PRIMO AND GIOCONDO CAON RECORDED BY
KAREN GEORGE ON 25 JUNE 1996 AT CHESSER CELLARS**

TAPE 3 SIDE A

O.H.: Last week we talked quite a bit about your father and his butcher shops so this morning I thought we would talk a little bit about your mum. You said you had a lot of stories about her that you could tell. I think you said last week she was - one thing you called her was the dynamo and also a bit of a feminist. Can you just perhaps tell me just a little bit about what you remember about your mother when she was young.

P.C.: I think probably to set the ball rolling, my first understanding of her strength was how she tackled her problems from an Italian to an Australian which, as a young boy I remember her saying that I'd gone to the Dominican Convent and I was in grade 3 and she said, "What do you like at school?" and I said, "Oh, a lot of girls there." She said, "Well, why don't you go to a boys school" and I said, "Okay, I'll find out." So then I found out that Christian Brothers College was down in Wakefield Street and the young - my nextdoor neighbour was a fellow called Bob McNally and he went there and I said, "Can you take me to your school." He said, "Yeah." So I just went to the school. Just rolled in and the teacher, who was Brother Burke, said, "What's your name?" I said, "Primo Caon." He says, "Well, what are you doing here?" I said, "I've come to school." He said, "But who bought you here?" I said, "Bob McNally." So my mother or my parents didn't go and speak to the Christian Brothers at all. I just rolled up. It was mum's direction to go and do that. Of course he said, "Okay, you can stay here for school today," he said, "but I want to speak to your mother." So then that is when she went there to try and understand, with my father of course because he explained exactly that I was tired to the Dominican Convent and wanted to get into a boys school. That was my first understanding of, you know, if you want to get things done, go out and do it. That was basically the theme of how she dealt with things in life. I would go - she would send me off to the market by myself and ask for Johnnie apples and I said, "But there is no such things as Johnnie apples." She said, "Look, you go to the market and you ask for Johnnie apples and come back with Johnnie apples." So under pressure I went to the market. I went to the first stand where all these apples were and I said, "Do you got any Johnnie apples?" He said, "Of course we are," he said "But don't call them Johnnie apples. They're called Jonathans." So from there on I discovered Jonathon apples. That is my first understanding. My first beginning of seeing what she was about.

G.C.: In actual fact if you consider where they come from and they come into an organised system, organised English system here in Australia of which they are totally ignorant: (a) they couldn't express themselves in the language, they didn't know the way things were organised and what was expected of them and they just passed on responsibility to us, no matter what our age was. In actual fact this is how it occurred all the time and it is only later in life that my mother particularly had the strength and courage where she went out and did things herself, in her broken English, always just expressed herself but she got to the stage where she didn't care what people thought or what they considered, whether her English was good or not good or how she expressed herself but those early days it was - now I realise it was purely on their part that they were shy and embarrassed which put us into the firing line. We had to go and do things.

P.C.: I don't know. One of the first words I thought was very funny, my mother, when she didn't understand, she'd say, "Go to buggery." That is what she used to say. I see my brother smiling but I'm sure he remembers what she was saying but that didn't bother her. She didn't want to go over the refineries of it. The job had to get done. That was the point. Like even soling the shoes, our shoes, because we use to have holes in our shoes, of course, and of course she'd be there - there she is in the middle of - in the back yard in Franklin Street putting on leather on our shoes. I mean, she said, "Look, at your father, he's good for nothing," and she wasn't terrified to do it. There she was putting tacks into the leather, into the shoes and I can still see it now. It was just - you know, I thought that was a man's job but no, it didn't bother my mother.

O.H.: You said she worked a bit in the butcher shop.

P.C.: Well, she assisted in the shop in Wymouth Street, for sure. There was no question about that and I'm sure she assisted in Franklin Street as well but I think Franklin Street was where the boarding house factor really came into power and that's when my mother and father had that arrangement of who was doing what and with whatever it may be. I remember certain arguments going on about the prices my mother was - my father was charging my mother for meat because she objected to that, you see, was that part of the arrangement.

O.H.: So does that mean that your father actually sold meat to your mum?

G.C.: We are now talking in the late forties when they moved from Wymouth Street - the butcher shop moved from Wymouth Street to Franklin Street. We moved from Wymouth Street to Brown Street and it was the beginning of the immigrants, the wave of immigrants after the war. It is like downstairs, in the room downstairs, there were my father's eldest brother's two eldest sons and a cousin. Just ordinary farm boys. The three of them went to work for Albert Del Fabbro the day after they arrived. My mother started to cook and wash for them. Of course this was the start of the West End boarding houses and my mother was one of three ladies who developed the situation where all these young people coming over, these immigrants, where there was a place for them to stay. With the advent of these guys needing full board and lodging, my father and mother came to an arrangement whereby she had to pay for the meat because they were paying so much money per week for food and lodging and I remember many an argument that mother and father had: I didn't get this, you didn't get that, but he would say, "I saw you go into the shop and take a brisket or take some - a piece of meat but that was for you to eat. How can I separate what you and the kids are going to eat and what the men are going to eat," and many, many arguments went on. A lot of it was in fun and jest because they pooled all their resources together but my mother noticed that my father, whenever possible, would go next door to Mick Carmody's Flagstaff Hotel and he'd start playing the horses and she was getting very upset about that and in those days you had 6 o'clock closing and these guys coming after work would all - they'd all be in the pub between quarter past 5 and 6 o'clock, they're all swilling down all their beer and then coming in and having dinner. The atmosphere was convivial, jovial, very friendly. My father was treated like the patriarch and it was all good - all done in good jest and fun and I remember great huge pots on the gas stove with steaming whatever it was there and these young men, of course, they were immensely hungry. They're not used to concrete work. The Italians, the

first Italians that came here all they did was concrete and they would eat enormous plates of soup and pasta and meat, it was incredible.

O.H.: So did she start to take boarders at Brown Street and then moved to Franklin Street?

G.C.: No. At Brown Street we had my father's uncle and my father's cousin, Angelo Caon and Dimitrio Caon. They're the only two. It was kept very much a family. From then on, for the next - I would say between the late forties and the late fifties, because we left Franklin Street in the late fifties, yes.

O.H.: So you moved first to number 237, that is where you had your butcher shop and lived before you bought the other part.

G.C.: No. 237 was where the butcher shop was. 239 was the house next door and behind it.

O.H.: So by the time you moved you were already living in the two - the shop was in 237 and your house was in 239.

G.C.: Mm, that's right, yes.

O.H.: So how did it come about that she developed it into a full blown boarding house?

G.C.: Well, one brings the other and there was my mother in Franklin Street, a Mrs Stocco in Waymouth Street, and Mrs Corinda in Waymouth Street. Mrs Stocco had a very big block of land. That is where they had the bowling green, I wouldn't say it was a green, they called it bocchia - and boule the French call it - but it was only an earthenware flattened area where all the young men would play bowls, which was a very popular game in Italy at the time and these three women, from - first they started from cousins and nephews and whatever and then just the word around, in our parts of Italy, just got around so these people - young men looking to immigrate would write letters and one would help the other. My father would always guarantee a place to sleep and Albert Del Fabbro always guaranteed work for them and this was how the whole thing started. My mother ended up between 40 and even at sometimes 60 people living there. The back area, the courtyard was cobblestones and behind that where Crumpets factory was, they converted that into three big rooms downstairs and there were four smaller rooms upstairs. Each room slept four or five men and they all shared. They all shared - one wardrobe would be shared between three men. Downstairs, one room would be four or five men sleeping there. My father built a special toilet block at the back for the men to shower and so on. Eventually, the cobblestones was all concreted. They had bikes. There was a bicycle rack - they had two. One for the bottom and they used to have them hanging up, all the bikes hanging up just like pieces of meat and everyone had their own hook to hang their bikes up and it was very, very convivial. My mother, on the other side, I've never - I remember going to school and I was in primary school, grade 4, grade 5, I use to walk from Franklin Street to Christian Brothers College. I use to leave home at 8 o'clock or quarter to eight or half past seven and I'd pick up Maurie Cappo on the way because he lived in Grote Street and we'd just walk over together. My mother would be there washing. She

had a copper with a wood fire underneath and I remember going to school worrying about her, thinking that when I come home I'm going to find her dead because I'd come at 4 o'clock, school would finish at quarter past three, twenty past three and I'd get home at 4, quarter past four and she'd still be washing. It was all done by hand. There was no washing machines. All cooked in the smoky little laundry that she had and she'd be washing. Mondays was her washing day and I used to have to try and help her - I use to pick up the pillow cases, one of the men or whoever was home would help her fold up all the sheets. There was an enormous amount of work. I use to hate Mondays. I use to watch her slave over this hot - she had two cement troughs where she would have hot water, one for rinsing, one for washing, all done by hand.

O.H.: So would she be washing the linens for ---

G.C.: She'd wash all the linens for all the beds. The majority of the men would wash their own clothes but sometimes some of those guys just couldn't do it so they - she would charge them a small fee and she would do all their washing also.

O.H.: Where would she do all her cooking then?

G.C.: In the - downstairs there was a very big room. It was 20 feet by 24 feet. In one corner there was a four-burner gas stove. There was a long double bowl stainless steel sink and the traditional fireplace where they put - they had a wood stove so she would use the wood stove. She would bake in the oven or she would cook sauces on top and all this was done - then she had the gas stove also. She had an ordinary Kelvinator fridge but before that she had one of those little - I can't think of the name now where you would hang all your meats from the ceiling, she had one of those and she had an ice box. I remember the old ice boxes where the man would come up with the ice blocks, he would put hessian bags over it to keep it cool for a long time. So there was an enormous struggle all the time, continuous to maintain everything but she started, as I said, with the three nephews and then her brother arrived and so on and then it just grew from that. So as the boarding house thing developed, she grew with it.

O.H.: Did she have help to do the cooking or did she do it on her own?

G.C.: She did it for quite a few years by herself, by herself, and it was in the late 50s that my father brought out his elder brother. His elder brother Leandro was the father of 13 children and the father - the Duillio and Galdino, who were the first two nephews that my father brought out, the first two sons of my father's elder brother Leandro - you have got to appreciate they had to pay for their own trips. All these people coming over paid for their own fare but they saved a fair amount of money and bought an old house at Stepney and when the house was available, my father guaranteed mortgage and all the rest of it. Then my father, with the help of the two nephews, brought out his brother and the rest of the family, his wife and the rest of the 13 kids. That was a tremendous reunion and one of the daughters, one of the daughters came to help but just before her, my mother had another couple, who came from the same town as my mother, Resana in Italy, and Augusta and Adelia Bernardi were their names and they lived, young couple, upstairs where we did. In other words, my father and mother had the front bedroom facing Franklin Street, Augusta and Adelia had the back bedroom. In the other front bedroom over the butcher shop was where my brother, myself

and my uncle, who is my mother's brother, we slept. Behind there there was a small room with two boarders. Behind that room there was another larger room with four boarders. So you had basically six rooms upstairs - sorry, five rooms upstairs. So that is quite a few people who lived upstairs, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen.

P.C.: Yes. In fact it was a good job ---

G.C.: There were 13 people sleeping upstairs.

O.H.: What was it like for you to be surrounded by all these people?

G.C.: You know, one of my ---

P.C.: I think that was one of our best - sorry.

G.C.: One of my recollections that - now I think how sad it really was. I remember my mother, these men, these men coming over, they're working for Albert del Fabbro concrete workers and drinking in the pub, these were men. I remember on one occasion my mother sitting by the bedside of a room next to where my brother and I were, sitting by the bedside with this young man and she was talking to him. He was crying. She was sitting there. I got up - it must have been 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. She was speaking very calmly to him and just quietening him down and I thought oh, he's sick. In actual fact, I realised then that my mother was being a mother to him, if you like, and this man, he wasn't a grown man - in my eyes he was a great big man - he was a 19 year old boy. He felt a bit homesick to this strange country, couldn't speak the language, he was sun burnt, his hands were blistered and I thought how my mother really, basically, was a mother to all the - these men, who I thought men, they were just boys, lads, come to this strange country.

P.C.: This is where she was wonderful. The rationalisation, as my brother was saying, rationalisation in the fact that she would comfort them. That was the whole point. She would take all these boys, men, under her wing. That was the whole point of it. She demanded respect from them in the sense of: well, if you don't know what you're talking about, you know, I'll talk to you about it and show you which is the right way to go about it. That was the whole point.

O.H.: Did they stay very long? Would there be ---

P.C.: Some were there for quite some time.

G.C.: Oh, yes, yes. Look, some guys 7 or 8 ---

P.C.: Would have been 5 or 6 years.

G.C.: Even more - 7 or 8 years - and a lot of them eventually brought out their girlfriends from Italy. A lot of them married. A lot of them married Italian girls here, some married Australian girls here.

P.C.: Until they were settled. She made to them - her day was starting breakfast 7 o'clock, you know, 40 or 50 men for breakfast in two sittings.

G.C.: What they would have for breakfast is cafe latte but not cafe latte as we know it here, it was a bowl with bread.

P.C.: Large bowl.

G.C.: Large bowl with bread, lots of bread, coffee and milk.

P.C.: That's all it was. They use to put the milk - they'd make their big bowl of black coffee and milk and fill it up with bread and, of course, she worked with a wood oven, of course and so consequently she'd be there turning the coffee in the - oh, dear - it was an old number 10 can which you would get, probably, Rosella tomato sauce from and one of the men had made a little sort of turning, with a piece of iron and cut the top off the number 10 can and that is how the coffee used to be roasted, over the wood stove.

O.H.: So she would roast the beans.

P.C.: She'd roast the beans.

G.C.: Roast the beans.

P.C.: Of course she couldn't have it any other way. I mean, if he had his way, he'd be doing that every morning himself because he is a mad coffee freak but the smell of coffee would always permeate through the whole house as well. Getting back to the point, breakfast would be a double turnover and then she'd make lunches for all of them as well and then have dinner for all of them as well, with two sittings.

G.C.: Lunch ---

P.C.: Seven days a week.

G.C.: Lunch was bread from Continental Bakery which was in Gouger - Grote Street, Continental Bakery - two thick slices of bread and in the middle would be a piece of salami that my father would make or cheese. That was it, salami or cheese, salami or cheese, day in day out. When I say thick pieces of bread, I meant thick pieces of bread and wrapped up in newspaper and these men would get this great big lump of bread under their arm and off they'd go.

O.H.: What would she make for dinner generally?

P.C.: Generally speaking, there'd always be a soup of some description. Whether it would be beef, whether it would be chicken or a vegetable like a minestrone, whatever but the pots were huge great pots, they were massive. There would always be a soup and a meat dish or a stew but never any sweets.

G.C.: And lots of bread.

P.C.: And lots of bread. Bread was the big comforter, of course, to fill them up. That was the point.

G.C.: There was one great guy who was called Panozzo, what was his name?

P.C.: Posibon, was it?

G.C.: No, no, starts with a "P". He was a monster of a man. His hands would easily cover a football. He was huge. A simpleton really. A humble simpleton, if you like. My mother would say, Panozzo, eat bread, eat bread because he was eating too much of everything else. He was eating other people's portions so to make it all fair - everyone would laugh, of course. The whole atmosphere was always convivial, congenial and people always had a hand out to help everybody else but everyone use to laugh at Panozzo. Basically he would eat one loaf of bread easily and have his portion of soup and so on.

O.H.: Where would she shop, your mother, to get all the stuff she'd need.

P.C.: Generally speaking, of course the meat would come from my father, of course but she'd ride her bike to the market. She'd ride her bike to the market for the vegetables. Then she'd ride her bike to the Farmers Union stand, which is now next door to Balfours cakes, so she'd ride her bike down there and go and buy whole bins of chickens.

G.C.: I must tell you that story because I was involved in that one. Groceries she would get from Rosetto. Rosetto's was on the corner of Gray Street and Hindley Street. They were the only Italian place there. That is where she started from. Then eventually she went to Star Grocery but Rosetto's was her favourite place. Later on, and I am talking now in the early 50s, in Morphet Street, next door to Balfours, running between Waymouth and Franklin, is where they had the chicken auction and I don't know, some government body would have this auction or council and all the chickens were in what were called pens, little cages and she would often take me and she would go on Thursdays to the auction and because the auctioneer, who admired my mother and I didn't know why - I learned afterwards - didn't call her Giuseppina because people would say what is her name, what is your name, and she would say Giuseppina, translation is Josephine. So they couldn't say Giuseppina so they called her Pina. This particular auctioneer, I think, would enjoy her - you'd get so many people there bidding and I had no idea who they are, I still don't know, but everytime she would bid she would always win a cage, a pen and in the pen would be four or five roosters or four or five hens or smaller chickens whatever. At the end of the auction you had to go and pay for them, the auctioneer who would give you a little slip. On the slip was a number of your pen that you won. Then I would have to go up with her, hold the bike, she would then put her hands in the pen, grab a chicken from the feet and put the head between two of her knuckles and twist. She would break the chicken's neck and she would do it very quickly. Then she would somehow interweave the legs so you get two chickens with their legs interwoven hanging over the handlebar of the bicycle and we would walk down from the auction place down to Franklin Street and I would say, without question, 30 to 40 chickens hanging over the handlebar of the bicycle. Sometimes I would run and sometimes, because she was in a hurry, she would ride. The auctioneer, when they see her like this they use to laugh and they use to marvel how quickly she would twist the chickens neck and just kill it instantly.

O.H.: How often would she get you to help with things in the boarding house?

P.C.: As often as she could. You know, the chicken sales were at least once a week and so it would be after school, grab us after school and just go down and give her a hand, etcetera, but I think when you say - it was Farmers Union, it was.

G.C.: Farmers Union, exactly right. Who used to do the auction was Farmers Union, yes.

P.C.: That's who it was at the time.

G.C.: Yes, Farmers Union.

O.H.: What other kinds of jobs would you do in connection with the boarding house?

P.C.: Try and pluck the chickens.

G.C.: I use to hate that job because, again here we have the copper in the laundry, wood-fired copper, boiling water. You had to hold the chickens by the legs, dunk it in, get all the feathers nice and wet, sit there and pluck it and the smell use to drive me wild. I didn't like it at all. Another one of my jobs after school was to make all the sandwiches for the men. That's why I said earlier those slices of bread, pretty large. That was my job. I use to hate that job.

O.H.: What about you, were there any ---

P.C.: Along the same lines, if not, try and help with the dishwashing or whatever it might be. I mean 60 plates, you know, washed because I used to try and do homework, of course, but anyway but she always was very responsible in trying to get her money to live, that is what it was all about, until she discovered she actually could sell beer so she got involved with selling beer, you see.

O.H.: How did she do that?

P.C.: Well, she'd buy the beer from the pub next door and store it in my father's fridge. Then he'd sell it by the bottle or by the case, and it was called sly-grogging.

G.C.: That's true.

P.C.: Were you going to mention that?

G.C.: No, never thought about it, but its true.

P.C.: So then the place got very busy after a while.

G.C.: This was the unity of the West End. The three women, Mrs Stocco, Mrs Corinda and my mother, they all used to do it. They all use to sly-grog. Of course the publicans knew, the publicans knew because you had 6 o'clock closing.

P.C.: Had big sales.

G.C.: Europeans are not used to 6 o'clock closing, I mean how uncouth.

P.C.: I mean, that 6 o'clock closing really was something else. I mean, the men use to just pour in that pub to get their quick gulp of beer and then another and another one, you know, and by 6 o'clock they were out in the street, you know, and ready for dinner. I mean, really, it's ridiculous when you think about it.

O.H.: So she would sell to people other than her boarders?

P.C.: Well, eventually word got out that she was selling beer on Saturdays and Sundays or Saturday nights or Sundays, you know, particularly Sundays and then word got out that, you know, she was moving quite a bit of beer but then the story was that she was warned to be careful, that the police will come around because the network was getting bigger and bigger but gee, there were many times when I was doing - I was a cadet at the army and I remember some time coming home - I was only 14 at the time - when the Slavs, Yugoslavs used to come in a bit more and so consequently they would try and buy a case of beer at the time and she'd be there with her hands in her pocket trying to sell a case of beer. That used to happen at night so I remember them coming in. It got too big.

G.C.: Sometime Primo and I with Mick Carmody, Mick and Dean Carmody would prepare behind the hotel, because this all had to be unseen, of course - a good Irish publican - and he prepared 20, 30 cases of beer and Primo and I would have to bring it around, always after hours, and bring it into the butcher shop. Of course, you'd have all the meat in the cool room and you'd have 10 cartons of beer and so on. On weekends it was when the beer sales were on, particularly Sundays after church. In the courtyard at the back you'd have all the men who would buy a bottle of beer, but then at night time - when Primo is saying it got a little bit out of hand, it did because we were in bed, 10 o'clock, 11 o'clock at night, there was a knock on the door and my mother would come and wake me up and see who's at the door and someone is saying they want some beer, do you know who they are. My mother would say: look, you've got to look after the dollar, you've got to look after the - pennies, sorry - look after the pennies so she would come down and sometimes, you know, it was very - she was concerned but she would always try and make that extra shilling and she would sell them a carton of beer.

O.H.: Do you ever remember any trouble as a result of that?

G.C.: Once, once.

P.C.: Oh, I remember a couple of fights.

G.C.: Once the ---

P.C.: I remember one time ---

G.C.: With men you are talking about?

P.C.: Oh, yes.

G.C.: Men drinking.

P.C.: Men - well, I don't know what the fight was about but I know there were at least eight or 10 men in the fight, there was a knife pulled and a hand cut.

G.C.: I don't remember that.

P.C.: He was Esther's brother, the younger brother.

G.C.: Oh, right.

P.C.: What is his name, he is now passed away.

G.C.: I don't know.

P.C.: About 7 or 8 years ago.

G.C.: I don't remember.

P.C.: Anyway, I remember him coming out and his hand was cut because they tried to arrest - not arrest meaning - not arrest in police terms but arrest this guy because something had happened to take the knife off his hands and - it was a bit of a brawl. That's the only one I can remember.

G.C.: But was that because of drinking or just an argument?

P.C.: I don't know what the incident ---

G.C.: Just an argument.

P.C.: Could have been an argument but that was the only one in all those years that was of any great violence.

G.C.: My mother did get charged once. The police did come there.

P.C.: I didn't know that.

G.C.: Yes, the police did come there and it was when Augusta and Adelia Bernardi, this young couple living upstairs were helping out, the police came and confiscated all the beer and they went to court and my mother was charged.

P.C.: I do not remember that.

G.C.: She was fined for selling alcohol. Of course, there was no more beer sold but then after a couple of months it started again but very slowly, much more subdued. That

break really stopped the network. People were told that she was charged but also the other women, Mrs Stocco I know was charged also. The police knew ---

O.H.: Just tell me a little bit about Mrs Stocco, that you remember.

P.C.: To me, she was, I think, the biggest of the three.

G.C.: Yes, she had a very big property and she had a bigger house, bigger area where people would congregate. I remember the talk of the West End was who was the better cook.

P.C.: That was always the story.

G.C.: So there was a little bit of competition going on between my mother and Mrs Stocco. Mrs Stocco had three helpers, three helpers. Bigger premises. She had two sons, Bruno and Aldo. Aldo was a school teacher.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: Bruno was just ---

P.C.: A mechanic.

G.C.: Mechanic.

P.C.: In fact he had a place called High Speed Service Station.

G.C.: She - what can I tell you about Mrs Stocco. Both her and the other woman, Mrs Corinda both come from the same area of Italy where my mother came from. There's not much I can remember about her.

P.C.: All I can say to you, I remember ---

G.C.: They had a daughter too, I think. Didn't they have a daughter, Mary?

P.C.: I can't place the daughter but as I remember it - I remember it with found memories because they had a grapevine and that is where the men in the summer time would sit outside under the grapevine.

G.C.: They would play bowls, yes.

P.C.: On the other side she had, I think, three courts.

G.C.: To play bowls.

P.C.: Yes, which were fairly large, fairly long - they've got to be at least, what, 60 or 70 yards long - no, wouldn't be as long as that. They'd be 50 yards long to play boccia and that is why most of the Italians used to congregate there to do their bocce playing.

G.C.: It was more of a social place.

P.C.: More of a social thing, yes, but she had more boarders though, I think.

G.C.: Yes, she had more boarders and she had the space where the men could socialise, you know, off the street and have their quiet drink of beer, their glass of wine.

O.H.: The other one was Mrs Cescato.

G.C.: Cescato.

P.C.: Cescato, yes, which her daughter was one of the head prefects ---

G.C.: Mary. Mrs Cescato.

P.C.: No, Nevis.

G.C.: Nevis Cescato, the eldest daughter, married my cousin, the first son of my father's elder brother who my father brought out to Australia.

P.C.: Yes, who was probably the head Italian - the head Italian, that's wrong, I retract that - the head Caon here. He's probably about 68 or 69 now, and he is the eldest of all the Caon's here at the moment.

O.H.: So what was her boarding house like?

P.C.: It was a bit smaller. It was similar in one way to Franklin Street. It was a bit smaller but still had a double storey building. She would have probably had about a half ---

G.C.: She had a very small, just a two storey smaller terrace house, if you like, and she would have had 15 boarders, that's about all. She had a very small affair. She was a much more discerning person.

P.C.: I do remember her grabbing me one day and dragging me off the street and said, "Come here I want you to give me a hand," and I said, "Yes, okay". Walked in there and there were four turkeys. She said, "I want you to chop the turkey's head off". I said, "Well, okay" but I didn't expect the amount of blood that came out so she held the turkey, kept it in place while I chopped its head off and there was blood all over the bloody place. Anyway, we did it. You know, "You're a good butcher boy," was what she said to me.

G.C.: I remember one day my father would say, "Look, Mrs Stocco wants to see you." So I went around, ran around to Mrs Stocco's house and I said, "Mrs Stocco my father said you wanted to see me." She said, "What for?" "I don't know, he told me to come to see you." She said, "What's today?" I said, "April". What's the date, 1 April. She said, "No, I don't want to see you, Mrs Corinda wants to see you." So I went to see Mrs Cescato - we use to call her Corinda. "Mrs Corinda," I said, "Mrs Stocco said you wanted to see me" and she said, "What for?" "I don't know." She said "What's today?" I said, "April 1st." She said,

"No, no, you go home to your father tell him that today is April 1st." So I went home to my father and I said, "Today's April 1st, Dad." He looked at me and said, "You stupid boy."

O.H.: What was the relationship like between your mum and the other two ladies?

P.C.: It was reasonably - it was pleasantly competitive. That's the way I would ---

G.C.: Yes, exactly.

P.C.: They use to sort of support one another in the best sense.

G.C.: Support one another. They would send boarders - if there was a problem with a boarder they would pass on the information. If a certain boarder needed help they would always be there or if they wanted to swap - if they needed a bit of food or a bit of extra thing of cheese, for example, my father would go down to Railway Terrace, Mile End, at Farmers Union and buy those whole big rings of cheese. He'd buy, 20, 30 40 of them and keep them in the cellar to have them matured.

P.C.: In fact, he won the butcher championship there when they had a competition.

G.C.: Yes, they had one competition and he had that friendly rivalry between boarding houses and our father happened to win it. Just a little bit of fun but getting back to the cheese, like Mrs Stocco would want some cheese so Dad would give her one or two cheeses and so on. It was a very, very convivial, congenial - helpful but the whole atmosphere of the West End in those days was one of help, assistance, helping one another, you know ---

P.C.: It was general support and that was not just with the Italians. It was also with the Lebanese who were there, with the Greeks, the Maltese and that was all supportive.

O.H.: You were talking about some of the characters you remember last week and the Fimery family was a family that you mentioned.

P.C.: Yes, that is one that you would have to chase up. That would be a big story for you. It's the Jack Broadstock story which involved the Fimery family.

O.H.: What do you remember about them?

G.C.: Crazy Irishmen. The bottle-o's. You had in those days the man with the horse and the cart and bags of bottles and you had chaff bags. You had to fill up all the bottles and they would come around and pick them up and you'd hear them going up and down the street yelling bottle-o, bottle-o, just like you see in the old-day movies. The Fimery's were - they use to get up to - "mischief" is the word. That's the only way I can - in every way of the word. They were wood merchants too.

P.C.: Wood merchants as well.

G.C.: Wood merchants so you would have to get your wood, they'd get the bottles and there was a little bit of mischief. There was always that underlying mystery of something is always happening.

O.H.: Would you have a story that would give me an example of that type of thing?

P.C.: Well, he was involved with SP booking, as you know. I remember the SP bookies coming around to my father, you know, wanting all the betting used to go on so they used to control the betting in the West End. Also the wood. The Marsdens ---

G.C.: Wasn't there some story that Fimery was the betting with certain hotels and no-one else was allowed to go there and be an SP bookie.

P.C.: There was a bit of that too and that's what I'm saying, that's where they sort of had control - he had control of SP booking of the West End.

G.C.: You didn't come over to my turf and try and take a bet without me knowing sort of business.

P.C.: That sort of thing and of course, the Jack Broadstock story is also part of that as well which is the West Adelaide Football Club and I'm sure that's another big story that will come to air at some stage. Well, I'd like to know about it myself actually. I remember him as a great figure of a man because of his football prowess but they virtually controlled the West End and the family who had - was the Marsdens, the Marsdens were the people - in fact Claudette and her sister, I can't think of her sister's name.

G.C.: Julie.

P.C.: Julie, yes, the two sisters are still alive and very dynamic, very dynamic.

O.H.: When you say they controlled the West End in what sense?

P.C.: Well, controlled the West End because of the SP booking, because of property, I don't know how much property they would have had and the wood yard they had there - that's ---

G.C.: I think there is a bit of myth also in it because they use to deliver - pick up the bottles, deliver the wood, and they used to go around the whole West End area.

P.C.: Control it.

G.C.: They were well-known. Well-known so perhaps a little story started somewhere and it just was created, made into a bit a myth and so on but they are very jovial --
-

P.C.: Happy people.

G.C.: Fun, fun people, mischievous fun people.

P.C.: What I can say with you is I think our upbringing was - we were very fortunate with the upbringing that we had because it was open, it was supportive, it was fun to a certain degree, there was not a lot of violence in any way or any form and I think we were lucky in that sense that we had that sort of interaction with so many different nationalities. That's how I would put it.

G.C.: You would see it today, today 30 years on, 40 years on, where a lot of the West Enders moved down to Thebarton, Torrensville and when we would see them, if I saw them in the street, you would look at each other, 40 years older, 45 years older and the memories would just come back and there was a fraternity - an emotional feeling between you, there is an amount of respect, of love and it is a wonderful feeling. It is a wonderful feeling that today this big family, that I feel part of, the big West End multicultural family is a wonderful thing to have been involved in and still am involved in because I see these people from time to time. It was so evident when my mother was buried three years ago, the church was so full of her boarders, all the old West Enders and it was lovely to see these people who we haven't seen for so long. Beautiful.

P.C.: I must remind you that in those times the food factor was just as you would know it, corned beef and dripping because that was just the English fare. To try and have Italian food, etcetera, was very difficult. I mean, restaurants are just starting to come into fruition over the last 20 years and, of course, the Italian restaurant is around every corner, as is Chinese, but in those times it was very hard. I mean, I used to swap my sandwiches for a ---

G.C.: Fritz and tomato sauce.

P.C.: For fritz and tomato sauce, so there was a lot of that going on too.

O.H.: Did your mum cook Italian style and Australian style?

P.C.: No, no, no. Never sweets and always Italian. That's all we ---

G.C.: As best she could with the ingredients that she had at hand.

O.H.: Did she have trouble getting the things that she needed?

G.C.: Oh, yes, yes. As I said, it was all passed on between one another. You had some of the Italian peasants, farmers down at Findon. They would grow radicchio. Who ever heard of radicchio 45 years ago but they bought over the seeds themselves. They used to plant them. They use to pass it on. It was all passed on one to the other. When the plant went into seed like Mrs Stocco would give some to my mother. My mother couldn't plant anything because we didn't have anything there but the farmers would come and I remember some of these guys would come over from Findon, my father would do a bit of a swap and so on.

P.C.: You know, from vegetables to meat.

G.C.: Dad was very friendly with the Potts family from Langhorne Creek. Old Johnny Potts' father would come down with an old buckboard and he would have eight or 10

boxes of flagons of Bleasdale claret and this was what our boys would drink and then every now and then while my father was selling a leg of lamb someone would have a flagon of plonk. In those days you never had wine. It was plonk. So we also sold, apart from Farmers Union cheeses, we sold Bleasdale claret and sly grog and even wine - beer, I am sorry.

O.H.: Do you remember anything of George Joseph, you said he lived in that area?

P.C.: Just that he was successful and he ---

G.C.: He was - go on.

P.C.: He was successful in the sense that he was very supportive of the Italians. He would always be very friendly. All I can remember is that the Joseph family was in Waymouth Street where they used to sort of - used to have the machines to make suits and things like that or dresses or whatever it was but the Joseph's there were well respected at the time and progressive. Well, obviously because he was Lord Mayor for a certain period of time.

G.C.: The big thing ---

P.C.: He use to spend his time having coffee with my brother in latter years down in Hindley Street of a morning. He used to get there - Hindley was not then as it is now and that's where George would've got a lot of support from the political scene as well.

G.C.: George's thing in the early days of the West End was he was a tertiary student. He was an educated person. He was the person that everyone respected because he was smart. He wasn't like one of us but he was one of us because he always said hello, never a bad word, always helpful but he was a lawyer. He was studying. He was, you know, he wasn't a dumbo all of us were. He was one of the boys but he wasn't one of the boys and he maintained always, throughout his life, he has always maintained that whole thing. I'll give an example. When I purchased a business in Leigh Street and it was owned by a Lebanese fellow, this gentleman said, "Oh", he said, "if you don't mind, I'd like to do settlement at my lawyer." I said, "Who is your lawyer?", George Joseph. "Fine," I said. So the day of settlement came and I met him on the premises and we both walked around to Waymouth Street where George's practice was. We walked in there. He says: "g'day, young Caon", g'day to the other fellow. He says: "You two know each other?" Yes. "You agree on a price?" Yes, okay, settlement done. That was it. Without any fanfare. It was a question of honesty. This was the old West End thing. If you said something you were held to it. If you said I will do this, it was expected. George has always been ---

P.C.: Like that.

G.C.: Yes, always been like that.

O.H.: The other councillor that you hear a lot about in the West End is Bert Edwards, do you remember him?

P.C.: God, you dropped a little beauty there, didn't you? You did your homework, didn't you? All we know about Bert Edwards was he use to stand on the corner, on a box, on the corner of Gray Street and Franklin Street and give his political talk. He would be around there, I think I might have heard four or five and people use to say, "Bert Edwards is coming, Bert Edwards is coming". Then a story got out one day and said: no, don't go there, he is a poofster because he likes little boys. Now, whilst I say that, I don't know the story. I'm just giving your hearsay so I don't want to be committed to run him down if it's not true. I make that proviso with that but that was the thing that I remembered at the time. I went to those talks on the corner just to listen what he was saying and he was obviously looking for support from the multicultural people but he was - what he did, I believe, was good in support.

G.C.: The grapevine of West End was tremendous. Now, if you wanted to can someone, you just mention that, oh, so and so is a homosexual, so everyone would stay away. It was very fast. Very, very fast but the stories were passed on one to the other and ---

P.C.: It got around quick.

G.C.: Very, very quick.

O.H.: As boys you said that the West End felt like a safe to be. Were there places that you were warned not to go at all, places you weren't to go.

P.C.: No.

G.C.: The cemetery at night. No, it was - I felt safe everywhere, everywhere. It was just a fun time.

P.C.: Sure, you know, the West End itself was at the particular time - I don't remember seeing any violence, I don't remember seeing a lot of violence at all but I think because it was the brewery and because there were a lot of multicultural people there, you mustn't go down there. As I reported to you before, the whipcracking in the middle of the street with the Aborigines, you don't go down and see that. We were in the middle of that and, of course, you know, when people hear that sort of thing you mustn't go down there, that sort of thing. We never ---

G.C.: Everything was possible. I remember one year we had a locust plague and I am standing in the middle of Franklin Street with a tennis racquet, tennis racquet one time and then a table tennis bat and we were having a competition how many we could kill.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: Literally, coming down Franklin Street were just plagues and plagues of locusts.

P.C.: It would have gone on all day. That's very true.

G.C.: Oh, yes, absolutely. Just cleaned out everything. Went on for more than one day. Just small little stories like that come to mind. I remember we were playing with the

Greeks, the Greeks - Sturt Street was the Greek compartment. You had Coni Bambacas and Sammy Adonis and you had the Retsas boys there and we would meet in the West Terrace parklands near the playground near the cemetery, we would throw rocks at each other and then all of a sudden we remember that Bertie Thatcher had to be home by 12 o'clock and it was 1 o'clock so he would run home - we would all run, chase him because we would go - when he would go - he couldn't go through the front door, he would have to go jump over the fence at the back from the back lane. So we would go with him and give him a bunkie over the back fence and he would jump the back fence and then his mother would come out and belt him and we would sit at the back and start: oh, Bertie Thatcher, good one, he's going to get beaten up by his mother.

P.C.: A guy, I don't know if he is still alive or not, a fellow called Reg Ellis ---

O.H.: Just before - the fights between - that Giocondo is talking about, were they in earnest or was it more like a fun type of thing?

P.C.: There were a few, you know, dago things, that sort of thing, but nothing like - I mean, Sturt Street was the place where you couldn't go down there otherwise there could build up a fight but that never occurred, never occurred because that was the Protestant school, you see.

O.H.: So was there a tension between the Protestants and - - -

P.C.: No, not really but you mustn't go down there because it is a Protestant school and could be bit of tension so that was the only tension that I remembered at the time, that was all, really.

O.H.: So the Sturt Street boys they were the Greek boys, were they?

P.C.: No, it was a combination of Greek, Maltese and Australian. You know, they had the fife band there and the Sturt Street Fife Band was one of the best in Adelaide but, you know, you were warned that as a precaution, you know, they're Sturt Street kids and you could get into a fight. That was all that I can remember. I mean, see what Con got to say as well.

O.H.: We were just talking about the Sturt Street boys and I asked Primo whether the fights you were talking about were in earnest or whether they were in fun.

G.C.: No, no. It was all fun. Every now and then one of us would get a little bit cranky or something but it was all done in fun. I see these guys today and it brings back tremendous memories, just fun memories. The certain amount of respect that it is there, it is just one big brotherhood, really.

O.H.: Some of the other people you mentioned last week, you talked about the Quinn family and how they had a big cottage and you were envious of it. I wondered how come they had a big cottage?

P.C.: They were the one opposite.

G.C.: Right. Opposite us in Franklin Street you had three big, I wouldn't say cottage, stone-fronted - I suppose cottage if you like.

P.C.: They were next door to the deli - the Home Brew delicatessen.

G.C.: We were all living one on top of each other, beside each other and you had these people who had, you know, their own bedroom and their own garden. Of course we had a cobbled back yard and we had the footpath to play with and we used to sit in the gutter and play our marbles and run down with our little toy trucks but, you know, they had a garden and flowers and lawn and in summertime we use to sleep on the roof.

O.H.: Really?

G.C.: Yes.

P.C.: That's true.

G.C.: We had a little balcony and the heat was tremendous of course, and we had this bow-shaped roof and we use to lay on the roof just to try and cool off. These people were sleeping on blankets on their lawn, you know. You think, oh, how lucky they are.

O.H.: So why were they better off?

P.C.: Because there was no sharing of any beds.

G.C.: Well, they had a lawn. They had flowers. They didn't have to share.

P.C.: You know, all we had was a balcony and a roof.

O.H.: The Heywood family, you said you were very upset when they moved.

G.C.: Yes, he was my first childhood friend that I remember, when they left. It was Bertie Heywood - Bert or Ian Heywood, I just can't think now - I remember he was a little tyke, he was smaller than I was.

P.C.: Bert Heywood, I think.

G.C.: Blonde-headed boy ---

P.C.: No, I've got the wrong one. I'm thinking Vic Cooper.

G.C.: When the family left I lost my first friend, if you like. Primo was my friend but he had older friends. I was just that little bit younger and I had younger friends but he was my first intimate friend and when they left to - I think they went interstate or into the country. They went to live in the country.

P.C.: His friend also was Maurie Cappel, the fishmonger.

G.C.: A little thing about my mother, I use to pick up Maurie, we use to walk to school together and we were in grade 5, grade 4 or grade 5 and we had to do a concert. Miss Murphy was my teacher, grade 3, there you are, grade 3 and grade 4, she was the teacher of Christian Brothers College. In the concert, all the boys had to wear a bow tie. Of course, my family, peasants from Italy, bow ties, please. So I said to my mother a week before: mum, I need a bow tie because all the boys in the choir are going to sing with bow ties. I happened to be the soloist. I told her twice, yes. The day before we had to do a dress rehearsal and I needed the bow tie. My mother gave me a black piece of paper, ribbon paper, and put it into a tie. Tied a bow, put it around my neck. I remember walking out of number 27 Brown Street and I was crying my eyes out I was so embarrassed and I was walking up to see Maurie Cappel who produced a beautiful silk bow tie. I thought it was silk. When I saw his, I had to take this thing off my collar because I was so embarrassed. Mrs Cappel came up to me: why you crying? I held out my hand and there she saw this paper bow tie and she says: don't cry, don't worry about it. I said: no, no. Would you believe, I didn't do anything. The next day when I went to school for the dress rehearsal I said to the teacher, Brother Stevens, that I forgot the bow tie. He said: well, you will bring it tomorrow night at the concert. Certainly. I did nothing about it. I didn't know what to do. When that night, I picked up Maurie to go to the Tivoli Theatre for the concert, Mrs Cappel called me in and gave me a bow tie that she made. She spent all day making it for me. I always remember her for that. I used to see her often after that at the cathedral and she would always be there at Sunday night mass and I would always drop her home. She lived in Grote Street right until she died in ---

P.C.: Opposite Adelaide High School.

G.C.: She died in the early 80s and she always said: remember me when I die Giocondo. When I met my wife, we used to go to Cathedral Church, St Francis Xavier, and I would always see her there and introduce her to my wife. She was a lovely lady. I always remember her for that gesture, that kind gesture but this was what West End was all about.

O.H.: Tell me a bit about school. How much contact did you have with each other at school?

P.C.: Well, I think living together, you know, went together. There was no real ---

G.C.: Primo had his own friends. As I said, he was always that little bit older so therefore he had his own little group but I remember going with my father and a man called Jim Walsh in my father's car. We went up to Rostrevor with Primo because the done thing in those days was that boys went to boarding schools and my father, very proud of Primo, wanted him to go to Rostrevor Boarding School. But again, my father not knowing how the system - not knowing how to go about it, got Jim Walsh, who then owned the Franklin Hotel, to take him up there to introduce him to the teacher so Primo could go to boarding school. So in first year - I was in grade 6, Primo was in first year - he went to Rostrevor for one year.

O.H.: What was that like?

P.C.: Generally it was ---

O.H.: You had a ball.

P.C.: It was a big change for me because, you know, away from the boarding house and also a controlled Christian school.

G.C.: But I still didn't have my bedroom because I had boarders in my bedroom. I didn't have a brother but I had boarders.

P.C.: That introduced me to the Morialta, up in that area. That was good. For me it was a great break from being in the boarding house Italian situation. I've always been very thankful for that.

O.H.: What was your parents attitude towards education and school for you two?

P.C.: I think from my point of view, my father, I mean with the meeting he had with this Brother O'Connor at Rostrevor to see whether it was worthwhile me continuing on. I don't think I was what I would call an academic student at all. So that is when they decided that I would not continue from first year but go and help him in the butcher shop. So that was the beginning of my becoming a master butcher.

G.C.: Did you have the choice to do that?

P.C.: No, I had the choice. It was discussed very ---

G.C.: It wasn't discussed at length. Look, being brought up with all those boarders there was no place conducive for study. I used to sit on the staircase trying to do homework with boarders walking up and down the stairs. It wasn't conducive. It wasn't convivial. Our parents really didn't know anything about homework. They expected results. They expected results. You felt that you had to perform because they expected all sorts of things but they didn't know what to expect. They didn't know ---

P.C.: Irrespective of that, you still went to Intermediate, you got Intermediate.

G.C.: I got to a very high standard.

O.H.: So what was it like for you to work full time with your Dad?

P.C.: Oh, a brand new world, you know. Some of the stories of the butcher business is something else again and to come from that sort of - to go from there into a butcher shop it was okay in the early stages but I picked up fairly quickly, there was no problem with all of that, and did my job as was required and chopped down lambs as fast and as efficient as my father and boned up very quickly and had a good eye as far as lamb chops was concerned and pumped the meat and all that sort of stuff. Everything that was required.

O.H.: What was he like as a boss, to sort of work on that basis?

P.C.: You did as you were told.

G.C.: He was rough. He was a rough butcher. As I said earlier in the tape, he was called Tough Steak, Tough Steak Jack.

O.H.: I wonder how he got that name.

G.C.: Tough Steak Jack he was called. I think it was just a typical, shall we say. Everyone had an overname so his was Tough Steak.

P.C.: I'll give you just one clue how he served a customer one day. He was obviously getting to the very end of his career - I wouldn't say end of his career because the shop went on for a good many years after that, but the shop was full of people and he was really going as fast as he could to get people served and this woman could not make her mind up and he chopped one lamb in half and he chopped the leg off and put it on the scales and he said: what's that like? She said: no, it's too big. Then he would go and chop another one down and chop that one again and he said: what's that like? She said: yes, that's okay but it's too expensive. He said: stuff, you. Just picked up the lamb, threw it in the bloody corner and went onto the next customer. You couldn't go any further than that. That was as far as you could push him and no more. His level would absolutely sort of stop. That was it. So he had his ways and that was the whole point.

G.C.: Everyone would accept it. They'd accept it. There certainly wasn't any problem there.

O.H.: So did he allow you to run the shop at all?

P.C.: No, no. The thing that occurred was I was transferred then from Franklin Street to Maces Meat Company in Rundle Street and that's where I really learned the finer points of how to be a master butcher and I was the youngest master butcher in Adelaide actually at that particular stage.

O.H.: How did that come about that you ended up there?

P.C.: There was a fellow called Allan Turner who started up ---

G.C.: Metro Meat.

P.C.: Holco.

G.C.: Holco.

P.C.: Holco and he was a buyer and was then transferred into getting into the wholesale of things. He was competition for Metro Meat, actually. He and Dad use to go buy cattle together and he was saying: Jack your son is not going to learn anything with you. I can get him a job with Maces and he will really fine-tune his trade, which is what happened. So I spent those years and got my certificate, my apprenticeship.

O.H.: Last week you said it was like going from the lowest to the highest.

P.C.: Well, that's true.

O.H.: Why was that?

P.C.: Well, as I said to you, my father never knew the benefit of using a knife and a saw and a chopper. All he knew was the chopper. Everything he would do he would chop it up just like a Chinese person in a restaurant. They just use a chopper, they don't use anything else. So there'd be bits of bone through his lamb chops, there'd be pieces of bone off his forequarter. My brother is laughing because he knew what they looked like, whereas Maces Meat Company had the big fine saw and they'd saw it, gently, you see, and so you wouldn't have - [Tape Ends]

**THIRD INTERVIEW WITH PRIMO CAON AND GIOCONDO CAON RECORDED
BY KAREN GEORGE ON 9 JULY 1996 AT CHESSER CELLARS**

TAPE 4 SIDE A

O.H.: Last week we got you into Mace's Meat Store, I think, Primo, that was the place we were at.

P.C.: All right.

O.H.: You mentioned on the tape that it was really a brand new world for you to move into that and I wonder in what way?

P.C.: Simply because of the fact that the training that my father had was pretty basic where the chopper was his big weapon and by that I mean it just got to the stage where he would use a chopper to chop everything down. Like, for instance, he'd split a sheep and he use the chopper to cut the leg of and he'd split all the bones with the chopper and also join the loin of lamb with the chopper as well, whereas the same - it would be different at Mases because they would use an electric saw which they'd just cut off the leg and everything would be joined or jointed with the saw itself because the chopper leaves a lot of splintering bones and that was part of the process. So when I showed them what I was doing which was pretty effective, customers don't like splintered bones on their forequarter loin.

O.H.: What did you have to do in those days to become a master butcher?

P.C.: An apprenticeship was the most important point and, of course, that sort of thing, they showed you correctly how to sharpen a knife which was vitally important and that was a daily factor, how to sharpen - how to keep it correct. The knife was the important point of making the split on the meat first and then you would do the saw, whereas my father would look at that and he'd say, "That's too slow." You would also then be taught how to roll beef correctly with the string and the tying of the knots on roast beef and there's quite a bit of artwork in that. Also the boning of an animal, the correct way to hold a knife, the correct way to nick the bone in the proper areas and the speed at which you could do it, which was something I used to show my father; he was absolutely - just quite amazed, that sort of thing. It was the correct way of being a - towards a master butcher.

O.H.: How long would that take?

P.C.: Well, generally speaking it's three to five years, generally speaking and also corning beef and things like that and the daily involvement of going into refrigerator and making sure nothing was left over from the day before and the setting up of the window, which was the important part of selling. People would look in the window to see what they could buy. So there were ways of doing that. That never occurred at Jack's place.

O.H.: What did Mace's Meat Store look like as compared to your Dad?

P.C.: The difference was quite remarkable. I mean, you're right in the middle of Rundle Street. At that time Rundle Street wasn't a mall like it is today; traffic used to run all

the way through it, and so consequently the window was the most vital part of your selling factor. So the window had to be prepared correctly so it looked appetising.

O.H.: The shop itself, how big was that?

P.C.: The shop itself was probably - it wasn't a wide shop. I think it probably would be anything up to say 20 feet wide but it was ---

G.C.: No, no way. It was like a long corridor.

P.C.: No, no. That is as you look at it from the outside but then the shop itself was very, very long.

G.C.: Long, yes, but it wasn't 20 feet wide. I'd say it'd be 14, 14 feet wide. It only had a counter going down the middle, one half for all the butchers and this half for the customers.

P.C.: Yes, that's inside the shop itself.

G.C.: A very long narrow shop.

P.C.: But I was trying to describe it. I was trying to sort of put it to you from a dimension of as you would look it from the outside, but it was a very, very long shop, yes.

O.H.: How many apprentices did you have there?

P.C.: There were three of us: one was a master boner; he was an apprentice as well, then there was myself and another young man. That was to do all the cleaning and all the understanding of how to keep it neat and tidy and do all the hack work, as the saying goes.

O.H.: What do you remember about Rundle Street in those days?

P.C.: It was a busy little street. I mean, the interesting thing in that time, we always used to get dressed before you went to Rundle Street. I mean - what were the movie pictures there, there was the Theatre Royal in Hindley Street, then there was the West's Theatre across the road, then down further was the Metro Theatre.

G.C.: Down the bottom end of Hindley Street there was the Metro and opposite the Metro was the West.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: As you came up on the southern side you had the Civic.

P.C.: Correct.

G.C.: On the other side of the Civic you had the Theatre Royal.

P.C.: That's correct.

G.C.: That's only Hindley Street.

P.C.: Yes, that's right, then you go over into Rundle Street itself.

G.C.: Then when you come into Rundle Street, the first theatre on the right-hand side was?

P.C.: God, I can't think of it. You're right.

G.C.: You can't remember.

P.C.: No. What was it?

G.C.: The Majestic. No, it wasn't.

P.C.: No, it wasn't. The Majestic ---

G.C.: The Sturt. It was the Sturt.

P.C.: The Sturt, that's right.

G.C.: It changed it's name to the Sturt.

P.C.: The Majestic was in King William Street.

G.C.: Further up on the right-hand side ---

P.C.: Was the Regent.

G.C.: No. That's - yes - no - you had what was opposite Charles Birk's which is now David Jones ---

P.C.: That was the York Theatre.

G.C.: You had the Liberty Theatre, Primo.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: It was a continual one-hour newsreel program.

P.C.: That's true.

G.C.: The Liberty Theatre. And underneath the Liberty Theatre was Adelaide's first great restaurant called Allegro's.

P.C.: Allegro's, that's true.

O.H.: What was that like?

P.C.: It was quite busy. It was a lovely little restaurant. It was quite delightful.

G.C.: In the basement, long little basement, and I remember going there with my Uncle Angelo many years ago. I was only a young boy. I wasn't even 10. I went there to see Chelso Allegro ---

P.C.: That's him.

G.C.: ---one of our father's friends, but in any case I'm diversifying, Primo.

O.H.: No, that's fine.

P.C.: Then opposite that was the York Theatre, which is now ---

G.C.: The York Theatre was on the corner of Gawler Place and Rundle Street ---

P.C.: Yes.

G.C.: ---on the northern side next door to David Jones. Further up you had the Regent Theatre and then you had the - is it Mayfair? The Majestic was in King William Street. Wasn't the Majestic in King William?

P.C.: Yes, that's right, that's what he said.

G.C.: Opposite the State Bank.

P.C.: Yes, but then there was another theatre opposite the Regent Theatre just down further to the right which I can't think.

G.C.: It was Mayfair, Mayfair.

P.C.: Mm.

O.H.: You're remembering all the theatres. Is that relevant?

P.C.: That was your entertainment at the time. In those times the suburbs are not like they were today and, of course, everything used to take place in the central part of Adelaide and, of course, Rundle Street and Hindley Street were fairly busy; the traffic used to run backwards and forwards in both areas and I always remember you never would go into the city unless you were dressed; in fact, if you could see some of the photographs even now of the Second World War you'll see a lot of the people wearing hats and their three-piece suits and ladies always dressed, but it's all changed now, as you know.

O.H.: Where did you get your clothes from then?

P.C.: Mother was always a very ---

G.C.: People Stores.

P.C.: Yes, that's true.

G.C.: People Stores or the big store was Moores.

P.C.: That's right.

O.H.: You would always wear a suit if you were in the town?

P.C.: All the time, yes.

G.C.: I used to have patches on my pants and I was always embarrassed.

P.C.: Well, we both did; he wasn't the only one.

G.C.: We didn't have any money, so she'd patch them up and my brother used to make fun of me.

O.H.: Before we started you were mentioning a couple of places you remembered just before you went off to Italy - the place that had the first coffee machine in Adelaide.

P.C.: Yes.

G.C.: Do you remember that, Primo?

P.C.: No, you go, it's your story.

G.C.: The first coffee machine in Adelaide was in the early fifties, I guess '53/54 in the Barclay Delicatessen which was - what was that hotel? The Exchange Hotel was on the corner of Hindley Street and King William and right behind it the Barclay Coffee Delicatessen. Not so much of a deli, more of a tea room, snack bar type thing. I remember my mother's boarders coming home laughing and complaining, happy. It was a place of retrove where they could go and have what they thought was - what they considered was a European-style coffee. I couldn't wait to get there and I looked at this thing and I just got an ordinary weak cup of coffee. It was pre the days of Nescafe and Nescafe, that was a powder form, of course, but it was interesting for them and I remember seeing this fantastic machine and it was a Faema machine and I thought how in the hell does this machine make coffee and all the guys would go there before they'd go to the ballroom. There was a ball on Friday nights at the Embassy in Grenfell Street, so the guys would go there and all get dressed up. I remember coming home from work, concreters, having their meal and going upstairs and having a shower and getting changed, putting their collar and tie on and hair oil all over their hair and perfume and laughing and joking. Now, I realise these were only lads, 19, 20, 21, they were only lads, and off they'd go to the Embassy or to the Palais in North Terrace and they would go afterwards and have their cup of coffee - sorry, before, not afterwards because it was closed.

O.H.: So was it a major sort of event?

G.C.: Yes, it was a big deal, a big deal. The real coffee bar that started up was the Mocca Bar and that was at the intersection of Morphett and Hindley Street. It was started by Mick Paparella. Mick Paparella used to work for Cappa Fish Brothers in Grote Street and he was an Errol Flynn type, charming, swashbuckling, you know, a man's man and a woman's man. He had a little moustache just like Errol Flynn and a lovely smile and he used to know everybody's names. It was only a little place.

P.C.: Yes, but he was a top flight Juventus soccer player, too, and very well loved amongst all your clans.

G.C.: By everybody, by everybody. He had a little place there, the Mocca Bar, and he was the first man really to make real cappuccinos and - espressos weren't sold, it was cappuccinos, the froth and so on.

P.C.: They used to call it a cup of chino.

G.C.: A cup of chino.

P.C.: That's true.

G.C.: And he came out with continental cakes; that was a real eye-opener - only a small little place and he did extremely well - on Saturday mornings particularly. In the Italian congregation, any European - they would congregate around that intersection. On one side you had the Star Grocery, on the other side you had the Belle Madeline Travel Agency and right behind that, of course, facing Morphett Street was the Mocca Bar. So any Saturday morning you would go there you would find up to 100 people mingling in those corners, just chatting, meeting, talking, on a Saturday morning before the soccer game on Saturday afternoon, which was in the west parklands and it was a retrove for all the Europeans of Adelaide where they would meet. Saturday morning was a very big morning.

O.H.: Was that still when you were boys?

P.C.: Yes, yes.

G.C.: Yes, yes. I was still in my teens, 13, 14, 15.

P.C.: I mean, you've got to remember there was nowhere else for any of the - what can I say - the continentals or ethnics to go. Hindley Street was the only place they could go. The Greeks used to have their gaming rooms. I think one of the first Italian restaurants was Sorrento, the Sorrento.

G.C.: No, no, no, the Sorrento came long, long afterwards. Allegro was the big one.

P.C.: True, but I'm just trying to piece it together with Karen, the fact of - that the only entertainment they could go to was at that area, that was all.

O.H.: What other meeting places do you remember?

G.C.: No - mainly it was Hindley Street. Hindley Street was the big place.

P.C.: It was mainly Hindley Street - it was.

G.C.: There was no such thing as the Italian community. The Italian community never had a hall or a retrove. It was just Hindley Street, really.

O.H.: Particular places - like you mentioned the Mocca?

P.C.: That would be the main draw card.

G.C.: The Mocca Bar, that would be the main - the Belle Madeline Travel Agency, Mr Palliaro, on that corner, that's where all the Italians used to book to go overseas or - etcetera, etcetera, and that was really it.

O.H.: What kinds of things did you start to do as you became young men and you started to perhaps date women and that kind of thing? What would you do?

P.C.: Well, I mean, school, I think, was the most important part. I mean, as I said to you before we both went to the Dominican Convent to start off with. We'd shifted from Waymouth Street to Franklin Street and the school was only just down the road in Franklin Street there and as far as I'm concerned we just met up with some of the school friends at that particular time and just kicked the football in the middle of the street even up to night time, you know, go to the movies in Hindley Street, of course, or to the Peoples Stores Theatre over at the East End Market there - not East End Market, the Central Market there.

G.C.: The bug house.

P.C.: The bug house, yes, which we talked about last week. I think we grew up in that particular era of just, you know, no visitors Saturday afternoon, until we got into our sort of more older teens. So that's where it all sort of centred, as far as I'm concerned.

O.H.: So once Primo had gone to Rostrevor and was boarding, did you tend to take over more of the jobs at the boarding house and in the butcher's shop?

G.C.: I used to hate the shop. I'd come home from school, particularly on Fridays, for example, and I used to - Thursdays and Fridays, Friday mornings I used to have to take meat out in the pushbike, deliver meat before I used to go to school and when I used to come home, half-past three, a quarter to four, it was in those days, I'd have to rush home, deliver meat.

P.C.: He hated being a butcher.

G.C.: Butch^{er}ing was not my scene. Primo was the big butcher.

P.C.: I had to be, I was the eldest son.

G.C.: Yes, he was told and he had to be the master butcher. For me it was dreadful. I just didn't like it at all, you know, the cleaning up, the washing up at the back, the mincer and the sausage maker. My father was - he didn't have time for being clean and nice. He used to throw things all over the place and just busy at 6 o'clock closing and that was important to him, to see his mates and go off to the pub and just left it all there. I used to hate that. It was in 1954 that I finished school. Up to that time there was, you know, I was still a young boy, 15, 16, I was only interested in my mates and running around the street seeing what was going on. Basically, in those days, because Primo was the leader, he had the pressure of the parents on him, I used to follow him all the time.

O.H.: Was it like that, the eldest son was ---

G.C.: Yes, very much.

P.C.: The eldest son had to be the one, had to be the one that, you know, step in to that particular - because I was told, "You've got to be a butcher." That was it, irrespective of which way - that's what you've got to do.

O.H.: Where did your National Service come in? You both mentioned doing National Service.

P.C.: Yes. Woodville, of course. I was in the seventh intake. What was interesting about that particular period of military service, at Rostrevor we were supposed to do National Service - not National Service, Cadets.

O.H.: Well, perhaps while Primo is absent you can tell me about your - you did National Service as well?

G.C.: Yes. At school I did the cadetship. It was an expected thing for all boys to do. It was good fun for me. We had camps at Warradale Army Camp during our school holidays, of course, which was dreadful and I can remember on one occasion, I was in intermediate and I didn't want to go to the Warradale Army Camp to do - we had two weeks' holiday and I wanted to have my holiday. So what I did one morning, I went to Hazelgrove's Hardware in Grote Street and I bought a pound of plaster of Paris and I bandaged my arm up with bandage and I put plaster of Paris all over it and I went off to school. My mother had no idea what I was doing, didn't care too much. As children the parents didn't worry too much about getting up to mischief, they were so busy - my parents were so busy looking after all the boys and running their own affairs and the kids, we were really out of sight and out of mind, but I remember wrapping up my left arm in plaster of Paris and waiting until it got all solid. I got to school just before lunch. Didn't even think, you know, just stupid, and this was the day before holidays, before we had to go to the army camp and I remember Spindles, Brother Stephens coming up to me and saying, "Caon, what happened here? Did you break - is it a compound fracture or is it a sprain, and I didn't know which was which. I didn't know how to answer, but I remember now when I think about it, I was so embarrassed because I remember his smile and his laugh, but I didn't go to army camp, just didn't front up at all, and sure enough, two weeks after the school holidays I came back to work and Spindles came up to me and said, "How's your arm?" I said, "It's fine now." And I thought then I was so smart, got away with it. That was in 1953, 1954. I finished school, intermediate, and I had no idea what

to do. Intermediate was what was accepted. I didn't even think of going to university. My parents never even suggested it or had I wanted to continue studies, or anything. It was just expected in those days in the Italian community to continue, go and help your father and I didn't really want to do that, but in '54 my father decided to go to Italy. He went with his best mate, Albert Del Fabro and Chelso Allegro, who owned Allegro's Restaurant. Allegro's Restaurant was then in Rundle Street in the basement, as I mentioned earlier, Liberty Theatre. So these three guys got together and went on the ship. I remember going to Port Adelaide with my mum. My mother was left behind to run the boarding house and my father put in a young man, Alan Turner, to rent the shop from him. Alan Turner was only very young but he rented the shop. He then went into the meat wholesale business and has done extremely well - Alan Turner. So my father was away for about nine months. In that period mum was home. I had to look after with the boarders. Primo was at Mace's Meat full time and it was a time where girls started with Primo and he was never home. I used to go to school, look after my mother and - that's when I did my intermediate.

O.H.: Did you used to work in the shop that the other man was running?

G.C.: No, no, no, that shop was fully rented. I didn't mind that. I thought that was great. Yes, yes, yes.

O.H.: You've just mentioned that ---

G.C.: That's wrong. Yes, yes, that's all wrong. When did Dad rent the shop to Alan Turner? He rented the shop to Alan Turner for some reason.

P.C.: That was after he'd - gee ---

G.C.: Because in '54 Dad went to Italy, as I said, and he gave the shop to Primo to look after.

P.C.: That's true - for six months.

G.C.: For six months.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: And you bought yourself a motor car - didn't you have a motor car?

P.C.: Yes, I bought myself - yes, I bought myself an MGTC, it was.

O.H.: So you'd finished your apprenticeship at that time?

P.C.: I'd finished my apprenticeship.

G.C.: That's right.

P.C.: And National - National Service had gone, too. That was gone as well, yes. I was just settling down to that period of - I was enjoying - really enjoying cars and got

involved with a group of guys who just loved their MGs and we joined the MG car club and all that sort of stuff, you know.

O.H.: Before we go on to that you mentioned something about your father not letting you join the cadets at Rostrevor.

P.C.: Yes. At that time cadets were part of the scene in all colleges as well and - that was my first year - it was the one year that I spent at Rostrevor. I mean, it was a great revelation for me because to be living in a boarding house with 50 other people, all of a sudden you're in your own sort of - how can I put it - group of boys with the same situation that you're in, so I finally felt as if I was - I'm trying to think of the word ---

G.C.: Your new family.

P.C.: Well, virtually your new family, you know. So the system was such that, you know, it was mass every morning and it was all controlled and you were having - I discovered porridge and all those, you know, sausages and eggs for breakfast and all that sort of stuff.

G.C.: Well, it was new foods.

P.C.: You know, it was very different, which I thoroughly enjoyed; there was no - no different about that, but, you know, the whole thing was, at the college you had to do your cadets and I was not allowed to join cadets and I couldn't understand why. I mean, I now understand the problem that was associated with my father being Italian even though he was a naturalised Australian. Whether the - my father was not a fascist not by any stretch of the imagination but maybe there was that element of support for Italy, but where it was confusing for me was because the fact that our cousins were with the partisans in Italy at the time, fighting against the Germans at that time, and maybe he was anti war in every direction, but I felt very isolated at that period of time because I wasn't allowed to be part of what was happening at the college.

O.H.: Was there any tension between Italians in Adelaide ---

P.C.: No, no. It was really quite good. I mean, of course we copped all the, you know, as he did, copped all the terminology, you wog, you Dago, you know. I mean, I'm sure he was in a couple of brawls as well. There was a bit of that, but that was just one of the facets that you live with. I mean, I changed - when I worked for Mace's Meat Company I changed my name from Primo to Johnny because of the fact that I was embarrassed with a name like Primo. I mean, Primo was a very foreign word to a lot of people and, of course, you get, you know, earmarked very easily until finally after a while I thought, I couldn't give a damn, so I just persevered with a name like Primo.

O.H.: Did your parents know you changed your name to Johnny?

P.C.: Yes, but it didn't worry them too much, not at all.

G.C.: Throughout our lives our parents weren't too worried about us. They really weren't. Do you feel that, Primo?

P.C.: No. No. He's right.

G.C.: Really, they were so involved in scratching out and creating a life for themselves and while they did it for themselves, of course, they did it for the family. They weren't too worried about us.

P.C.: We were told to get up, polish your shoes and get going. It was as simple as all that. We've got not time to worry about any niceties, which is really - makes you feel independent.

O.H.: So were you involved in brawls, as Primo said?

G.C.: I wouldn't say - I didn't like fighting very much. I didn't like the fact of getting hurt, but emotionally I was always - I was always very hurt. Because of my name, Giocondo, and the nuns started this situation - he was called Primo, so the nuns started calling me Secunda and I never liked that because that was not my name.

P.C.: No. It was second.

G.C.: And I was always told, you know, you are second, you know, you shut up and you are second. So Secunda developed into the word "Cun" which Primo started, the word "Cun". I didn't like that either because there are other boys in West End called Con and they are Greeks and I didn't like them either. So throughout my life it was, you know, Secunda, then Cun, and then I met my wife and all that was always Cun, Cun, Cun, and I always had that feeling of being pushed aside, secondary, not an individual and throughout my growing up life I always had that feeling that - and I got this from all facets of society that you were not welcome.

P.C.: You were second.

G.C.: You were second in every sense.

P.C.: You were second to your brother.

G.C.: You were second to your brother.

P.C.: In other words, you ^{'re} living in a shadow.

G.C.: You were an ethnic. You weren't as good as us English. You just were a second-class person.

P.C.: Which wasn't correct, by the way, because I never regarded him as a sort of a second - I mean, he had his own - I mean, what used to really piss me off about him, because I regarded myself as a sportsman and I played district squash for 25-odd years, he would be the leading runner at the hurdles at school. He got trophies at school - I didn't. So you got that sort of brotherly situation occurring, as I'm sure you'll go through your interviews you'll find very similar situations.

G.C.: But I'd never, ever had shot you. He shot me in the bum with a bee-bee gun.

O.H.: Tell me about that?

G.C.: I was just leaning outside the window one day and he had this bee-bee gun and all of a sudden - bamb! He thought it was funny. It didn't hurt at all but I pretended it really hurt. I really made the most of that one.

O.H.: So were you involved in sport in those days? You said soccer was a big ---

G.C.: No, no, football.

P.C.: No, no. What I'm saying by that, at school he did very well in his sports, all right. I did okay, too, but he was the one that won the trophies, you see. He's got the under-14 hurdle sprinter or whatever it might be. He was also a corporal in the army. I wasn't. I was a private. So there's all those little bits and pieces which have that sort of connotation in your growing up life, you know, that sort of thing, but we never talked about it, not at all. I knew that he was in a difficult situation because of the fact that he was called Secondo - you're Primo's younger brother, it's the same situation. My sister was the one that really copped it. She's the one I really felt sorry for because of the fact that we were both successful in the world of hospitality around Adelaide - I mean, when we opened up La Cantina, we were very successful and then Charlie Brown's was also very successful, and she was this little girl who used to wash dishes all the time and we never really gave her a lot of regard, you know, you're just our sister - wash the dishes, and occasionally people would come in and we'd say, "This is our sister," and there she is, you know, trying to do the right thing by us.

O.H.: When was she born? How much younger is she?

G.C.: 25 July 1948.

O.H.: So she's quite a lot younger than you are?

G.C.: 10 years younger than I am.

P.C.: Yes, absolutely. She's doing very well. She's married to the accountant who manages all the Sheppard's Jewellers, Zamels Stores, and doing very well, so don't feel sorry for her now.

O.H.: So after you finished at Mace's your father went away and you took over the store.

P.C.: He gave me the shop for six months to run to make sure that everything was okay. Of course, it wasn't that successful because, you know, you didn't have a business head on your shoulders and you did what - whatever I knew was the correct thing to do. All he worried about was his overdraft and I think I lost \$700 in six months, whatever it might be. I can still see the overdraft coming down all the time.

G.C.: Or the other way around. He came back and went straight to the bank. He said, "I left you money in the bank and I come back and there's nothing left."

P.C.: That's right, and it was \$700.

O.H.: So what was it like running the butcher's shop?

P.C.: I enjoyed the fact that you're in charge of something like that and - "Where's your father and all that sort of thing?" It was the continuous situation of making sure the sausages were made every, you know, twice a week or whatever it might be, everything was done correctly, it was all done correctly, but the biggest thing in running a business is the manipulation and turnover of not to lose anything and that's the whole point because everybody wanted loins of lamb and legs of lamb, but nobody wanted the forequarters, so you've got to try and manipulate what you can do with the forequarters, whether you cut them up into chops, whether you mince it all up and made sausages out of it or whatever it might be, so there was that little problem that I used to try and sort of solve.

O.H.: Did you work in the shop ...(indistinct)...

G.C.: No, no, no.

P.C.: He wouldn't help me.

O.H.: I'll just turn the tape over.

TAPE 4 SIDE B

P.C.: No.

G.C.: No, no, no.

P.C.: That's not right either.

G.C.: No. You were at the shop because he went in '54, then mum went in '55 and I went with her.

P.C.: That's right.

O.H.: Well, how did it come about that you ended up going to Italy?

G.C.: Dad came back in October '54 - he went with his mates - because his father was still alive; his mother died, but his father was still alive, and I don't know the reason but Albert Del Fabro and Chelso Allegro, they used to meet at the Flagstaff Hotel next door every Saturday morning for drinks and so the three of them got together. Mum couldn't go with my father because there was the boarding house and so on. Primo had just finished his apprenticeship, so it was opportune for him to go and do it that way. I was still at intermediate standard and I - finishing off intermediate. I had no idea what to do, what not to do. When my father came back and it was school holidays I went to work for Floreani Brothers, terrazzo people. You, Primo, didn't stay with Dad, did you, when he came back from Italy in '54? I don't think you did. You might have stayed for a few months but in any

case in '55 my mother wanted to go to Italy to see her parents. She'd never been back since she'd been here and I think from when my father and mother came here together in '34, when they came to Australia, they'd never been back at all, so this was their first time back to see their parents. I remember that mum wanted to take Primo and my sister and Primo at that time had a girlfriend called Kay Smith and just bought a new MG.

P.C.: No, it wasn't, it was a second-hand one.

G.C.: It was a TF, Primo.

P.C.: No. It was a ---

G.C.: Yes, it was, it was a TF, because I remember borrowing it going to school and here I was, you know, intermediate, going to CBC in a brand new MG. So he didn't want to leave his new car, so I said, "Well, you go with mum and I'll look after your car and I'll look after your girlfriend," and he said, "No, no," and this is what was the beginning of the change of my - the direction of my life. This is what started the change, was when I was introduced to what was to me foreign, because mentally I was Australian. I lived in the Italian household, I had all the Italian food, but mentally I was Australian. I used to speak - both Primo and I used to answer our parents in English. We never used to speak Italian. We could understand it, but basically 99 per cent or 95 per cent - that right, Primo - we'd always answer it in Australian.

P.C.: True.

O.H.: So was it like that, Primo, how Giocondo puts it?

P.C.: Yes, except it wasn't the TF MG, it was the TC, but nevermind that's beside the point. He's got a very strong point here because that was the turning of his life, but I got caught up in the MG scene and girlfriends had come in on the scene, etcetera. My mother said to me, you know, "You're coming as well." I said, "No, no, I don't want to come, I don't want to come." I'd discovered this new world, but he discovered his own world which has then developed into the Italian heritage, which he thoroughly got into. I think you should continue from there.

O.H.: Well, I just want to ask you, last week we mentioned your first girlfriend, Cecelia Scotta, and you laughed.

P.C.: Gee.

G.C.: I wouldn't say she was the first.

P.C.: It wasn't my ---

O.H.: It wasn't.

G.C.: She was just one of the girls in the west end.

P.C.: Well, she was the girl across the road. That's all she was. Her father was Italian and her mother was Australian and they used to come over and get the meat from us.

G.C.: He was in love with all the girls. They were all in love with him. I'll mention -
--

P.C.: We won't. Look, I tell you ---

G.C.: Yole Macerano.

P.C.: I'll put a rider on ---

G.C.: Dorothy Newchurch.

P.C.: I'll put a rider on this right away. He, you can't believe. This boy was like a little boy in a chocolate shop. He looked like Tony Curtis and the girls loved him. So, you'd better be careful.

O.H.: Did you date both Italian women and Australian women in those days?

P.C.: No. I think from my side it was mainly Australian girls. Very, very few Italian girls. Very few Italian girls. I, for myself, got involved with very, very few.

O.H.: So when you took a girl out in those days what would you do? Where would you go in Adelaide?

P.C.: The pictures, whatever it might be, but I think you're missing a point here in as far as the Italian factor because I - as you're moving into - we're moving into sort of era, the MG scene, finding my own independence in as far as ---

G.C.: Freedom.

P.C.: I mean, to have a sports car and to belong to a club with a group of people was really sort of really getting out into seeing the countryside, which I loved to get involved with, etcetera, but he was seeing everything from the Italian side of things, saw his grandfather and grandmother, etcetera, and I never knew any of them at all, but he got involved in the Italian way of life which was very different to what I was going through.

O.H.: How long did you go away for, Giocondo?

P.C.: It was a couple of years.

G.C.: No, no, no. We left on the ship, the "Straithaird", at Port Adelaide.

P.C.: You're right, yes.

G.C.: I was 17 and I remember driving down and my father had a twin spinner green Ford utility and there was myself, my sister, my mother in the front and I dared to pull out a

cigarette and I thought I have to show him I'm smoking, so I sat on the passenger side, pulled down the window and pulled out a cigarette. He looked at me and he laughed and said, "One day, you'll say to yourself that you wish your father slapped you across the face and threw the cigarette out of the window." I smoked half of it. I was embarrassed, nervous and then I threw the cigarette out the door. We left in April of that year and I think we came back in October. It was my first introduction into the Italian - you know, I didn't know what to expect, I didn't know what to - I had no idea. I was just happy to, you know, get away. It was an adventure. It was something new. Basically, what I was, I was my sister's minder really. I had to look after her everywhere. When we first got to Italy there was a wonderful appreciation and affection that my mother had, I could see that, and as usual I was just put aside because even here in Australia she didn't have time for me and when we were in Italy she didn't have time for me either because there was all her sisters, her father and her mother, and Resana was a small peasant town, they had a little farm just outside the town and after a week I was just - I was speaking Italian, I couldn't understand everything, I was just patted on the head and given kisses and embraced everywhere. There was a tremendous amount of affection demonstrated. My sister was just playing with all the aunties because my mother was one of five - six sisters, about four or five brothers. We arrived at Marseilles early in the morning. We were on the ship most of the day and in the afternoon, late afternoon, we got off the ship. We were met by my sister's elder brother and then we got this train and travelled all night from Marseilles into the train and she was just chatting with - Amadio was his name and we got to Resana the next day. I was very tired, over tired and I felt very lonely. I remember the first period I felt very lonely for the first two or three weeks, very strange, very lonely. Then after about two weeks that I was there by myself and I said to my mother, you know, I don't know what I'm doing here and she said, "You stupid boy, why don't you get on the train and go to Venice," and I said, "I don't know what to do," you know. I couldn't speak Italian very well and I remember them taking me to the railway station at Resana and putting me on a train. She gave me some money, so I was told to go off for the day. Just remember what train to come back on. Not being very fluent with Italian or understanding all of it, I remember going on the train - you've got to appreciate I was 17 and it was all new, and when I got off the train and I walked from the railway station into the Grand Canal, I got very excited. I just didn't believe what I saw, the sophistication of what I saw compared to how we lived here in Australia; it was foreign to me and it was awesome. I remember walking across the bridge, the first bridge you come across, I stood in the middle of the bridge, looked down the Grand Canal and saw all these gondoliers and these motor boats and I thought of the River Torrens and the only person I thought off at that time was my brother and I thought he could have been here now, not me, but I'm here, and I thought of him, and I've never forgotten that moment. I thought of him all day. I just walked around everywhere with my mouth open. It was quite a day. When I got back my mother said, "Did you enjoy it?" And I said, "Yes, it was wonderful." From then I met cousins my age, my mother's younger sister had a son my own age and my life took off then. I started to become my own person. I become much more conversant with Italian. I began to understand the system. People - boys and girls of the town began to come and see this Australian who belongs to Pinna Caon.

O.H.: Did you stay in Resana or did you move around?

G.C.: No, we stayed in Resana and we were told - my father's father was very ill and after about two weeks, after the Venice trip we went to my father's town and to see him and I saw this old man again, a huge big old farmhouse with all these people living in it and I met

my father's father who was in bed, he was dying, and I couldn't get away fast enough. It was awesome to see all these people living together and a certain amount of poverty, I could see that. In any case after about five weeks, four or five weeks - we only went to see my father's father once, after about four or five weeks there was a message, "come straight away", so we went there quick and I forget how we got there, to my father's house, and we stood around the bed and there was the uncles, myself and my uncle's children, there were at least 25 people in the room, all around the bed and there's this old man on the bed and he was dying and he was joking, he was joking with his kids and I watched him die and it was, again, another first. I remember him saying goodbye to everybody one at a time but he was joking about it. In reflection many years afterwards, his mannerism and all the other Caons here in Adelaide, I can see how that little seed has gone throughout, how they talk to each and joke with each other, it was the same thing.

O.H.: So what was it like to come back to Adelaide after that experience?

G.C.: After that experience, I came back, I thought - how can I put it, I felt more stronger in myself ---

P.C.: Can I just interrupt here. Wasn't it the period of time that you - when we ...(indistinct)... there or was that the second trip over?

G.C.: No, no, no, no, that was much, much later, Primo, much, much later.

P.C.: Okay, fine, fair enough.

G.C.: I was 17. In Italy I bought a car, my mother bought me an old car which I drove around in, so - and all the boys of the town - in those days in 1955 in Italy no-one had motor cars - you still had donkeys and you used to go to the village on pushbikes or with a cow and a cart. There was that there. It was very, very primitive compared to the sophistication of Adelaide as far machinery and trams, you never had that at all.

P.C.: No, and his brother is running around in an MG.

G.C.: But what you did have in Italy was an immense fraternity and immense emotion, everyone was helping each other, they were picking themselves up after the war, everything was working, everybody was helpful. It was really a wonderful feeling. I felt at home, very much at home. My Italian developed and I felt very, very comfortable and I was very sad to leave. They were doing things for one another. I wasn't made to feel secondary. I wasn't made to feel second-class. I wasn't pushed down. So all this helped me grow up in myself. When I came back here I felt much stronger and wiser, more conversant with the world. In fact I remember Primo saying to me, "You've got an accent, you sound like a Dago."

O.H.: Do you remember Giocondo coming back?

P.C.: Yes. Everything he's saying was right. He was confident because his second language - well, his first language because really we spoke Italian before we spoke English. We didn't speak English until we went to school, but obviously his Italian had improved

immensely, it was great, and he still prides himself when he's speaking true Italian. Yes, I remember that.

O.H.: So what happened after that to the both of you once he'd come back from Italy?

G.C.: Well, when I came back I went to work with my father and then I had to go to - I did the military service, which I enjoyed, and that was another opening thing for me. I remember when we first came back Primo introduced me to the Camille Coffee Lounge, Luigi had in Hackney House opened up what was the Camille Coffee Lounge and I remember going there, my brother taking me there with Kay Smith and I had some girl, I forget who she was, and this was, you know, very romantic, dark lights, candles on the table and Luigi knew everybody and anyone who was anybody of any social standing ---

P.C.: Beautifully spoken Italian.

G.C.: ---had to go to the Camille Coffee Lounge after they go to the cinema. When you went to the movies in those days, of course, you had a collar and tie and you had a suit, Wednesdays and Fridays and Saturdays, but Wednesdays and Saturdays were the two special days, and it was, you know, very important you got all dressed up, you couldn't slovenly go around, girls had long dresses and gloves. It was really, when you think about it, it was endearing.

P.C.: It was only just a two room - what it was was only a two-room lounge down in the basement and he had fish - what do you call it?

O.H.: Aquariums.

P.C.: Aquariums, one there, one there, and the lights were dim and these lovely lounges; you used to sit down and he'd serve you his cappuccino or whatever it is and he'd speak the most beautiful Italian to you as well; he'd be dressed in a white coat, slightly bald, but quite a sophisticated Italian, and orange juice and vermouth, you'd get, would be the drink.

G.C.: Against the law, orange and juice and vermouth, if he knew you.

O.H.: Did he serve food as well or was it just ---

P.C.: Sandwiches, you know ---

G.C.: Sandwiches, a toasted sandwich.

P.C.: ---maybe an omelet and that's about it, and there was good money in it. He did quite well. He was there for a good five years.

G.C.: It was a place to go after the cinema. There was nowhere else. There was absolutely nowhere else. You went to the movies. You went to the cinema. You had nowhere else to go to. You'd go to Hamburgers in Gouger Street, Greek hamburger places where you'd go to ---

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: ---have a coke or juice or milk shake; the Black and White Milk Bar opposite the Town Hall or - what was the other one where everyone used to meet in King William Street? That wasn't the Black and White. The Black and White was opposite the Town Hall.

P.C.: That's right, and the one down - God, I used to go to it all the time.

G.C.: The one where the Southern Cross Hotel was.

P.C.: That's right. God, I used to go to it all the time.

G.C.: Yes, the Southern Cross Hotel, jazz in the afternoon, Saturday afternoons, where people would have a gin squash - that was a big drink.

P.C.: And everybody used to meet at the Southern Cross Hotel, particularly on the balcony which overlooked the trams in King William Street - the Devon - the place that was called the Devon.

G.C.: The Devon, the Devon Milk Bar, that's it.

P.C.: And that was just down further and everybody used to meet there and drink their chocolate milkshakes or whatever it might be.

G.C.: With their motorbikes and a few sophisticated MGs.

O.H.: So is this the young people's meeting place?

P.C.: Virtually.

G.C.: Yes, this was the clique of Adelaide.

P.C.: The clique of Adelaide? You're kidding.

G.C.: Well, c'mon.

O.H.: What do you mean by that?

P.C.: He doesn't know what he means himself.

G.C.: You know, the in group, the in group that was around Adelaide. You had two lots: you had the university students and you had the modern in group. You could see them on Saturday afternoons, you would meet sometimes - or Saturday nights. That was the - everyone would meet and, "Where do we go from here?" We're now looking at the '58 now - '57, '58.

P.C.: Yes, but at that particular time all we did was - having been involved with the MGs, you ---

G.C.: You'd go down the Semaphore Palais.

P.C.: ---you'd spend the whole afternoon cleaning your car and that's how it would be and then you'd have your group, you'd meet of an evening and then go off to have drinks, maybe at the River Torrens maybe. It was all quite pleasant and you'd have three or four MGs, etcetera, because I was going out with a theatre usherette who was at the York Theatre at the time. Then there was Nicky Dixon who ---

G.C.: Bob Mickham.

P.C.: A Greek - Bob Mickham, yes. All the girls were usherettes at the time. I think - well, Nick was unfortunate; he wasn't able to marry his girl. She was an Australian girl. She was a blonde English girl and she used to have a pink Austin Seven. God, very charming, but - anyway, and I was out with this Kay Smith and the Mickhams married and the other couple married. He was a Greek boy. He had a delicatessen, but they were all usherettes and that was a bit of the fun that we had, was we had entree into the theatres all of the time and then meet with the MGs afterwards and then go off to evening - and the girl, Kay, used to drink Green Label Orlando sweet sherry.

G.C.: Yellow label, yellow label.

P.C.: No, no, she preferred the green.

G.C.: The green was medium dry and the yellow was the sweet.

P.C.: That's what the entertainment came from really.

O.H.: Where were you working then?

P.C.: I had either finished at - no, I still would've been an apprentice at the - no, it couldn't have been.

G.C.: No, you weren't. It was after we came back from Italy.

P.C.: It must've been after National Service, so I must have been - must've started the kangaroo meat business at the time.

G.C.: It was at the beginning because when you started the kangaroo business you had finished with Kay Smith altogether.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: But in any case when I came back from Italy I did National Service and I was still working for my father and I was with my father for a few years. I hated every minute of it. I just didn't see myself as a butcher. My father then started off - he tried to start off a small goods business making mortadella and salami and he had an Italian fellow called Alligi who used to work with him and I was there for quite a few years. I had a little Ford Prefect panel

van, where on Wednesdays and Thursdays I had to deliver throughout all the shops. I was a butcher salesman. I had to go and deliver the salami and the mortadella and when I'd come back and no-one wanted to buy anything my father would scream at me, you know, "What're doing? You not selling any of it. You're just loafing around the place," and, you know, I used to drive all over the place trying to sell.

P.C.: That was the period that we mentioned last week, that he was very passionate about his mortadella and his salami, very passionate about it and he had to make a name for himself on that, so he was copping the brunt of that, you see.

G.C.: It was a very hard time for me; I couldn't do anything right and he was never happy. I did my National Service. I used to come down. I used to hate being there. I remember - not arguing with my father. You couldn't argue with him, you know, he'd just tell you to shut up, so you'd have to swallow all of this. I was 19, 20 and I was very angry. I remember very angry because there was nowhere for me to go. I didn't know what to do. It was in 1960, one Saturday morning when I was walking up Hindley Street that I come across West Coffee Palace and as I was walking up on the left-hand side of Hindley Street, they had removed some of the facade and they were putting in shop fronts and I saw down the facade and I saw there was this magnificent cellar with bricks and archways ---

P.C.: This is the opening of La Cantina.

G.C.: It was the archways that attracted me, and the archways reminded me of Italy, because in Australia you never had archways - I never saw archways anywhere, and I saw these archways and I just went down in the basement and I looked around and I immediately could see the potential that this would make a wonderful coffee lounge. This was a wonderful opportunity, and I saw in my mind's imagination exactly what I can do with it, and I thought, I've got to do this. I went home and I said to my mother, "I don't want to work for my father, I want to run this place, I want to set up a coffee lounge." My mother said, "Why don't you do it." There was no talk of money, no talk of where does the money come from, how are you going to go about it. There was no economic factor considered. She said: just go and do it. If you don't like working for your father, don't work for him - leave. It was so simple. My parents were really simple people. Just go and do it, and that's how the whole thing came about.

O.H.: So how did you go and do it?

G.C.: The next thing - this was in winter time and I really don't - it was July, August, something like that, September, and I was going out with a girl called Jill Alexander and I used to confide in her, I used to say, "What do you think of this?" She didn't know my situation really because as an ethnic boy coming from peasant family you really can't explain to them, but she supported me. So I went to see the landlord and what I'd found out was that the West Coffee Palace had been sold at auction and had been broken up and Jimmy Cacas, the Cacas Brothers, the chemist, they had bought two shops. So I went to him and I said that I wanted to rent the basement from him and - sure - and I remember the first rental was seven pounds and five shillings a week, however I had to do everything myself. There were no ceilings. There was nothing there. I had to - the archways were bricked up and I had to break

through the archways and I had to do everything by myself. There was no plumbing, there was no toilets, there was nothing and I spent a good four or five months setting it up.

O.H.: Did you work alone or did you ---

G.C.: Yes, I was just by myself. Primo at that time was, as I said, the precursor of pet food for kangaroo meat. He had - at Kilkenny he rented a butcher's shop at Kilkenny and was getting all these kangaroos - semi-trailers of kangaroos and he used to break them down, but before I did this, to get a bit of money I used to go and work with him. I used to go and work not with him, for him, and perhaps he should listen to this, he's probably forgotten.

O.H.: What would you do?

G.C.: He had a butcher's shop in Kilkenny. I forget what was the name of the street?

P.C.: Which one?

G.C.: In Kilkenny, when you had the butcher's shop.

P.C.: Wilpena Terrace.

G.C.: Wilpena Terrace, that's right.

O.H.: How did that come about that you got the butcher's shop out there? Giocondo was saying that he used to work for you to earn extra money when he was setting up.

P.C.: I saw a need for pet food, so we just started off playing around with sort of just ---

G.C.: But you were somewhere else before - you were at Stepney. Didn't you start off at Stepney?

P.C.: Yes, I had a little shop there, just a butcher's shop there for a while, but that was ---

G.C.: That's right, you had a little butcher's shop. You started your own business in Stepney.

P.C.: Yes, for about six months.

O.H.: Did you chose not to work for your father?

P.C.: I wanted to get away from him. That was the whole point. I wanted to go into other arenas. That's what it came down to. I saw a need for pet food at the time and what I started to buy was what they call cracker mutton which is third-grade mutton which was just stripped down and sold in packets. That's all it was. As the meat business changes things get a bit more expensive, so then I looked further afield to see what else I could get hold off. Anyway, as things developed beef got a bit more expensive as well, I couldn't use that

anymore, and then I saw an opening for goats and as I got involved with the goat business, kangaroo came in at the scene and then a demand for kangaroo meat became - for human consumption for export for Germany, so what wasn't used to go for export to Germany was used to try and be sold for pet food. So there was a stint in the pet food business for about three to four years. But I discovered the kangaroo, which was an extraordinary animal, so I went shooting and all that sort of thing and did a bit of skinning and found kangaroo fur was just an amazing - do you realise kangaroo - I just mention this as a statement - kangaroo leather is the best leather you could ever get hold of, but it's got to be tanned by the Italians and they can make shoes and boots out of kangaroo leather which is just so superb and that's R.M. Williams boots virtually in the earlier stages were made out of kangaroo leather and it lasts forever and it's so supple and moves and bends as you would like it, which is fantastic.

O.H.: Did you basically have to teach yourself this whole new field?

P.C.: You picked it up as you go along, you know. I mean, tanning itself is another progress of understanding. That's something I didn't want to get involved with, though, because that was another world, but you picked up various bits and pieces of knowledge about the kangaroo itself. Do you know a kangaroo was always pregnant. I make the statement because that was extraordinary for me. When the kangaroo mother's impregnated, she would be always pregnant. The little joey would climb like a little worm from the outside of the pouch until it gets inside and that's how the joey starts. Then it grows and then when the joey is ready to leave, it leaves, and then next minute up grows another little worm and away it goes and it's just quite extraordinary.

O.H.: So your first butcher's shop was just an ordinary butcher's shop selling everything and then you moved into pet foods?

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: I remember when he was at Stepney, I used to drive in a little van and try and sell him my father's salami and mortadella and he would refuse because you couldn't sell it - he was in the suburb where you couldn't sell it.

O.H.: So it wouldn't sell in those days?

G.C.: So he wouldn't sell it. That was the beginning of the end for my father. He realised that - end of the smallgoods business that it just was not a viable business. We weren't going anywhere. We were making all this salami and mortadella and a lot of it, particularly the mortadella was over-cooked or it was too dry. I used to go one week and sell it to different shops. The next week I'd go to sell more and they'd give me back what I'd sold the week before.

P.C.: That was his neverending problem; he just could not work it out.

O.H.: What about your mum's boarding house, was that still running?

G.C.: That was still going very, very strong.

P.C.: That's where they'd have discovered their own ways, you see. She would buy all the meat from him. They might have their sort of a tallying-up at the end of the week, how much meat she'd bought from him as far as the boarding house was concerned and he'd be running his smallgoods business and she'd be running her boarding house and that's how she discovered her independence and became one - I think the first feminist that I ever discovered. Do you agree with that?

G.C.: Yes, I agree with that totally. That was at a time when the smallgoods business was not functioning. The boarding house was getting bigger. We had moved then from the city to Goodwood, Lanor Avenue, as a family, and my mother then rented the business, the boarding house business to her niece, Prima Caon.

O.H.: How did it come about that you moved out of the city?

P.C.: They'd got fed up with the fact - I mean, when you've got a boarding house and you've got a butcher's shop, everybody wants meat all hours of the night and it just never ever stops. The phone always rings. The interruptions were just extraordinary.

G.C.: And how it came about is, in Lanor Avenue there was another Italian that was a customer who used to live in Lanor Avenue and he used to come to the butcher's shop in Franklin Street and pick up his meat and he told my father that there was a house across the road from him that was going to be sold. So my father being the man he is, being very shy in the business world, approached the people and purchased the house.

O.H.: We are about to run out of tape, so that might be a good place to stop for this week and then next week move into the La Cantina and the restaurant ---

P.C.: Great, yes.

G.C.: Sure.

CITY OF ADELAIDE

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH

**PRIMO AND GIOCONDO CAON
LONG TERM RESIDENTS AND RESTAURATEURS**

CONDUCTED BY KAREN GEORGE

18 June 1996

Volume 2 of 2

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**FOURTH INTERVIEW WITH PRIMO AND GIOCONDO CAON RECORDED BY
KAREN GEORGE ON 30 JULY 1996 IN THE CHESSER CELLARS**

TAPE 5 SIDE A

O.H.: Last time we finished up we talked a bit about your National Service and I just wondered how that worked in those days. Was that a full-time occupation?

P.C.: If my memory serves me correct I mentioned to you with reference to how I was affected by the fact that I wasn't allowed to do my cadets at Rostrevor College and my thoughts of that was because my father was, being an Italian, and I wasn't quite sure where his thoughts were, whether being Australian or being Italian or whether I should be in the services here, but I never talked to him about that or discussed the matter with him, but I certainly felt the odd man out at the college because all my school friends were in the cadets and I felt the total man out of the whole situation, but when National Service came around there was no problem with him at all. In fact I wanted to join the Navy and he wouldn't allow that because that stint would have made me away from home for six months, but there was no problems in National Service at all. So I did my three-month stint. In fact my brother did his stint as well and he finished up a Corporal and I didn't, so that put me the odd man out again, but never mind.

O.H.: So it was a three-month stint in one hop ---

P.C.: It was a three-month stint and my intake was the seventh intake at Woodside and then after that, after you'd do your full-time three months you'd then stay on for a period of two years as what they call - what do they call that, the two-year stint that you stayed on there?

G.C.: After you'd finished your three months at ---

P.C.: After you'd finished your three months as a full-time ---

G.C.: At Woodside.

P.C.: As a full-time soldier you had to stay with them for the period of two years to finish off your - I can't think of the term of it.

O.H.: Right, and that would be on a part-time basis, like a reserves type thing.

P.C.: That would be on a part-time basis. In other words you would have to go for a fortnight to Port Augusta, which we did, one year for two weeks and the following year for two weeks. Then it was all over.

O.H.: Right. It was the same for you, Giocondo?

G.C.: Exactly the same, yes. I was in the, I think, third or fourth last intake then it was all scrapped.

O.H.: You said you enjoyed it. Why did you - what in particular?

G.C.: Yes, I had a ball. It was difficult. I learnt a lot of - for example, my mother never taught me how to cut my finger nails, would you believe. Little things. You learn a lot about yourself, how to become independent in a crowd. Even though we were brought up to be independent at home in the boarding house, but you had this outer family.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: But when you were at Woodside there were no - there is no family, you're on your own and if you didn't do something you were ridiculed or whatever, you know.

P.C.: It was a discipline, I think.

G.C.: And I'm a great believer - in fact, if I had my way I'd get all young people today, men and boys and girls, military service the lot of them. What I noticed was that was for the first three weeks you just marched left, right, left, right, turn left, turn right, attention, sir, etcetera, and psychologically you were taught to listen to orders and you obeyed the orders and then you went up to camp and you started, you know, with your guns and so on. No, I enjoyed it very much. I became very independent, as it were.

P.C.: I must raise one story. We had been there for a fortnight and I'm walking along the road, got my hands in my pockets feeling very comfortable with myself and my new beret and all that sort of thing and a Sergeant goes past and I just nod my head and, "Good morning, how are you?" And he pulls me up and says, "How are you, Private?" And I said, "I'm very well, thank you, very well, thank you." He said, "Cold today?" And I said, "Yes, it's a bit cold." He said, "What, hands a bit too cold are they?" I said, "Yeah, that's why I've got them in my pocket." He said, "Listen, Private, next time you a" - he said, "You salute, remember that. Stand to attention and salute, got it, got it?" It was really that moment that he saw an opportunity he was going to sort of pull all the privates into line. It was very funny.

O.H.: You were talking about owning your MG. I wonder who taught you to drive in those days?

P.C.: The hardest part was getting the car from my father and that was always a bit of a problem.

G.C.: Let me tell you, let me tell you. He came home one day with this half beaten-up sports car and it was half a racing car, half a whatever.

P.C.: It was a Riley, a '37 Riley.

G.C.: And he was going to buy this car.

P.C.: 200 Pounds.

G.C.: And he wanted his mother - he drove it between the hotel and where we lived in Franklin Street there is a little lane, Fenn Lane. He drove it in there. It was a Saturday ---

P.C.: No, it wasn't Fenn Lane, it was what's-it's-name.

G.C.: Yes, you're right, sorry, sorry.

P.C.: God, can't think of it.

G.C.: Trenerry Lane.

P.C.: Trenerry Court.

G.C.: Trenerry Court. He drove it down there to the back on Saturday afternoon, I'll never forget, my father was in Italy. He drove it down the lane. My father's in Italy so it was in 1954 and he wanted to buy this car. My mother saw the car. She says, "Bolko, are you stupid?" "Bolko" means, you know, are you silly?

P.C.: Dopey.

G.C.: Dopey, and I looked at this car, "You're going to kill yourself." It was just an open little sports car and he wanted this at all costs, all costs, and she looked at him and she said, "Where are you going to get the money from?" "You're going to loan it to me." He never got that car.

P.C.: Well, the whole thing was that there was a group of guys that I'd met and they were all just MG crazy, that's all they were, and so the old Riley was not a car for - it was purely one of those sort of cars that you keep for long term, you know, one of those old styles. Then after a long chat with the fellow who was very pro this car, a fellow called Roy Wooding and he worked for one of the TV stations and was a nut with these old cars, we decided that wasn't the way to go. He was part of the group that I got caught up with. But the learning how to drive was making use of my father's utility Ford whenever I could get hold of it.

O.H.: So you would just do it yourself, drive?

P.C.: Yes, exactly.

G.C.: We are both self-taught, Saturday afternoons. My father had a Twin Spinner, a 1952 Ford utility, and after Primo got his car if I wanted the car I had to clean the car, polish it and then, "Could I drive it for half-an-hour?" While he's in the pub next door having a drink. Like Primo, the same as me, I used to sit and watch my father put his foot on the clutch, watch how he changed the gears and one Saturday afternoon one of his mates took him up to the Franklin Hotel which was down the other end of Franklin Street where we were living and I searched the house and found the spare key so I took the car around the block. Saturday afternoons in the city was very quiet but I was rather terrified, but I remembered watching, so we were both self-taught drivers.

P.C.: Self-taught and we had a bit of assistance from other guys who knew how to drive as well, but the hardest part was getting the car from your father.

O.H.: Was it an unusual thing for a boy your age to have an MG? Was there sort of a group that ---

P.C.: It was one of those things that you sort of as a young boy you had this passion for a car like that and when you get caught up with a group of guys who are car orientated, where they strip the car down and polish it and lick it and all that sort of thing, it's fun to sort of be in part with a group like that.

G.C.: But it was unusual, yes.

P.C.: So fortunately I was able to pick up an old '49 TC because that's the way I spent most of the time just - every Saturday was the day we used to sort of clean and polish your car with the group and you'd talk about it when you'd see each other Saturday night and the group got bigger, you'd have three or four cars and then the MG Car Club came along and that was great to be part of that.

O.H.: Giocondo, you mentioned at some stage you had worked for some terrazzo people once, when was that?

G.C.: I was still at school, in school holidays I went to work for Floreani, Floreani down at Brompton. I'd get my pushbike and I'd go to North Adelaide and pick up a friend, another young boy. We were in second year, grade 9, at CBC. So school holidays we'd go down there. Nap Floreani, Napoleon Floreani was a friend of my father's and that's why I worked very hard. I didn't like to work in the butcher's shop and my father had - I think you were working in the butcher's shop at that time, weren't you, Primo?

P.C.: I had to.

G.C.: With Dad?

P.C.: Yes.

G.C.: And I used to go and pick up a guy called Bob Coradini who now owns Prestige Motors and he was at Mills Terrace so I just - on the pushbike. I would go on the pushbike to Mills Terrace, North Adelaide and then we used to go straight down to Brompton. The hard part was starting at 7.30 in the morning, that was the hard part. But school holidays and particularly in Christmas-time.

O.H.: Okay. We were just talking about the terrazzo. I just wondered what you were doing?

G.C.: My first job was to work in the factory and it was to - the columns, they make the columns. Floreani Brothers made all those, the Dorian columns and the Roman columns and you just made a mixture of sand and metal, sand and cement and then you had this form and with a big stick you just had to push it down all the time and all day, that's all you did. My mentor there, the guy who taught me was half-Italian, half-Yugoslav and his right arm, I think, must have been a foot wide because he'd been doing it all his life and I learnt how to

make all those columns. In fact when I designed my house now where I live I insisted on having Floreani columns and from there I just went onto the big machines polishing the terrazzo and from there I just progressed and I went out with some workmen putting up terrazzo tiles in the front of shops and the best job of all is I was sent out for a week to build the gutters in North Terrace.

O.H.: Really? Tell me about that.

G.C.: I felt a little bit embarrassed too, I must confess, but from the bridge, from the River Torrens bridge right up to the intersection of West Terrace and North Terrace, all those, the council used to put the gutters out to contract. They weren't like - didn't have machines like they do today and you had to have a mixer and water and everything and it's like you to anything else, it's cement.

O.H.: What was North Terrace like in those days?

G.C.: Exactly the same as you see it today really.

P.C.: No change.

G.C.: There has been very little change, very little change. I was upset when they redone all the gutters of course. I used to leave a little mark. Every time I used to clean off all the cement I left a little mark.

O.H.: What was the mark?

G.C.: My thumb, my left thumb. Every now and then you'd see my left thumb.

O.H.: So at that stage had either of you had any interest in the hospitality field in restaurants or ---

P.C.: No, I think the only thing I could ever remember is that we were living in Brown Street which is now what?

G.C.: Morphett.

P.C.: Morphett Street.

G.C.: 29 Brown Street.

P.C.: And we were there for a couple of years and I remember that my brother and I tried to cook dinner and one thing I can still remember from my father and mother and we both played the part of waiters and cooks and I still can remember the fact that we made a custard which we were watching my mother make a custard and put in black pepper and custard. Of course, you know, I remember the accolades they gave us but then, you know, and we were dressed in butchers coats, in the white butchers coats. That was the first understanding I have of sort of showing some sort of interest in the hospitality industry, but

otherwise not at all. I mean, direction as far as our professions were concerned were not clear to me because I was sort of being pushed into the butchering business.

G.C.: We were both pushed there.

O.H.: Did you have any ambition at all?

G.C.: No. I didn't know what I wanted to do at all. I had no idea and I think what really messed both of us up really was the fact of the way we were obliged to live with all the boarders. They were all cement workers, carpenters, bricklayers, because when the first Italians came here basically that's all they were doing, and we were just part of that particular scene. The ability - I can't say the ability - the possibility for us to study in a quiet repose was impossible, it was impossible. Even in our bedroom we had a boarder sleeping with us. If we studied or did our homework, I remember sitting on the staircase trying to do homework or doing it in the morning before you go to school because they'd all get up early, all the workers, at half-past-six, 6 o'clock because they had to be on the job at half-past-seven.

P.C.: There was really no room. They were trying to make a dollar.

G.C.: We just didn't do it, it was impossible.

P.C.: Of course we were lucky to have had the opportunity to go to Christian Brothers College because, you know, there's my father paying the fees and, as you know, private schools and for an Italian man like that who had nothing when he arrived here at the age of 21 to send his two children to a private Christian Brothers school, it was quite an achievement, really, and that's why I'm sure when he felt that he had achieved his goal in making a world of his own in another country. Sorry, I cut right across my brother then.

G.C.: That's normal. He's big brother.

P.C.: Yes, you've got it.

O.H.: So tell me a little bit about what the restaurant scene was like when you were still growing up, before you got into it in Hindley Street. Were there many restaurants?

P.C.: Well, I think as my brother said last time, the first coffee machine was the one in Hindley Street.

G.C.: At the Barclay, yes.

P.C.: Was the one in Hindley Street. That's my memory. We were both still fairly young at the time and the picture, as I understand, I mean, I was still working at Mace's Meat Company as a butcher and going out with a young girl called Kay Smith who was an usherette at the York Theatre just off here off Rundle Street and I'd taken this job as a second job as a dresser at the Theatre Royal and so between being a butcher and a second job with the theatre which opened up another world for me, as theatre normally does, I was fed up with being a butcher and so consequently National Service came in so I left Mace's Meat Company at 18, went to National Service. When I came out of National Service I saw some sort of adventure

in getting involved with pet food and that's when the beginning - when kangaroo meat was coming into the market place as venison and there's a complete new story there with how kangaroo was found and how the kangaroo meat began. How leather come in on the market place. So I spent three years in that particular time of looking at kangaroo and kangaroo meat, etcetera, and so I opened up my own little pet shop or pet food store. No, a delivery store for private delivery of pet food to various homes and things like that which developed bit by bit. Now, in the meantime my brother, I think, was at a loose end and I think that's when he got - and you'd better take over from me here - that's when, with discussions with my mother, she gave him some sort of direction. Now, I wasn't aware of that story. Well, I am aware of it, but it's basically his - because that's the beginning, really, of La Cantina.

O.H.: Before we go into that I just want to have an idea what Hindley Street was like when you were growing up, what kinds of restaurants and coffee shops were there. You mentioned Allegros was one place that you remembered in the city.

P.C.: That's right.

O.H.: Were there other places that stand out in your mind from that time?

P.C.: Was the Sorrento open then?

G.C.: No, no. Sorrento opened ---

P.C.: I think there were only two. I think as we mentioned last time, I think Rigonis was one.

G.C.: Rigonis was in Moonta Street.

O.H.: But we didn't talk about the original Rigonis.

P.C.: No. What do you remember about ---

G.C.: His name was Colombo Rigoni. He comes from a place not far from where our parents come from. He comes from Asiago in Northern Italy and in fact Rigoni is a very common name up there, but he married an English girl and I saw her on the list. I think it's 22 Moonta Street, he lived in this attached cottage and he was a musician, he loved playing the guitar and he had lots of mates, like all these young Italian men who came here, they sort of struck up very close serious friendships because they didn't have anyone else. So how he started in Moonta Street, I don't have any idea, but apparently he was a musician, an entertainer, a bit of a cook. So in this maisonette which was fronted right onto the street, you walked in, down the corridor and the first room on the right was his bedroom, the next room was a dining room, then you had the main dining room with a kitchen and he had murals on the wall, candles.

P.C.: And a little courtyard in the centre of the house too.

G.C.: Yes, a little courtyard. He had a toilet out the back, way out in the back. It was a lovely atmosphere and he would come around playing his guitar. Some of his mates

were waiters and it was not far - of course you had the theatre in Gouger Street, Grote Street. The Tivoli? Is it called The Tivoli?

P.C.: No, Her Majesty's.

G.C.: He Majesty's, yes, but it was called The Tivoli then, wasn't it?

P.C.: That's right, that's right.

G.C.: It was called The Tivoli where anybody in Adelaide would have to do a play, would have to do all of that.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: I remember as a student from Christian Brothers College we had our annual concert at The Tivoli.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: Anything that happened in Adelaide happened at The Tivoli.

P.C.: Opposite The Tivoli was Peoplestores and as we mentioned last time there was a film theatre there.

G.C.: Before it was Peoplestores it was called The ---

P.C.: The Bug House.

G.C.: The Empire, The Empire State Theatre.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: And the nickname was "The Bug House," and further down in Wakefield Street there was The Star. But you had Rigonis in Moonta Street. In Grote Street you had a few ---

P.C.: Hamburger shops.

G.C.: There was a little hamburger place. There is one particular that we liked very much which was next to The Embassy ballroom. In Hindley Street itself ---

P.C.: Bill Barabas was there next to The Embassy and he had a little ---

G.C.: Yes.

P.C.: Bill Barabas was a Hungarian fellow who married - I can't think of her name now - an Australian girl and Don Dunstan was their - they couldn't have children - they adopted a child and Don Dunstan was Godfather. So there's a bit of history for you and I can't

think of the girl's name at the time, but right next to The Embassy Theatre was this small little hamburger shop and I think there was one other down further closer to ---

G.C.: But that's in Grote Street.

O.H.: Was that like a hamburger shop these days, a takeaway type place or would you have - could you sit in there?

P.C.: It was a takeaway but you could sit in there as well, but the old-fashioned, you know, hamburgers on the flat plate, like you're fried egg and you'd have a pattie and then a slice of tomato. I mean, Hungry Jacks looks like the closest thing to it, but always run by ---

G.C.: No, it was a real hamburger, a real hamburger. You had bacon and egg.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: You had everything on there and it was very, very tasty. The hamburgers you have today would not compete at all.

P.C.: I think Gouger Street and Hindley Street were the two places ---

G.C.: In Hindley Street as we come down from West Terrace on the left-hand side Ernests ended up being at the weir, but where now is the motel, the motel on the corner of Hindley and Morphett, what's it called, The Tower House?

P.C.: Yes.

O.H.: Yes.

G.C.: Okay, there, Ernest started his first little restaurant. Was it called The Blue Grotto?

P.C.: No.

G.C.: He started there.

P.C.: No, the Blue Grotto was back further.

G.C.: Do you know what I'm talking about? Do you remember the restaurant I'm talking about?

P.C.: Yes, The Blue Grotto was opposite the Bay Ganew at the time.

G.C.: The Blue Grotto, but further down where the motel is now, Ernests, who became a famous name and quite a force in the industry, in the catering industry in the early days, and we are talking about the fifties, the sixties now, he started off there, very European, Hungarian style.

P.C.: Dressed in a white coat.

G.C.: Dressed in a white coat.

P.C.: Juggling - with his hands in his pocket juggling his 20 cents coins or - yes.

G.C.: Now, he had white tablecloths, candles, and so on. Opposite him a German fellow set up The Copper Kettle.

P.C.: That's right, that had a very good name.

G.C.: That had a very good name.

P.C.: Excellent food.

G.C.: He ran than for quite a few years then he sold it and left, he went back to Europe. Coming across the road you had the hotels on either corner. You had Star Grocery of course, but please understand that Hindley Street was very cosmopolitan, all the Europeans used to meet there and it was very friendly, there was a lovely atmosphere. Everyone was dressed up. Any time you saw anybody, particularly at night time, everyone had collar, a tie, a suit. It was very nice. You didn't have any problems. Australian people of course were told, "You don't go down Hindley Street, it's very dangerous, because you've got all the ethnics," but in actual fact ---

P.C.: Ethnics always dressed in a suit.

G.C.: Ethnics with -there was a certain amount of culture, very different from the then Australian Adelaidian attitude towards people.

O.H.: So you were aware of that then, that strangers didn't want to go down there.

G.C.: Yes, very much so, very much so.

P.C.: Yes, because the Balts were going to be down there. You see, Balts being the Latvians, the Lithuanians, that sort of thing. You've got to remember it was after the Second World War too and people were quite concerned about, you know, the Nazi image that had been created in Europe, etcetera, so they were a bit nervous about it and, as you know, the Balts and then they were called "New Australians" and then "ethnics", and what are we called now?

G.C.: Well, Dagos was the big word.

P.C.: Well, that was then. So there was that bit of, you know, "You can't go down Hindley Street because of the European component."

G.C.: Yes, and as you come up ---

P.C.: But that changed as it went along.

G.C.: As you came up Hindley Street on the right-hand side you had a couple of Greek cafes, they have always been there. Typical like they have in the islands of Greece, you know, the men would sit there and play cards. On the left-hand side the West Coffee Palace had a dining room that was very popular.

O.H.: What was that like?

G.C.: Typical, like an elegant hotel, if you like. West Coffee Palace, they still - I am going back now in the fifties - in fact the West Coffee Palace was where I started, but the dining room was very sparse, very clean.

P.C.: It's got a big history which goes back to the First World War where a lot of the soldiers there stayed for some time.

G.C.: Then further up you had all the hotels. You had the Berkeley Hotel.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: Then you had the one on the corner. So you had the hotels and all the hotels used to cater for people's requirements. Restaurants itself weren't there. What was very popular was Maurice's Seafood Cafe.

P.C.: Maurice's, that's right, which was next to the Theatre Royal.

G.C.: Which was right next door to the - that was very popular. That had terrazzo floor. It had laminated booths, tables, or booths. As you walked in it was very narrow, very long, narrow and it had the old style fridge with everything displayed in it, just like you see in the Central Market and he had - I mean, people used to go there for pigs trotters and salamis and things like that that you wouldn't normally see. It was a European deli.

O.H.: So who was Maurice, who was that?

G.C.: He was Greek.

P.C.: He was a Greek fellow but it was like a good delicatessen, that's what it was.

G.C.: A good deli, a very good deli.

P.C.: And it was well known around town.

G.C.: So restaurants as such that stood out other than the ones that were down the bottom end of Hindley Street, and I can't - there was Ernests, there was another Hungarian fellow, Copper Kettle, West Coffee Palace and this was before the days of the Mocca Bar and before the days of the Adelaide Pizza Restaurant.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: But it had a very good feel about it. It was the entertainment centre because as you came up Hindley Street you had the West Theatre on the right, the Metro on the left. Further down you had the Civic on the right-hand side,

P.C.: The Civic, that's right, yes.

G.C.: Then you had the Theatre Royal. So Hindley Street was really the entertainment.

O.H.: How did you get involved in that entertainment side in terms of being the dresser at the Theatre Royal? How did you become the dresser at the Theatre Royal? How did you get that job?

P.C.: Simply because the girl I was going out with was a girl called Kay Smith and she was an usherette and her girlfriend who was married, was married to a fellow called Trevor - and I can't think of Trevor's surname - he was a dresser at the Theatre Royal and the ballet come into town and they needed an extra dresser to look after the Corps de Ballet as well because I think the Corps de Ballet was quite big, it was the Borovanski Ballet Company that came in. So he asked me whether I wanted to have a job of a night time which suited me because my girlfriend at the time was working at nights at the Theatre Royal anyway so I took the job which went on for eight weeks. Then that was fine, I enjoyed that. I mean, it was the first time I saw Coppelgia and was almost sitting right on top of a full orchestra, a full symphony orchestra which was quite sensational. It was marvellous.

O.H.: So what did you do as a dresser?

P.C.: The whole purpose was simply that you had to be by the actor or the dancers, whatever it might be, in case there were changes, quick changes to take place. Life, for instance, in a play called, "Double Image" the head actor would walk off the stage and take his coat off and I'd have to be there to help him put a new coat on as if he'd just changed, right, and make sure that all the costumes were in order and to make sure that everything - it was a bit like sort of the pick-me-up boy.

G.C.: A gopher.

P.C.: A gopher virtually, that's exactly right, and you would be there handy for any of them to assist them look good for their part on stage.

O.H.: So you did that first eight weeks and then it moved on?

P.C.: Then they said, "Well, do you want to work here at all?" I said, "Yes, if anything comes available." So when bigger plays would come in I'd get that sort of number two job and then the other fellow decided that he didn't want to continue any further so then I got the job. So I did that for about eight or ten months.

O.H.: What kinds of things do you remember from those early days when you started?

P.C.: "The Pyjama Game," was there. A Shakespearian play which was with - when Helpman did a soliloquy for Shakespeare at the Theatre Royal. I got to know Helpman very well because, you know, Helpman was very footloose and fancy free and thought I was wonderful, of course. Though that's exactly where it stopped. That play called, "Double Image." What else? No, I can't think of any other, but stage plays, ballets, musicals were all part of what actually came to Adelaide. Whatever came to Adelaide. It wasn't a continuous thing all the time because it was only when the theatre was being operative was the job available.

O.H.: Did you meet anyone else who was a name other than Robert Helpman, anyone you remember?

G.C.: That all came later when we had the restaurant it was full of actors.

P.C.: I'm trying to think of what other great names there were.

G.C.: In the early days.

P.C.: No, it can't come to hand, but, sure, there were. No, I can't come to ---

O.H.: So at this stage were you both still living in the city or had your family moved out of the city?

P.C.: No, still in the city.

O.H.: Still in the city. How did it come about that you actually - your family moved out of the city, because that was before you opened the restaurant, is that correct?

G.C.: Yes, yes.

P.C.: I think I mentioned it to you before, it was simply the fact that when you were living above your premises of business people would, you know, phone you, ring you and if they can get their weekend meat and so that's something that my father got fed up with after a long time of living in Franklin Street so that's when he decided he'd buy the new house.

O.H.: Okay, I would like to talk a bit about La Cantina now. I think last week you told me how you walked ---

P.C.: Yes, but you didn't get the story.

O.H.: The exact story. A bit of the story of how you ---

P.C.: How it started, yes.

O.H.: How it began.

G.C.: My interest in catering started when I went to Italy with my mother in 1955 because Adelaide was so repressed in whatever possibilities you could have and whatever you

could do. I was 17 and to walk into Europe and to see people sitting in a sidewalk cafe with a tablecloth on a table or having a glass of wine or whatever, or a coffee, or a panino, a little sandwich, you know, it blew my mind away. I thought, how relaxed, how lovely, how elegant, and then the first few weeks I felt very much out of it and then I began to really enjoy it and I thought how sensible, how civilised, and when I come back here I just couldn't go back to that world, not in my mind and I felt that there was something more to do, something more about living and I even thought about leaving Adelaide and going to live in Italy but I thought, you know, I was too young, I didn't have the self-assurety that military service helped me a year later when I went to military service. So it was after Europe I still, always had this little bug in my mind and I thought, you know, of the great possibilities. When we were still living in Franklin Street I remember we converted the ground floor front room where there were four beds into a lounge room. This was our first lounge room that our family ever had and I got one guy called Tommy Tomich who you just met to make me a bar because we were the same age and we had a big bar and I designed a little mural on the wall to create a little bit of an atmosphere for our lounge room. Our parents never used it, but in fact we did. We entertained our friends there and this happened when I was the age of 18 at the time. I remember I got a piece of red lino which I put in the middle of the floor which we could use as a dance floor and this all emanated from my experience in Europe to see how the Europeans lived. It was a bit of a cultural shock for me even though I was brought up in an Italian environment, a big family peasant Italian environment, to see the actual culture and sophistication of Europe. I just could not compete. Naturally I wanted to be elevated to that style but I didn't know how. My parents - no one had the capacity, particularly my parents, to show me or teach me and so I always had that little bug. After National Service I was working for my father and indeed it was the age of when I was 21 and it was in 1960 that I was walking down Hindley Street and walked in front of West Coffee Palace and I saw the shop fronts, because separate shop fronts were being put in. I remember seeing West Coffee Palace prior to that when it had the big dining room and I made inquiries, "What's going on here?" Because as I walked through I could see the basements and I saw these big archways, these brick archways which were all bricked up and I thought it would be wonderful if we could just remove the layer of bricks between and join them and it was the archways that got my imagination and I thought - I was young, there was no meeting places other than milk bars where young people used to meet. The Black and White Milk Bar, the Devon Milk Bar and so on and I thought this would make a wonderful place where people could meet. So I approached - I found out who owned the shops that I saw and it was Jimmy Cacas, Cacas the chemist who was across the road and he said, "Sure, sure, I've got no problem, I'm prepared to rent it to you." I asked him for some free time to do it. I had no money. I had a little bit of money so I talked to my mother about it and my mother said, "Of course, of course you can do it. Yes, don't have any problem." My brother at the time was in Sydney and so I couldn't confide or talk to him and, really, I didn't know where to go. So further up the road ---

P.C.: I met a ballet dancer, you see, so I followed her to Sydney.

O.H.: Yes, I wondered why you moved up there.

G.C.: I went further up the road and my brother introduced me to a guy called Brown. I forget his - Peter Brown I think it was.

P.C.: The furniture mob.

G.C.: Of Browns Furnishers and I said what I wanted to do and I said would they get me all the tables and chairs and that I would pay them later and they gave me the credit, they gave me six months credit.

O.H.: What condition was the place in when you first saw it?

G.C.: It was an unused basement, two basements. Brick floor, brick everything. Everything was brick. It had no ceilings, no nothing. So I spent four months of my life, and I did most of it myself. I got a cousin to do the ceilings for me and I just begged and borrowed, begged and borrowed everything. I did it very very cheaply, very very cheaply.

P.C.: It looked good.

O.H.: So what would you see from the street level? How did it look?

G.C.: From the street. There was no facade so as I walked by they were putting up the ...(indistinct)... and I could see down into the basement and that's when I approached Cacas and I said, "Look, if you put a doorway here I can build a staircase," and he said, "You can have it but I'm not going to spend any money," and I actually had to do everything myself. He promised me - he said, "We'll air-condition it for you and so on." I said, "That's very good," and what he gave me were two fans.

P.C.: The great Greek story.

G.C.: I'll never forgive him for that, I was wild about that. So I put a household kitchen in the back and I did all - what I knew best and what I thought was the right thing, and I just wanted to make a comfortable coffee lounge, a retrove for young people of my age.

O.H.: What was in the rest of the building then?

G.C.: The rest of the building was being broken up. It was sold at auction. A fellow called John Asikas bought the centre portion and he kept all the residential part, the upstairs part. Cacas bought two of the places. It was all broken up. Because of the archways the foundation partitioned. It was very easy to individualise. I remember Ron - the music store - Ron Pearce bought the first one.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: A guy who had a deli further down the road, a Greek, Pentopoulos, bought the next one. Cacas bought the next two.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: Asikus kept the main portion of the building. Puccini Hairdressers had the next one. Then there was a camera store, Neesman, and the next one was a Greek jeweller and the last one was a drycleaner. So the whole place was all broken up but no one was using the basement, so I saw that possibility and I thought, well, using a basement is cheap, I'll do all the work myself and we can start that way.

O.H.: So for a lay person what were the steps you had to take? First you renovated the whole basement area. What did you have to do in order to open up a restaurant in those days?

G.C.: You know, I had no idea. All I ---

P.C.: He had a basic idea.

G.C.: I just had a gut feeling that what I was doing would work. I liked the idea of what I wanted to do and I thought there's nothing like this here, but before I set up there was a place called The Las Vegas Coffee Lounge which was set up in Hindmarsh Square on the first floor of a corner in a building named The Block. That place had a coffee machine.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: That place had a coffee machine. A guy called Brian Webber and John Rosetto who was a window dresser for John Martins, they went into partnership and they used to run this place at night-time. They opened seven nights a week. That was an American style coffee lounge and they named it Las Vegas and it was very, very popular. The Camille at Hackney, I think I mentioned that earlier, Luigi had the Camille. That was another style altogether, the more beatnik, sophisticated people would go there, but Las Vegas was popular and it was common to everybody.

O.H.: What was it like inside?

P.C.: It was just one great room. They just put tables and chairs in it.

G.C.: Dark lights.

P.C.: With a little bar and all they served was just cappuccino and coffee and toasted sandwiches.

G.C.: Toasted sandwiches. That's all they did and they always had ---

P.C.: And maybe an omelette maybe.

G.C.: That's right, omelettes, and they had the theme song played by Ray Coniff, they just kept playing this theme song all the time.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: But it was popular.

P.C.: It was light and pleasant and easy and for, you know, for 40 cents you could have a cup of coffee and sit and have a bit of a chat. That was it. People used to queue up like you wouldn't believe.

O.H.: Why was that?

P.C.: Well, there was nowhere else to go.

G.C.: No, people would queue all down the staircase, all along the door. I kid you not. You would have 100, 150 people queuing, queuing up just to have a cup of coffee because as Primo says, there was nowhere - there was nothing else available. You went to the cinema because you got dressed up to have an evening out. You went to the cinema and after the cinema you wanted to go and have a cup of coffee. You didn't want to go to a hamburger place or a cafe or the Black and White Milk Bar to have a milkshake, you wanted to sit down with your companion and have a bit of sophistication and that's why I thought what I wanted to do, I want to put a bit of European thing into it and what fascinated me when I went over to Europe with my mother in 1955, there was a Spanish dancing troupe on board. We went over on the ship called the "Strathaird," and we left Port Adelaide in March and that month travelling on a ship was exciting. In Colombo this Spanish dancing troupe got on and of course they entertained everybody and I was completely blown away by the dancing and the noise and the castanets and the guitar playing and that came into my mind when I walked by West Coffee Palace and I saw the archways and I thought this would be exciting.

P.C.: And it had that sort of almost, you can't say Spanish, but almost, there it is, there you go.

G.C.: You have a look, Primo. I've got an album there. We had on Friday and Saturday nights a man from Palm Photo Studios would come there and he would take pictures, he would take pictures of all the guests and so he did a little album for me as a memory.

P.C.: That's the front entrance as you walked down the stairs.

O.H.: Right.

P.C.: And down this other end you had another, perhaps another six seats with a little cul-de-sac there for two others. That was the first room as you walked down the stairs. He did that himself by the way.

O.H.: The mosaic on the bar.

P.C.: He did the mosaic himself which is really quite good.

G.C.: I did all the woodwork.

P.C.: That's the first barman there.

G.C.: The ceiling.

P.C.: That's the shop coming - there's the stairs coming down this way. There's the entrance to the other main, if I could say, the main dining room which seated about 40-odd people.

G.C.: Can I give you the history?

O.H.: Yes.

G.C.: I just opened. We had the two basements and I was already opened about five, six months, eight months I would say and, as I said, it's all by feel, trial and error, and it just took off. Immediately I opened the door. I didn't advertise, didn't say anything. What I now realise is a soft opening and it just took right off and I was just working day and night and day and night, you know. I was open - the only day I had off was Sunday and being young, being 22 at the time then, I had a birthday, I had some friends hanging around all the time. So you had to go out and try and enjoy yourself, but I was so tired and Primo rings me from Sydney and said that he wanted to come back here in Adelaide and I thought, yes, yes, I need help, I need help. "Please come back, see what I've done here." So he came back and joined me.

P.C.: And I had no idea what it was about, no idea at all.

G.C.: So we ---

P.C.: I just want to finish here because I want to answer Karen's question. How did you get involved in the hospitality business? As soon as I stepped in there and started serving coffee and toasted sandwiches I thought, this is really fantastic. I really am enjoying this, this is exactly what it's all about, better than being a bloody butcher or in the pet food business and that was my entrance into the hospitality world.

O.H.: So what was your impression coming to see what Giocondo had done?

P.C.: I was delighted for him. He had opened up this new idea and I don't think I would have gotten involved - I don't know whether I would have got involved in this business if it hadn't been for working in La Cantina with him at all, but it certainly suited me and it certainly was what I wanted. Then that led onto other things such as the wine business. I didn't know whether he was interested in wine or not, but that led onto all that.

O.H.: Where did the name come from?

G.C.: La Cantina? The word, "La Cantina" means the cellar. I was telling my mother that I saw La Cantina. "Where's the Cantina?" I told her, West Coffee Palace and I tried to explain to her what it is and so on and she said, "Yes, you do what you want." It took off straight away and I got all this money so I paid off all my debts as quick as I could and I was delighted with Peter Brown who was a big help, the Brown family.

P.C.: Browns furniture people.

G.C.: Browns Furniture and I just went on that way, but to set it up ---

O.H.: So just step by step, you have renovated the place, you've got in your tables and chairs. What is your next step? Did you have any involvement with the council then? Did you have to licence the ---

G.C.: I didn't know, the council come and saw me. I had no idea you had to get a permit and so on, I had no idea. They come and saw me on what to do. My parents didn't know. They had no idea. I didn't have someone to go and talk to so it was just all trial and error.

O.H.: So who came to see you?

G.C.: I forget.

O.H.: Was it a Health Inspector?

G.C.: Yes.

P.C.: Probably a Health Inspector.

G.C.: Peter ---

O.H.: Webb.

G.C.: Peter Webb.

P.C.: Peter Webb, yes.

G.C.: Exactly right, Peter Webb.

P.C.: Yes, well done.

G.C.: In fact Peter Webb and I we became quite friendly afterwards.

P.C.: He gave us very good direction.

G.C.: Peter Webb's the man, yes, exactly.

O.H.: What was he like?

P.C.: Charming.

G.C.: He was charming.

P.C.: Very helpful.

G.C.: He was natural. He was natural. I didn't feel threatened by him at all. Like being Italian and having the name Giocondo Caon, you know, often people, I felt, that people were looking down on you, trying to threaten you, trying to intimidate you, but with him I never felt that. I remember him saying, "Look, young fellow, you've got to do this, you've got to do that, just come and see me." Exactly that, "Just come and see me. You've got to get a licence and so on." And that's indeed how we started.

O.H.: So what did you have to do to get the licence? Were things you had to have or ---

G.C.: I remember the next day I went to see him in his office and I don't know, I though I did something wrong. I thought I was going to be charged with all sorts of criminal offences. I had no idea. He said, "Just fill out this form and give me some money." End of story.

P.C.: Just good direction.

G.C.: He made it very simple for me. Then I realised one thing straight away.

P.C.: The sort of things, you know, toilet situations. If the toilets run very well, how the food is being handled. It was just good direction which was very good.

G.C.: He was very helpful, he certainly was.

O.H.: How many tables and chairs - how many people did you cater for in those days?

G.C.: Now, I also, like when we first opened we had, at night time, at a-quarter-to-eleven, twenty-to-eleven, the queue would start, we would fill up and we only had two little basements and we'd have a queue. I would sit about - I think about 60, 70 people.

P.C.: That's in the first two ---

G.C.: Well, I only had two basements.

P.C.: You see, there ---

O.H.: That's later on is it?

P.C.: Those photographs you are seeing there, you are seeing four.

G.C.: When Primo come and joined me we were so busy that I made my first business mistake. I felt elevated, not elevated, I felt alleviated with him being there, a bit of a help, and then the demand for more and better food because my first menu was very simple, just spaghetti, spaghetti and meat balls, toasted sandwiches.

P.C.: And cakes.

G.C.: And a schnitzel and cakes. Primo kept saying, "People want better food, they want steaks, they want this, they want that," but we only had a couple of Italian women in the kitchen. So my first business mistake was I closed down and I thought I will expand either way and either side so I went and saw Mr Pentopolus ---

O.H.: Before you get onto closing and opening up I want to hear a bit more about what it was first like. Your opening night, do you remember - do you have a memory of that?

G.C.: Yes, I do. I was then involved - I had a girlfriend, it was my second girlfriend and I was very much taken with her and ---

P.C.: She was an Aboriginal.

G.C.: He says that as a joke, she wasn't.

P.C.: I will just relate on that. It was simply the fact that he really liked this girl.

G.C.: I liked this girl very much.

P.C.: And she was very charming, she was very sweet and she still is, but my mother didn't want him to marry an Australian girl because I'd run off with a ballerina, you see.

O.H.: And she was Australian was she?

P.C.: She was an Australian girl so my mother used all the forces in the world to impress upon him that this girl wasn't for him so much so that she went to the Births, Deaths and Marriages to find out that she was connected with an Aboriginal tribe. That's an Italian mother for you, which I thought was absolutely outrageous and very wrong. I mean, he's very happy now, but that isn't the point. The whole thing at that time, the pressure that she applied to him because this girl had come from an Aboriginal family was enormous and hence another reason why they went overseas.

G.C.: No, that's not true.

P.C.: She pushed that.

G.C.: She pushed the point.

P.C.: She pushed it. She wanted us to go but that is not reason to get ---

G.C.: The girl was not from an Aboriginal tribe. My mother lied through her teeth.

P.C.: You see, used every trick in the book.

G.C.: She just used contacts because she didn't like the idea, that was all. She didn't like this girl, as simple as that. She didn't like her and so she just tried to ---

P.C.: Break it up, which she did.

G.C.: No, she didn't, she did not break it up at all.

P.C.: Whatever anyway, but I am just telling you about Italian mothers.

G.C.: But the opening night, I remember, on a Sunday, it was a Sunday. I just had a few friends, this girl's brother and his friend was the first photograph, a guy called John Rickard.

P.C.: John Rickard.

G.C.: John Rickard, yes. In fact John Rickard, he was going to school, my girlfriend's brother was going to school. These young boys would come and help me set up this place, all the woodwork, I did all the panelling, did it myself. I learnt a lot and I will be open on a Sunday night and I just had a few friends who I had met, 10, 12 people, that's about all and then on the Monday I just opened up, 11 o'clock in the morning, half-past-ten I was there and I had these two women from Trieste. One was a cleaner, one used to work in the kitchen and we just stood around hoping for someone to come in.

O.H.: Where did you get them from? How did you get your staff?

G.C.: You know, I really don't remember.

P.C.: I think at that particular time you asked around.

G.C.: I really don't remember.

P.C.: If anybody wants a job or just to cut sandwiches, just to wash a few coffee cups and things like that, that sort of thing.

G.C.: There was certainly - within the Italian community there was this pipeline. The word would go around and I really think now that you've mentioned this, I think they approached me. Some of the guys - in Hindley Street you had this outer congregation and sort of the word would go around, you know, you're opening up, do you need someone to work and I think it was the husband who approached me.

O.H.: So that's all the staff you had, just the two women?

G.C.: Just the two women, yes.

O.H.: And their jobs were, one would ---

G.C.: One would come in the morning and clean up and the other one could speak a bit of English so she'd work behind the coffee machine and make a few toasted sandwiches and I just progressed from there. I remember after the first two weeks one of the women she come out of the kitchen and she said, "Look, I don't think I could work here because you haven't got any money to pay me." I felt very hurt and I said, "No, no, no, you stay here, stay here," and it just developed very - it just took off straight away after that, but the first two or three weeks I didn't even know how to make hot chocolate. You know, you just put chocolate in a cup and fill it up with boiling milk. I didn't even know how to do that.

O.H.: Did you have a cappuccino machine?

G.C.: Yes.

P.C.: Yes, there it is in front of you.

O.H.: Yes. Where did you get that from?

G.C.: In fact that - one refrigerator behind the counter and that coffee machine belonged to the Las Vegas because I opened up in 1960, the Las Vegas opened in 1957 because they had a three-year lease and their partnership stopped and they sold everything. They had a problem with the landlord, but also the partnership went either way, and it was at an auction just before I opened up that I bought that coffee machine and the refrigerator that went behind the counter, that belonged to the Las Vegas.

O.H.: So you served toasted sandwiches and coffee?

G.C.: Yes, toasted sandwiches and I tried to push, you know, the Italian schnitzels, Scaloppine and spaghetti, the pasta, but it was not popular. People had been trained already with omelettes and toasted sandwiches and ham and pineapple, ham, cheese and tomato and that was it.

O.H.: Who did the cooking? Did you do the cooking?

G.C.: No, no, I had no idea at that time.

P.C.: Generally speaking Italian women are reasonably good cooks, generally speaking, and just to make a bowl of spaghetti bolognaise or a schnitzel of some sort, it's very simple, it's not difficult and they're very good at that. There's no problem.

G.C.: I remember the toasted sandwiches, you know, there were hundreds of them, hundreds of them. We would have our two women just making toasted sandwiches.

P.C.: You would ham and tomato, you would have cheese.

G.C.: One preparing and one putting them under a griller.

O.H.: Did you go out and do the buying for the restaurant?

G.C.: Yes.

O.H.: Where would you go in those days?

P.C.: Star Grocery.

G.C.: Well, further down the road was Star Grocery and I used to go and see them all the time and I would just give them my order and within a few hours everything would turn up.

P.C.: They were the only Continental place that you could buy some of the European herbs and spices and things like that and they never progressed. I mean, they should be Adelaide's biggest super store, really, but, no, no, there was nobody to sort of carry it through.

O.H.: So who were your customers in those days?

G.C.: People my own age. Ostensibly I opened it up to look after people my own age. In the twenties, you know, people in the twenties, mid-twenties. Sometimes you'd get older people, a little bit older, but Hindley Street was then, you were told you had to stay away from Hindley Street and if you came to Hindley Street in those days you had to be a little bit game and it was obvious that boys and girls, you know, you weren't allowed to be there sort of business.

P.C.: But, generally speaking, you've got to remember there was no licensed places around at all, the 6 o'clock swill was on, so consequently people, you know, to get a drink of some sort that's where you went, you went to coffee lounges. I mean, they were ---

G.C.: You couldn't serve any wine or alcohol at all, but I always had a bottle of brandy downstairs in the fridge.

P.C.: He looks like Tony Curtis there, doesn't he, and that's the first name on the ---

G.C.: No, that comes afterwards.

P.C.: Do you recognise who that is?

O.H.: Tania?

P.C.: Verstak.

O.H.: Verstak.

P.C.: Miss Australia 1961.

O.H.: Miss Australia, yes.

G.C.: After Primo was with me a little while and he kept impressing, you know, I was the employer, I was his boss, but he was my big brother, so I was cut between two worlds.

O.H.: Did you divide the labour between you or did you have particular jobs?

P.C.: No, we both worked at the same time.

G.C.: Yes. No, we were there together.

P.C.: All the time.

G.C.: But I felt a little intimidated because he had a better - an easier style with people than what I did and he enjoyed people where I was more concerned about the workings, having everything functioning, and he kept telling me that, they needed more and more and more and there was one fellow called Dick George who Primo befriended who was there nearly every night, who kept demanding for one thing or another and so the decision, and it was mine, it was to expand and I thought if we expand, I had the money, we expand either way and we set up a restaurant, you know, and we'd just go a little bit more because we just can't stay as we are. So that's when I approached both landlords on either side and rented two more cellars and expanded. My first business mistake was closing. We closed, you know. Instead of being for a few weeks we closed for four months because in the meantime we had a bit of fun. So we opened up - as you came down the staircase, on the right-hand side, our dining room and I called it the Bistro Grill because a few years before I'd taken my mother to see her brother get married in Cooma and on the way we stopped off at Melbourne and I walked past a place called Florentinos Bistro Grill and I was so impressed with this place I thought I'd try to emulate it in a way. On the other side of the two basements I just extended the coffee lounge and made it into a second dining room, if you like, but the Bistro Grill was our up-market dining room and the other one was just an extension of the coffee lounge so basically we had, as you walked down the staircase, we had three cellars on the left, first, second and third and on the right-hand side we had the more exclusive dining room. In the last basement on the left, the last one, I panelled the whole wall just with timber because being in a basement it was totally covered with bricks everywhere, it needed a bit of warmth, and we started off by this Tania Verstak coming down ---

O.H.: So did you do all that work yourself, the ---

P.C.: Panelling.

G.C.: In the extensions, no, in the extensions I had a helper in the extensions.

P.C.: In the very end, the bottom of that particular room, was another very tiny little cellar about half the size - two-thirds of the size of this.

G.C.: It was about 8 by 10, 8 by 10 feet.

P.C.: A cellar, a small room, and that was the wine cellar.

G.C.: Yes. When we extended the Licensing Court then began to change. Don Dunstan was in power and Don Dunstan had a fellow, Laurie Johnson who became the first Licensing Court judge and he was then told to change, you know, the whole aspect of the Act.

P.C.: He was to release the Licensing Court tightness and to bring in ---

G.C.: It was very tough.

P.C.: To bring in the law that you could drink in restaurants until 9 o'clock.

G.C.: Till 10 was the first one, till 10.

P.C.: No, no, sorry, the whole purpose of that was that at a-quarter-to-nine your bottle was taken away and you had 15 minutes to finish off the glass. So at 9 o'clock everything stopped, so no more drinking.

G.C.: 10 o'clock.

P.C.: I would like to lay a little bet with you.

G.C.: You're on.

P.C.: A good bottle of wine.

G.C.: You're on.

P.C.: Right.

G.C.: Because I remember one day this particular fellow said to me, "Look," - in the dining room when the bistro grill - we called it the Bistro Grill, in the bistro cellar - we would close it off. We had a little door. So when you'd come down the staircase we would close the doors and so people could stay a little bit in privacy and this fellow said to me, "Look," he said, "Just leave me alone." So I told the waiters at the time, I said, "Look, just leave them alone." So I left the bottle and the glasses on the table. It was a-quarter-past-eleven and the police came down, it was a Saturday night and they called me over and they said, "Do you realise what this is?" I said, "It's a bottle and a glass." I was convicted for permitting the consumption of alcohol on unlicensed premises and the couple were convicted for consuming alcohol on unlicensed premises because the licence stopped at 10 o'clock and it was the waiter's obligation to make sure that everything was taken off, glass and bottles. Of course people who buy a bottle of wine at 10 o'clock and the waiter comes up, "Well, you've got 15 minutes to finish it," people were objecting and so you were made to feel bad at the same time. I remember on the Monday I was very worried and I went up to apologise to the couple and I said, "Look, it's my fault, we should have taken the bottle and the glasses away," and the woman was crying and she said, "No, no," she said, "He just asked me to marry him," and the police walked in. I'll never forget that and in fact on the Monday the police, there were two of them, the police rang me and I remember one of the policeman was very congenial, very helpful. The other one was rather obnoxious and I think he was a little bit drunk anyway and he was the one with the loud mouth.

P.C.: He was a West Adelaide footballer and he was drunk with power and he wanted to do his job.

G.C.: And I told - I forget their names - but I told the congenial one, I said, "Please, could you - look, I admit the offence, I know I allowed an offence to be committed, can you just tell him to lay off." They took the bottle and the glasses away as evidence which I never received back and the congenial policeman on the Monday rang me and said, "Are you going to plead guilty?" I said, "Why do you ask?" He said, "Well, if you plead guilty we won't charge the couple for consuming alcohol." I said, "Certainly." And I got, I think, a 12 pound fine, something like that, end of story, but of course I have this criminal offence.

**FIFTH INTERVIEW WITH PRIMO AND GIOCONDO CAON RECORDED BY
KAREN GEORGE ON 20 AUGUST 1996 IN THE CHESSER CELLARS**

TAPE 6 SIDE A

O.H.: Before we move on to talk a bit more about La Cantina, I just have a few follow up questions from the tapes that I have listened to. Primo, you mentioned that it was successful, you thought, of your father to send you to a private school, to CBC. Was that an unusual thing? Were there many other Italian boys at CBC?

P.C.: Yes, there were a few others, but I think possibly it would have been only maybe one or two others. But I think to answer your question in fairness, both my brother and I were brought up in a boarding house environment where we had, you know, 40 or 50 men who we were living with. There was really sort of no really private, any sort of family involvement at all. It was all sort of, you know, do as you are told, get into bed now. Whilst it was sort of a - there was a bit of joy to be involved with other people, there was certainly no privacy at all. The only time that my brother and I really were together was when we had our own room together. We didn't have sort of an individual room. Now, whilst - to answer your question, while going into a private boarding school the environment was entirely different, away from the fact of Italian, Yugoslavian or Latvian, whatever it might be. So you were in an entirely different controlled - this was a controlled environment. I'm not saying my mother's house wasn't controlled, but all of a sudden there was a discipline that had to come into the story with that. I think that year of the boarding school at Rostrevor was a very important year for me, because it gave me the self-discipline that was required, and I enjoyed that.

O.H.: Why was it that you went and Giocondo you didn't end up at Rostrevor as well?

P.C.: All I can say is that the older brother, I suppose, just as to sort of see how I worked out, and perhaps it may have been an idea to send me to get me out of the house so that he had the - was the point that they could control him and my sister, probably. That's my version of it anyway.

O.H.: What is your version?

G.C.: My version is that the parents knew that there was not really a family environment and they really wanted to give their children the best opportunity.

P.C.: Yes, I'd have to agree with that.

G.C.: Basically that, and they started off with him, and had he been successful, I'm sure I would have followed. That's all.

O.H.: A couple of times you mentioned a restaurant called Sorrentos.

P.C.: Yes.

O.H.: Giocondo said it wasn't there at that time. I just wondered where that name comes from and when that came about.

G.C.: Sorrento was a restaurant set up by - he started off as a chauffeur and his name - his name ---

P.C.: Ettore ---

G.C.: Ettore ---

P.C.: Ettore Benuzzi.

G.C.: Ettore Benuzzi was his name. He started off as a chauffeur and he was chauffeuring this wealthy widow and on Saturday mornings everyone would meet on the corner of Hindley and Morphett Street, which was then - it was Alpha Emporium, Mocca Bar and on the corner was Palliaro Travel Agency. All the Italians used to meet there and all the Italians whenever they wanted to book to go back to Italy - everyone would go through Arthur Palliaro. It was called Belle Madeleine Travel Agency.

P.C.: Belle Madeleine

G.C.: So on the corner you had Belle Madeleine and Madeleine because his wife was Madeleine, she was a Madeleine Brazzale was her name. That was Belle Madeleine. Then you had the little Mocca Bar then you had Alpha Emporium. But all the guys used to meet there on the corner and Ettore would turn - he comes from Trieste so does his wife. Quite a jovial fellow, a few jokes, a few here, a few there, and he would drive up with his black hat. In Adelaide you never had chauffeurs in those days and you know, everyone thought it was wonderful and of course, he used to tell exaggerated stories about his mistress. I used the wrong terminology, isn't it, Madam, where he would drive her and so on. But in any case, Sorrento as you go up Hindley Street from Morphett Street, it was on the right-hand side. It was about the fifth or sixth shop up. You had Star Grocery, you had a hairdresser's shop. You had Con's Meat Store. Then you had Sorrento. Why Sorrento, why he named it Sorrento, I have no idea, but ---

P.C.: Probably had to do with the song Come Back To Sorrento maybe - maybe.

G.C.: He started off a number of the boarders that didn't go to my mother, would go there, different cuisine, because my mother, Mrs Stocco and Corinda, the boarding houses in Waymouth and Franklin Street, of course the food was a little similar, I would say. Whereas Ettore Benuzzi's wife was the cook and very strict lady, too. Their style of cuisine from Trieste is a little bit different. So he started a little business there, and over the years developed quite a name for himself. In fact, when he ---

P.C.: Chrome tables and chairs.

G.C.: Yes.

P.C.: That's all there was.

G.C.: Kitchen tables and chairs.

P.C.: And lino - lino on the floor.

G.C.: And of course, you had a small little clique of Australians who started to go there, and it was just the beginning of the whole thing, but very, very Italian when you walked in. Ettore used to run the place as a waiter with his wife - with his brother, I mean, as waiters. His wife was in the kitchen. He'd been around for many, many years, Ettore.

O.H.: What sort of period did he start that in? Were you in the business then?

G.C.: Yes, we were.

P.C.: Looking at 35 years ago, no, no. No, no, we weren't then.

G.C.: In 1960 when we opened up, yes, he wasn't open then. He would have opened pretty much at the same time as we did.

P.C.: I thought he was open before us.

G.C.: He might have opened a year before or a year after, but I really don't - I wouldn't like to put a date on it. It was all pretty much the same time.

O.H.: I think another place you mentioned was the Adelaide Pizza Restaurant. Did you used to have something like that?

G.C.: No. Adelaide Pizza came later. Adelaide Pizza came in the mid-late 60s when Arthur Palliaro left Bel Madelyn. The Mocca Bar moved and they moved around the corner into Hindley Street itself. They opened what they called the Adelaide Pizza. Just a bigger version of the Mocca Bar. Mick Papparella was the owner and he was a terrific character, quite a colourful character. Still alive today.

P.C.: Is he really?

G.C.: Yes, I saw him the other day walking up and down Rundle Mall, white suit, grey hair ---

P.C.: Now, there's a story.

G.C.: Quite a character. He's quite a character.

P.C.: Yes, first Juventus Soccer Club.

G.C.: He was one of the foundation players.

P.C.: Foundation players, yes.

G.C.: He worked for Cappel Brothers as a fish scaler and fillet out the back. Always had an Errol Flynn type moustache, very smart, very jovial. Always had a word for everybody. Loved soccer.

O.H.: So was pizza a thing that was around.

P.C.: Not at that time.

G.C.: It was new.

P.C.: Not really. It wasn't around like it is today.

G.C.: It was new, very new. In fact, on the corner where Bel Madelyn was it ended up being the famous Marina Pizza Bar. A lot of people will remember - and they would consider the Marina Pizza Bar as one the embryo - the first of pizza bars in South Australia.

O.H.: When was that?

G.C.: That again would have been in the mid-late 60s when it first opened. They used to make - in the cellar they would make the pizzas and everything, all downstairs, everything was in the cellar and they used to bring it up, upstairs.

O.H.: What was that like at that time?

P.C.: Real pizza.

G.C.: Yes.

O.H.: What about inside the restaurant?

G.C.: It wasn't a restaurant as such, it was more of a bar. They had a few tables and chairs, but they had benches along the windows along each side - Morphett Street, you know. Ordinary ice cream, sandwiches, they still had pies, pasties, that type of thing, but pizza was the big thing. Pizza and they started with the pasta. They developed a bit of a following. The younger people started - the Australian people started to come. It became an accepted thing in the Australian society.

P.C.: It's like coffee as opposed to Australian food. Just like the schnitzel and rather than sort of lamb chops and eggs. You are getting new flavours coming in, that's what it was all about. The food really was foreign to a lot of, what can I say, Australians, English, so the flavours are sort of so different. As you've seen now in the last 10 years, Asian food has come in on the market place, God, there's almost a Chinese restaurant in every little shopping centre. Thai food has now come in so strongly. So that was the beginning of Italian food coming in to the Adelaide scene.

O.H.: We will come back round to the restaurant; before we do I just want to go back to your work as a dresser. A couple of times you have mentioned double image, double image. I wondered what that was about?

P.C.: Double Image was simply ---

G.C.: It was the name of a play.

P.C.: It was the name of a play, but what was interesting about it was I had not seen a shift so rapid in theatre. I just got to the stage where I got to understand how theatre operated. The job of a dresser at that particular stage was that he was playing the - I can't - the name is on the tip of my tongue then. Emery - I think Emery - something or other.

G.C.: He was an English actor, wasn't he?

P.C.: Yes, he was. He was playing the part of a dual role, of people in the play, and he would have to shift from one role to another role. There was one scene in the play where he had to change so rapidly to change into this new image of a person that he would - I'd have to be on the wings with a coat and a pair of trousers and change immediately into the new image. That took 30 seconds. It was so quick. If I wasn't there that would hold up the whole play. So I felt important. But how that switch changed was something that I've not forgotten. The rapidity of how it worked.

O.H.: Yes, I thought it had to be something that made that one stick out more than the others.

P.C.: It made it stick out because I was important as the dresser to be there at that right time to change that whole image.

O.H.: I think you mentioned when I was first here was a time where you got Giacondo in to do some of that kind of work.

G.C.: Yes, because one day he wanted to take out his beloved Ramer, and he said, you've got to go and be the dresser. I had no idea. He insisted, so I have to listen to my older brother. I went and became important for a while.

O.H.: How long did you do it?

G.C.: I did it two or three times. But whenever he didn't feel like doing it he would send me along.

P.C.: But generally speaking it was a hard chore. It was six days a week but I enjoyed the extra money that I got for it.

G.C.: How come I never got paid?

P.C.: You got paid, don't worry.

O.H.: So when you were running the restaurant you'd be doing that.

P.C.: No, no, no. No, nothing to do with - no, then I was a stabilised butcher.

G.C.: You are talking 58 now, 59 - yes, 57-8 you are talking.

O.H.: So it was in this period that your family moved to live out of the city.

G.C.: Yes, that's right.

O.H.: What was that like to actually move from the city as a place to live?

P.C.: To me it was an enormous change. I mean, to have been in a boarding house with 40 or 50 men, all of a sudden you were in a very quiet little suburban street with - what are those trees called? With the lovely tree-lined street.

G.C.: Jacarandas.

P.C.: Jacaranda trees, with your own bedroom. My God, you know, that was something very new to me. It was quite a big change. Very different.

G.C.: All of a sudden we had a lawn to mow, flowers to grow, you know, a house to look after, privacy. It was an awesome change. For me it was.

O.H.: What about the sense of community. Did you lose touch a bit with the people you'd lived with in Hindley Street, did that ---

G.C.: I didn't mind that at all.

P.C.: No.

G.C.: No, no, the people in Hindley Street, living in the city, the friends we had created, not really. But the change was that you then selected the important ones, or the important ones in your life were always there. But the hustle and bustle of living in town had just gone, and it was really a feeling of coming up in the world if you like.

P.C.: Very true, in fact I could relate to that quite easily. All of a sudden there was a family, we had a family. Whilst we always had the family there was always this interaction with people wanting something or other, or their bed wasn't right, or their food wasn't right, and there's always this interruption, which to us, whilst we are brought up in it, in an area, that to us was just life as far as we were concerned. But all of a sudden, to have sort of a family meal with your parents and it all became very personal, was a big change. A big change.

O.H.: Had a lot of people that you knew moved out of the city as well at that time.

G.C.: The exodus was on, absolutely, yes. We could see that. The houses next to us were gone. They were bulldozed which is now a fishmonger's factory, for example. People began to leave. The city began to change.

O.H.: What did you feel about that happening when you saw it?

G.C.: I felt very sad, actually, because even though we still owned the property and we owned the property for many years afterwards, a bit of your life, it's there, and you can see all of a sudden where John Slattery was living, for example, is now a bike shop, or so on. It was not the same feeling. The emotion. I felt a little bit abused that you know, part of my life and my friends and the affection and love you have for that life all of a sudden became an office or a factory, it just lost that emotion, that affection.

O.H.: What about you?

P.C.: I enjoyed the private side of it. All of a sudden I was able to do what I wanted to do myself. This drive of wanting to do your own thing without sort of asking for permission. I wanted to be a rebel. Well, still am, I suppose.

O.H.: Were your parents at all involved in your restaurant venture in any way?

P.C.: No, no. We were ...(indistinct)... tailor in Waymouth Street. One of the original Italian tailors.

[Interruption]

O.H.: I'll mention we were just interrupted. By Armando Urbani?

P.C.: Armando Urbani.

O.H.: And his father was a tailor.

P.C.: His father was a tailor in Waymouth Street. Opposite the hotel there, was it?

G.C.: No, next door to Mrs Stocco who had the biggest boarding house. She had the - where they play the bowls which is now a petrol station. The father was a tailor and the mother just an ordinary housewife. They had two daughters and the son, Barney. Barney, we call him Barney. The father used to play the piano accordion so whenever there was a festivity, a wedding, particularly there was always Barney, Mr Urbani, playing the piano accordion. The father died and it was one of the biggest funerals that they had in the West End, because he died rather young, the father. I will never forget standing at the graveside when the coffin was lowered, Armando had a bunch of flowers and he just threw it and he said, "Goodbye Pop." But it was the way he said it. The expression on his face and tears rolling down his eyes. It was a very, very special moment. I will never forget that particular scene.

P.C.: With affection.

G.C.: Yes, tremendous affection. The mother - the eldest daughter was married and she lived in Waymouth Street also. Silvana the youngest daughter, then went to live in Sydney. The mother began to live by herself. Barney still lived just down the road, 50 metres, didn't like tailoring any more. In fact, tailoring then was going by the bye, we were getting more professional tailoring shops opening up.

P.C.: In fact, George Joseph's ---

G.C.: Ex-Lord Mayor, George Joseph ---

P.C.: Ex-Lord Mayor, George Joseph was next door with the Jewish machines, tapping out all the clothing. Suits and shirts and things, next door, which they sold out much earlier than that.

G.C.: Yes, so Barney tried his hand and he went to work as a barman in the Cumberland Hotel which was across the road. You have got to appreciate that you had across the road from Urbani was Bolkus - Senator Bolkus' parents, that's where they were brought up. You had the hotel on the corner.

P.C.: Yes, Bolkus' father and mother, sorry, I'm interrupting, owned the vegetable shop next door to the hotel.

G.C.: Next to the Cumberland Hotel. So Barney worked as a barman and then he ended up being a manager and then he started to you know, play around with horses. A little bit of bookmaking and so on. But a very jovial fellow, very colourful, very well-known in the early Italian community.

O.H.: He was talking about collecting spoggies. Did you do that yourselves?

P.C.: We heard all about it.

G.C.: I knew about it but ---

P.C.: Not the way they would do it with nets.

G.C.: Lockleys in those days was where all the market gardeners were. All the market gardens were down - that was down towards the end of Adelaide, the periphery of the suburbs, if you like.

P.C.: In fact, that was the market garden, at Lockleys.

G.C.: It was big blocks, and I remember we used to go down on the tram, we used to go down to Lockleys on Sundays, sometimes, just to see some families that we knew, and come home on a tram with a great big watermelon, and so on. But to actually go down there and get the birds, no. I remember trying to pluck them, hated that.

O.H.: As we were interrupted - I just asked you whether your parents had any involvement in your restaurant business at all. You were just about to answer that.

P.C.: No, no. There was no - it was a simple involvement between my brother and I, but basically my brother had started the coffee shop in Hindley Street at that particular stage. Otherwise it was all run independently of them at all. They were very proud of the fact that their two sons had made a - had developed a name for themselves in that hospitality industry.

O.H.: Looking at the directory, it has this Christina Restaurant at 106. What was that, was that next door to you?

P.C.: Was that the Greek place upstairs, which was the delicatessen? The Greek place?

G.C.: Yes, no, no. No, ...(indistinct)... 108 Hindley Street, all I had to access to Hindley Street was a doorway, just a plain doorway; 106, that property, we had the basement and upstairs it was - the property 106 was owned by - starts with a P [Mr. Pantelos] Greek fellow. He had the snack bar next to the Metro Theatre further up, but he bought - when the West Coffee Palace project was broken up, he bought 106. Cacas bought 108 and 108A and Mr John Asikas kept the balance of the coffee palace, the main coffee palace, with the bedrooms upstairs. So all we had basically, was an entrance - a staircase. When I first opened up, yes, there was above me a camera shop. At 106 there was a Greek cafe. [The Christina Restaurant]

O.H.: What was that like?

G.C.: Very plain. It was not successful, not that many people involved.

P.C.: It was a family.

G.C.: It was a family, they really didn't last very long. Really didn't last very long at all. That was 106; 108 was, as I said, the camera shop. 108A was empty for a long time, then 110, there was ---

P.C.: European bookshop.

G.C.: No, that was further down, 110.

P.C.: Well, Ron Pearce Music Store was 104.

G.C.: He was 104.

P.C.: Yes, that's right.

G.C.: And 110 was - they used to sell fridges and washing machines and so on, I think.

P.C.: Yes, that was above the - that was next door to West Coffee Palace, yes.

G.C.: Which, eventually downstairs in the basement, we had our first competitor, Vittorio opened up.

P.C.: Yes, that's right.

O.H.: What was this Cefalonia Club, what - does that mean anything to you?

G.C.: No.

P.C.: I can only paint a picture that ---

G.C.: Cefalonia Club.

P.C.: A lot of the things, a lot of the clubs, basically Greek clubs, were little shops or first floor places where a lot of the Greeks used to play cards. They would spend their time playing cards. That was all it was. Cefalonia Club is obviously an area of Greece where they would - that particular area - people, Greeks would meet and vice versa, a bit like some different Italian clubs that are around Adelaide at the moment. So that was how Hindley Street started.

O.H.: You said you had a soft opening. I wondered what you meant by soft opening.

G.C.: All I did when I finished the place, on the Sunday, I remember I invited just a few friends. I don't think it was any more than about 14, 15 people. We just sat in the little dining room that I made out the back and I even forget what we had to eat, quite frankly. That's all I did on the Monday I just opened the door. No advertising, no nothing. In fact, everything we've done in the past, opened up whatever shops or restaurants, I've always done that. What I call a soft opening. You don't advertise it, and you let the Adelaide word of mouth do all the advertising for you. I'm a great believer in that. I think in this industry, people who spend money advertising your wares, whereas I don't think it's warranted, and I really believe that word of mouth is the best advertising you have, the customers you have at your table at the moment. I've always believed that. It's always worked for us.

O.H.: Can you give me a feeling of the atmosphere inside the coffee shop, what it was like?

G.C.: Do you want to try, Primo?

P.C.: No, go on. You go ahead. I mean, it was ---

G.C.: I was very enthralled for a period of time with bull-fighting, Spanish dancing and so on, because in 1955 when I went to Italy with my mother, when the ship stopped at Colombo, on came a troupe of Spanish dancers. They entertained the passengers on quite a few occasions and I was totally blown away with the tap dancing and the Ole's, and the guitar music particularly. I was rather enthralled and fascinated, and I thought it was very exciting. That bit of culture I'd never even thought about or seen, because all we had in Adelaide was radio and cinema. Never saw anything like that at all.

P.C.: It's called vital, earthy.

G.C.: So when I saw the basements and those particular archways, that sort of conjured up a particular atmosphere. Indeed, so the first prints I had up they were a bit of bull-fighting, and so on. I wanted to have - I called it Cantina, because the word in Italian is Cantina, but it also conjured up the idea of Spanish. I wanted to try to get a bit of atmosphere of a retrove where people could go in a cosy little place and the proper lighting and so on. I

didn't have any experience or knowledge, or didn't look at any books. It was all done by feel. I was a bit sad that the ceilings were very low. But the atmosphere I tried to do to create was a European-type atmosphere because from what I saw having been in Italy, anything to do with Europe I would have been happy with. And I just tried to put it all around the place. Not Italian, I was never embarrassed with the fact of it being Italian. I was always embarrassed with my name, Giocondo. That always embarrassed me in my younger days. Conjured up that dagoism that we paid for. But I did want to give it that little bit of European culture, and I thought the best way to do it was not to use the dago connotation, so I thought Spanish. Everyone likes a bit of excitement, Spanish bull-fighting and music, and that's how I - that's what I tried to put in there.

O.H.: Did that change from the coffee shop to when you closed down and opened up again as a restaurant, did you keep the same ---

G.C.: Yes, the main atmosphere maintained - we maintained that main atmosphere, and we just added to it. It was a very bad business decision for me to close.

O.H.: Why?

G.C.: Because we ended up - instead of closing in a matter of weeks, it took us about 5 months. I didn't get myself organised at all, but by that time Primo had joined me, and indeed with his help, that's the reason - that gave me the reason to close. Indeed, if it wasn't for him I certainly would not have closed, and I would not have extended. But because he had joined me and I felt the strength of having an intimate help, intimate assistance in more ways than just physical, I had the courage to say, all right, let's close, let's expand.

O.H.: How did you work together in those days? Did you split the jobs you were doing or did you do the same things?

G.C.: No, no, no. I was always little brother. I always had to go behind the scenes. Primo always had a way with words, a way with the girls, a way with his smile and they all loved him. They thought he was the person and I always felt - I never felt confident. I think a lot of it was - apart from the upbringing in the boarding house, etcetera, but the name, Giocondo. What was your name? And I had that variation of Con, Caon, Jock, and so on. So I always preferred to stay away from the main scene of activity. In other words, as people came down, the greeting and the hellos, and the questions. I never knew what to say, how to say ---

P.C.: He didn't want to do that. He didn't feel comfortable with confrontation. Not - I have to retract that.

G.C.: It's true.

P.C.: In a way that he wasn't comfortable with confrontation with the general public. I mean, now, after all these years, there's no problem. He will go out and fight the biggest bull you could ever - if you want to. But at that particular time it was something that he didn't enjoy, he didn't feel comfortable with that. Whereas it didn't matter to me. It didn't matter who it was, I'd have a - make them feel comfortable whatever they were, it didn't matter.

G.C.: In other words, Primo had the people skills. I had to learn them.

O.H.: So how did that work out in the restaurant?

P.C.: It would work out very well because I would be front of house, I would welcome them as they came down the stairs, wherever it might be, what they wanted to do. Then he would be there backing it up, which worked very well. There was no problem. He didn't do what I wanted to do, and I didn't do what he wanted to do. So as a team, in fact it was really quite good.

O.H.: So when you opened as a restaurant, did you have waiting staff.

P.C.: Absolutely, no question about it.

O.H.: Where did you get them?

G.C.: I started with just friends, the brother of my girlfriend at the time who was still going to school, mind you, Adelaide Boys High School, he'd come there and work. His friend also and they just finished their matriculation and one was going to university as a pharmacist. He ended up marrying the daughter of a very wealthy businessman in Melbourne and after the divorce became a pastor, a priest. But that's how I started because I didn't know. I had no idea about hiring, firing. I had no idea. I just had some lovely Italian women working in the kitchen and it was all by trial and error. Observing, I never went to catering school or other restaurants, but just by observing and watching and seeing. The food that we started off with was all food from the boarding house, really. Just watching and seeing. The fact that I worked with my father after school in the butcher shop, learned how to cut up meat, learned how to buy meat, that was a great help. Going to the market with my mother, that was a great help, as you made contact that way. So all that became very helpful.

P.C.: I think a lot of the staff - sorry, Karen, would have been young men who were working at David Jones, looking for after hours casual work.

G.C.: The staff as we grew, as we re-opened, yes. Meeting people and people coming to the coffee lounge. People saying, look, I'd like to have an extra job, and that's how it all started. Casual staff, and we ---

O.H.: So you did not need to advertise for waitresses?

G.C.: No, no. We actually grew up. As the business grew, we also grew.

O.H.: How did the food style change from your coffee shop to when you re-opened as a restaurant? What did you do with the menu?

G.C.: We were very lucky. I think our first mentor and I'm sure that Primo would agree with us, it was Primo, in actual fact, who hired a guy called Leo Froschell. Leo Froschell was an Austrian, a chef who - his claim to fame was that he used to cook for

General Eisenhower after the war. But Primo was involved in the hiring of this guy. He used to work for the railway department, railways.

O.H.: How did you find him?

P.C.: I can't remember now.

G.C.: I really think it was an ad in the paper. I think it was one of the few times we put an ad in the paper. He was working at the railways ---

TAPE 6 SIDE B

G.C.: I remember asking him, you know, how come he came to Australia. It is a question that I always ask even today. I'm fascinated, you know, why did you come from Norway if you are a Norwegian. Or from Sweden or wherever. Why did you come to Australia? Above all, why did you come to Adelaide. Because quite frankly, I love Adelaide. I'm very much an Adelaidian. I remember him saying to me that while he was overseas he met some lovely Australian tourists. A doctor, his wife and daughter. He cooked for them in the hotel where he was working and got to know them a little bit. He had a young wife and already had a young son. They said, Adelaide, there's a lot of opportunities in Adelaide. Adelaide - they explained Adelaide, it was a growing city, etcetera, so after the war - this is in the early 50s now, he thought I must try. So he came here not knowing anybody at all, not knowing a soul. By ship, of course, it took the usual 30 days. When he came to Adelaide he apparently had lost the address of this particular doctor, didn't know how to contact him or whatever, and the only job he could find because he didn't have any papers and he was an ethnic, and that saddened him a lot, he ended up working on the railways as a cleaner. He saw our ad in the paper and I remember Primo interviewing him. He introduced me, he was only a little man, very thin, very small. Of course, we had all our Italian ladies in the kitchen and he enjoyed that. He enjoyed the fact that even though we're Italians, there was that bit of that European atmosphere. He loved the fact - he used to call them, "my ladies." He enjoyed them very much. He was my first mentor of ---

O.H.: In what way was he a mentor?

G.C.: Of appreciating a very well run kitchen. How a kitchen has to be managed. Firstly, how you have to treat your staff. I've always maintained that. I've never had any problems with kitchen staff. Or indeed I've had very little problem with staff at all. I do believe in this industry there is a certain way in which one has to treat staff in this industry. It's not like any other business.

O.H.: What did you learn from him in terms of the way to treat your staff?

G.C.: Respect. The way he respected his ladies and the way he used to treat them was absolutely incredible. He left to go to America. He was sad to leave, but he thought that there wasn't any future for what he wanted to do. I remember one dish that - and I've never been able to find anything similar, was his apple strudel. He would show me the pastry, he would lift up the pastry and you could actually see through the pastry before he would wrap it around the apples.

P.C.: He would make strudel pastry that you could spread right across a table, half this table, it would be extraordinary to watch that, and spin it.

O.H.: That would be about six foot long.

P.C.: Yes.

G.C.: Yes, it was huge and he'd lift the whole thing up. You'd actually see through it. It was wonderful. He was a terrific chef. Never had any problems with him. He was a lovely man. Lived in a rented house in Norwood. His daughter got sick at one stage, he had a few problems, didn't he?

P.C.: Yes.

G.C.: But he was very sad to leave and we heard that he ended up being a chef in the Due Line. The Due Line are the radar stations that the Americans have from Alaska to Washington and he was a chef and he used to go from station to station looking after their menus and so on. Very happy.

P.C.: Lovely disposition. I've worked with some chefs who have been drunks. I've worked with some chefs who are arrogant absolute pigs. Some wild men who make a lot of noise. But this man had a lovely disposition which is rare in this industry.

G.C.: In this industry it's rare, absolutely.

O.H.: So in terms of the menu, how did you come up with that? Was that in association with him, or did you have a menu already there?

G.C.: The first one with him, no. It was in association - what we could do, what we couldn't do. We started to do things that we didn't know, for example. Apart from being a mentor in the personal sense it was also in the teaching of the menu, how to do about a menu, how to prepare it. How one dish flows on to another, you know.

O.H.: So what was on the menu in those days?

G.C.: Please don't ask.

P.C.: To answer that question I think it's a bit like as we were talking before, Italian food was - pizza was just coming in on the scheme. It's what you could think you could really sell.

O.H.: That is what interests me, what ---

P.C.: Yes, bit by bit what was coming in. I mean, schnitzel was coming in on the scene.

G.C.: Schnitzel, T-bone steaks, Porterhouse, Filet Mignon. Filet Mignon was the big thing, of course.

P.C.: That's right. Omelettes.

G.C.: Yes, that's right.

P.C.: Chicken Maryland which was also ---

G.C.: Chicken Maryland, always the oysters. Always the oysters. Chicken Maryland; chicken salad.

P.C.: It was a gradual development. If you made a different sauce of some sort that could go with a piece of beef or a piece of chicken, there'd be some of the ---

G.C.: I think the most popular dish would have been fillet mignon and mushroom sauce. That was the most popular. Would you agree with that, Primo?

P.C.: No question, that's quite right.

G.C.: That would be the most popular.

O.H.: Did you have pastas in that as well?

G.C.: No, no. I always - we always had spaghetti bolognese.

P.C.: That's right, I was just going to say.

G.C.: We always had spaghetti bolognese. I've always had that on every dish. I've taken spaghetti bolognese, only in the last three or four years have I taken it off the menu, quite frankly. But I always had it. Always there.

O.H.: So in changing from a coffee shop to a restaurant, what did you need to do with the kitchen? Did you make it bigger.

G.C.: Well, yes, because we extended from 108 down to 106 they gave us the extra room at the back so we could have - because before the kitchen - all we had was - I had an ordinary gas stove, ordinary 4-burner gas stove on the side, and electric salamander. We used that as a toaster. Really, that's all I had. And a sink. Nothing else.

O.H.: What is a salamander.

G.C.: A salamander is like a griller. A griller. We had a 2-door fridge and that's all I had. Knocking down the wall and going into 106 of course we could extend, so we ended up having a commercial kitchen - a semi-commercial kitchen, compared to today. But for us it was - we had a deep fryer, a big 8-burner oven, a big 8-burner gas stove. So we became a little bit more ---

P.C.: Sophisticated.

G.C.: Sophisticated, yes.

P.C.: I think that's how the place was set up. You'd come down the stairs, you'd have the two areas which was your coffee shop, omelette, toasted sandwiches, etcetera. On your right-hand side if you wanted a classical up-market meal, that's where it would be set up in a different sort of environment entirely. Which would be the red carpet, the table cloths, very much more up-market. In fact the waiter at the time wore one of those tartan-type vests with a white shirt and a bow tie. It looked quite stylish.

O.H.: How many did you have in the kitchen then with the chef, how many staff did you have?

G.C.: Four, four altogether. And on Friday, Saturday nights, five. You see after the cinema, because cinema was the big thing in those days, and we were next to the three main cinemas, the West Theatre, the Metro and the Civic, and people used to come there because there really wasn't anywhere to go.

P.C.: And the Theatre Royal.

G.C.: So you'd always have this queue. By 11 o'clock we were full up and there was a queue of people standing on the staircase just waiting to have a - and all they wanted really was just to finish off the evening. We'd have records, started with records, and then we had a tape - taped music. Tried to have the theme music of the year at that time. Ray Coniff and his Big Band was ---

P.C.: That's right. That's a conductor I haven't heard of for quite some time.

G.C.: Ray Coniff, yes.

O.H.: You mentioned something about a piano, I have just made a note ---

G.C.: Upstairs the shop that was selling - camera shop, closed down. Then who took over the two shops on 108 and 108A upstairs belonging to Cacas was music, they were selling pianos and organs and so on.

P.C.: Ron Pearce Music.

G.C.: No, Ron Pearce was on 104. He had this own thing. It was Ron Pearce Music school. These were people who were selling pianos and organs and musical instruments. They went bankrupt. After a couple of weeks I noticed there was this baby grand piano there, and at the time, coming down in La Cantina, there were these musos. One was a little fellow. I can't remember his name but I remember looking at his fingers because I always thought a pianist had very long fingers and he had little stubby fingers. He was a muso, so I mentioned to Primo one day, why don't we get that grand piano because I had the - I knew how to get in upstairs and we took it downstairs. And we did. We had that piano downstairs for about eight months. No one laid claim to it. Eventually I wanted to get rid of it because it became an incumbent, you know. But while we had it there, this fellow, and he was a terrific pianist, he was a jazz pianist, and he would come down Friday nights and just play. You remember him?

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: He would come and ---

P.C.: In fact, Kim Bonython, who was involved in his own record store at the time was jazz fanatic, and he came down to interview him and talk to him one night with Max Harris and his wife as well. And Julie Bonython, as well.

G.C.: This fellow, he wasn't much older than I was, and sometimes you'd get a bass man come in and join him and he'd just play modern jazz and he was fantastic. And after a while, after about eight months, I went to the landlord, Jim Cacas, who I never got on with at all, and I said ---

O.H.: Why?

G.C.: Because when I rented the premises from him he promised me the world and I got a match.

P.C.: No, no, you can have air conditioning, so he sent us four circulating fans. That's air conditioning.

G.C.: You know, and so on, but in any case I wanted to get rid of this piano, I didn't know what to do with it, you know, and stupidly I just went to him, and I said, "Look, there's a piano here, I don't know who owns it". He just went, "That's mine", and he took it. That was the story of the piano.

**SIXTH INTERVIEW WITH PRIMO AND GIOCONDO CAON RECORDED BY
KAREN GEORGE ON 27 AUGUST 1996 AT CHESSER CELLARS**

O.H.: This is the sixth interview with Primo and Giocondo Caon taking place on the 27th of August 1996 in Chesser Cellars. So we were talking about La Cantina as a restaurant, finishing last week. I sort of just wondered in general, having started in that restaurant business, what were the biggest worries and concerns and problems that you faced?

P.C.: I think it's best that my brother answers that because he's what - how can I put it - he's the more the hands on person who saw something that could be created into, what I would say, good ambience, etcetera, and good design and whatever that was involved in sort of setting the place up. So it's best if he answers that. I had other thoughts about getting the place filled with people as well

O.H.: Well, that's an ...(indistinct)...

P.C.: Which is another story, you see.

O.H.: Okay. Well, we'll talk about both sides of that. What did you see as the main ...(indistinct)...

G.C.: Well, at the age of 22 in 1960, having just finished national service then gone to work for my father in a butcher shop that I hated, having said that I think I did a reasonable job.

P.C.: Exactly.

G.C.: And then he went into the smallgoods business. I used to help make the smallgoods. Then I had a little van, a little Ford Prefect panel van, I used to try and deliver all the salami and mortadella all around Adelaide and go back and help the shop, then deliver the meat, etcetera, and I didn't want to do that. I just had that gut feeling after my sojourn in Italy that this is something for younger people, something that for the future, somewhere I could have created my own identity and I just opened this place up in a lot of faith and hope. The big thing that I knew I lacked was knowledge, ability. There was certainly nowhere in Adelaide I could have gone to for schooling, for learning about anything to do with catering at all, there's nowhere. The industry then was surrounded by hotels and, of course, the hotel kitchens. So that was my big concern. So I worked a lot on just the cappuccinos, the toasted sandwiches, things that I could pick up very easily, and the atmosphere that we had there. And then, as you know, six months or eight months later Primo came in and we decided to go the full restaurant hog because we were - we could see that there was something to do - not something to do ---

P.C.: There was a demand.

G.C.: A demand.

P.C.: Yes.

G.C.: We were being forced down a certain way. So it was all by making a mistake and you learn.

O.H.: Were there worries that you had with a restaurant that you didn't have with a coffee shop?

G.C.: The whole thing changed but it was a question of growing up and we just - as someone told me, when the water hits your bum you learn how to swim.

O.H.: Do you have any instances of that from mistakes that you've made?

P.C.: Well, you know, burnt sandwiches, all those - not enough plates, not enough spoons.

G.C.: Overdone steaks, you know, tough meat.

P.C.: Everything, you know. Complaints.

G.C.: Continuous.

P.C.: Omelettes are too soft.

G.C.: Or omelettes were too hard.

P.C.: "My omelette's too hard." A lot of that.

O.H.: What were you saying about getting people into the place ...(indistinct)...

P.C.: Well, you know, it was new. I mean, you've got to remember that the licensing at that particular time had to be closed by 60'clock and you try to let people know that there are other places other than hotels and try and get people to come in. Of course the big feature at that particular time was going to the movies and to try and create, to have a cup of coffee after the movies. So we really pushed on that. And also word of mouth is also the big thing. So we discovered what service was all about. So by giving good service, by making sure the coffee was hot, by letting people talk about it, that is what created it more and more.

G.C.: Being friendly, being happy, being a nice place to go and also it was all, you know, courageous for Australian people to go down ethnic Hindley Street and courageous more to walk down into a basement, you know: Cor, and a couple of dago boys there. We always had that underlying - it was there, that underlying factor that these people ---

P.C.: You're Italian.

G.C.: You're Italian and you weren't of the same level. It was always there. It wasn't said but it was there all the time.

P.C.: In this book here it says, "Italians were told" ---

G.C.: And, hang on, the book is ---

P.C.: "Italians were told" ---

O.H.: "No need to be afraid."

G.C.: "No need to be afraid," yes.

P.C.: That's right. That if you're Italian you were at the west end near the brewery and of course people shied away from that and because you're ethnic, which is probably a better term for it these days, but if you're Italian you came from the west end near the brewery. So people shied away from it. So a bit like as Hindley Street has changed dramatically over the last 40 years, the situation has become far more - to me in those days there was nothing to be concerned about maybe but as these days Hindley Street has opened up an ugly head with itself.

O.H.: Did you get many Australians then coming down?

G.C.: Yes.

P.C.: Yes, it was really quite ---

G.C.: Our market was totally Australian, totally Australian. We had a few members of our outer family who would always come in but the market was orientated to our own age people, really. But when the restaurant opened and because of Primo's involvement in theatre and also he married Ramer Townsend, who was with the Borovanski ballet at the time, there was a follow on, and because of Primo, that we had the attachment of the theatre people. And when the restaurant was in full flight, that was, let's say, 1963 now, '62/63, every time there was a show on at the Theatre Royale or the Tivoli Theatre, that was a live show, it would be a must that people, the actors, would come to the La Cantina afterwards and we always catered for them, particularly Primo, and so therefore he got to know all of them on a first name basis and of course when the actors would go there people would follow.

O.H.: How did that happen? Did you sort of invite them or did it just sort of become ...(indistinct)...

P.C.: Well, as I said to you before, working in the theatre as a dresser, people wanted to know where you came from, what you did, all that sort of thing and bit by bit word got out that you can go down the end of Hindley Street and get a - through the contacts that were made over that period of time people who were there from the Theatre Royal used to say, "Well, you can go down there and get a cup of coffee," or "You can get a glass of wine," or something along those lines, and so word eventually was established that you can go and get a civilised cup of coffee and a civilised glass of wine.

G.C.: Without telling anybody.

O.H.: So were you licensed as soon as you opened? Did you have a liquor licence?

G.C.: Yes, yes, but again, you had to adhere to the fact that, you know, at 9 o'clock or 10 o'clock everything had to be taken off the table and so on.

P.C.: I mean, one of the great things of all that, when La Cantina got to be known that it was a place where theatre people used to go, that had its own following and to see Robert Helpmann walk down the stairs, who he thought my brother was gorgeous, Robert Helpmann come down, Joan Sutherland, Marcel Marceau, Pavarotti was down there, he was in the Corps de Choir at the time, and a Corps de Choir - that's not correct, Pavarotti was, he was in the chorus, that's what he was, and he was here with Joan Sutherland, who was playing the lead in La Traviata here in Hindley Street, and it was the most amazing time to serve a fellow man, who's made a big name for himself around the world, where he ordered a piece of rump steak, which had to be rare, and just a big bowl of salad as well and he would order that and say [something in Italian], which means, "That was so good, I want another one," and I couldn't believe that we gave him exactly the same piece of steak and he had the whole lot all over again and said it was fantastic, and plus the fact that we were Italian, that made another dimension into it.

G.C.: Yes, of course.

P.C.: And Nureyev, also he came along as well, Margot Fonteyn. I mean, I haven't got the boards here which are now being done at the moment ---

O.H.: I was going to ask about the boards. How did that idea---

P.C.: Well, they're at a place called Art Lab at the moment where I'm having all the - their names that people have been scratching on them and writing their names on it and it's really disturbed the two boards and they're really part of the history of La Cantina and our work that we'd put into it. So I've taken that to the Art Lab to give me a price to see exactly what it would cost to clean them up and leave all those names the way they are without sort of destroying it because people see them up there and they can't see Joan Sutherland, Maggie Tabberer, Margot Fonteyn, etcetera. So it's being highlighted at the moment.

O.H.: How did that idea originate, that you would ---

G.C.: Well, in the - as I say, we had two cellars to start with then we expanded on either side and on the far side cellar in the back room we set up our wine cellar. It was a room 12 feet by 10 feet and the entire walls were totally covered with shelving full of wine. In the middle we had a table with a candle light and it started that if personal friends - Primo started this - you know, people would go there just to have dinner for two, you know, and it's like having a dinner for ---

P.C.: Or for four.

G.C.: Or for four. It's like people having a dinner in a wine cellar - and terrific atmosphere, it really was.

P.C.: Sometimes, I didn't leave until 4 o'clock in the morning.

G.C.: Yes, that's true. That's true. Anyway, in fact, it will be interesting if someone was a fly on the wall in that room. Quite a few things would've been heard, because it's amazing the personalities, political and otherwise, who dined in that room. But in the main cell itself, the whole wall was just brick and so I decided to panel the wall, just ordinary 3-ply, in portions. And the first signature - you know - and it was just stained panel wood, and the first signature was Margot Fonteyn Arios, followed by Rudolph Nureyev, and that's how it all started. And I was very jealous of people, you know, even touching the wall, because someone would come in and they would write in biro, "Charlie was here," and I used to gently scrub it all out and I used to police it all the time. Unfortunately, when we sold the restaurant in 1969, it was sold then to a fellow who was just as, as discerning, and I don't know how many owners it had after that particular guy. His name was Anderson. What was his first name? Something Anderson.

P.C.: It doesn't matter. Hughie.

G.C.: Hughie Anderson, yes. He was jealous and zealous of maintaining the same - the same character and atmosphere, but unfortunately, you know, you get a new captain, things change. He kept it for two years and then he just sold it on. Who started there was - started off as a kitchen hand, was Philip Searle. He was the assistant cook or kitchen hand, for the third owner. Philip Searle now, of course, runs Oasis Seros in Sydney and set up other restaurants like Nediz. He was the founder of Nediz.

P.C.: No, no, sorry.

G.C.: Yes, yes, him, Chong ---

P.C.: Chong Liew

G.C.: Chong Liew, Philip Searle and a woman, they used to call her Neddy. Three of them. And of course, he now has become one of Australia's leading lights. So - but after that particular episode, I don't know who bought it and it was a crime to see in lipstick, you know, "Suzy was here," or "Joe loves Blow," and all the rest of it. So all those panels were absolutely destroyed. Primo told me - oh, I think it was about 18 months ago, that one of the owners there was, was - auctioned them off. When the place was closed up eventually and they just changed it, you know, and painted the ceilings black. Absolutely destroyed the atmosphere that was there of course, but all those panels were taken off and auctioned and luckily, Primo bought a couple. Unfortunately, I did know at the time ---

P.C.: No, no, no, no.

G.C.: It was a crime.

P.C.: We got 90 per cent of the two panels. There are a couple of other little boards there which I can't make head nor tail of at the moment, but these are the two - one I'm concerned about, which I want to try and maintain.

O.H.: I was reading a restaurant guide around the 1965 and it said that you had a picture-photo gallery. Did you have photos or would that have referred to the boards perhaps?

P.C.: No, the boards.

G.C.: No, the picture photo gallery I did at - in '65. No, no, because of what I've just told you about La Cantina, when I set up Rigoni's, I decided to do the same thing, but only with photographs. So at Rigoni's even now on the wall, if you go there now, there's I think, nearly 40. You know, I could've had a hundred, but when actors come to Adelaide, you don't know when they're going to walk into Rigoni's, and luckily at the time, I had a contact in the Advertiser, in the photography section and I would ring up and I said, "Look, so and so was here," and within half an hour I'd have a photograph there. It was terrific. But only because of that problem that we had at La Cantina. But we never had a picture gallery there.

P.C.: No, that was ---

G.C.: Oh, hang on, what you might be talking about is the Festival of Arts. During one Festival of Arts there was a display. Some guy did a display of pictures, photography. Would that be the first Adelaide Festival of Arts?

P.C.: No, that would've been - that would've been a one-off though.

P.C.: One-off?

G.C.: Yes.

P.C.: And a couple of times we had different artists who wanted to, you know, put their paintings and/or photographs all around the wall. So that's probably what that is.

O.H.: So over that time, you know, when you started your coffee shop, you went out and got your own supplies and that kind of thing from ---

G.C.: Yes, yes.

O.H.: Did you continue to do that as the restaurant continued or did that get to be ---

G.C.: Well, in those days, there weren't, for the type of food we were doing, there was only one particular place, which was Star Wholesalers, and of course, they were on the corner of Hindley and Morphett and their warehouse was right behind the shop. So it was quicker for us just to walk down there and pick up the stuff. Eventually, they moved down to Hindmarsh, so they then started to - every week we'd ring them up and they would deliver. But that didn't happen until towards the end.

O.H.: Who would've been your main competition in those days? Did you have competition?

P.C.: Oh ---

G.C.: You had a few.

P.C.: Yes, but it wasn't really - I mean, eventually ---

G.C.: For our style.

P.C.: The coffee. If you just talked coffee shops, there were a about three or four in Hindley Street at the time, and all of them had a reasonable following, you know, because as I said before, the Licensing Court looked after that. Nobody could buy a drink anywhere. And so everybody - the thing to do was to go and have coffee shop, I think. Remember Philip Zappia? What did he call his place?

O.H.: Was it the Black Orchid?

G.C.: Black Orchid.

P.C.: The Black Orchid, the Desert Sands across the road. Next door to us was ---

G.C.: Well, the Black Orchid was only 100 yards away.

P.C.: That's right. Vittorio was the next place just down from us.

G.C.: He was twenty yards away from us.

P.C.: Then there was ---

G.C.: Twenty yards, 20 metres.

P.C.: Yes, that's all, because that's where the - that was the centre of the pictures and people would go to the movies and then go to have a cup of coffee, so ---

G.C.: Because in the suburbs, there absolutely - there was nothing in the suburbs. You had the outer picture theatres, but if you went to the picture theatre in the suburbs, there was nothing, at all.

P.C.: Because really everything was central in the part of the city.

G.C.: Yes.

O.H.: What was the competition like? Was it sort of friendly?

G.C.: Oh yes, absolutely.

P.C.: Oh yes. There was no - god, we used to borrow milk from them, they'd borrow milk from us.

G.C.: Absolutely.

P.C.: There was a bit of support - a supportive role across the board, I mean, because people get tired of going to the same place all the time, so then they change a little bit. So

what, they'd go to you twice and they'd go across the road another time. The people who stayed with you are the ones that sort of regularly then get into a pattern and won't go anywhere else, and so there's a lot of that goes on as well.

O.H.: Where there many restaurants around that sort of came and went very quickly? Sort of unsatisfactory type of thing.

P.C.: Still is.

G.C.: Is, still is, and always will be. These are people who - you see, in those days, the restaurants that began to open up were always European, or of European origin. There really - other than snack bars and delicatessens, but anything to do in this industry, the people themselves were of the European class. Ernest - Ernest's at - he went from the bottom of Hindley Street to the Plaza Theatre, which is now where the Regent Arcade is.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: From the Plaza Theatre, he went to the Weir. He didn't - he had an upper market, but again, European style. He was a - I don't think he was a chef at all.

P.C.: No, he was a ---

G.C.: He was just a self-taught ---

P.C.: No, he wasn't a chef. He was a ---

G.C.: He was just a waiter, I think.

P.C.: He was - I think he was a waiter, you're quite right.

G.C.: He was a man with a bit of style, but his wife was terrific. He had terrific support.

P.C.: Didn't he start the Paprika first?

G.C.: I don't know.

P.C.: I think he started the Paprika, which was a night - I won't say night club. It was a sort of a ---

G.C.: Restaurant-night club.

P.C.: A restaurant-night club of some sort. Then he got a bit more up-market and then opened up Ernest's at the river, now, which is still a restaurant. Or no, he went into the place just down here, down here in - near the Regent Theatre. He opened up Little - Little Earn - he called it, he had two going. That's right.

P.C.: He called it Little Ernest's.

G.C.: He had Ernest's, then Little Ernest's.

P.C.: Near the theatre.

G.C.: So the one at the Weir was called Ernest's and the little one there, had Little Ernest's, that's right.

O.H.: What was it like?

P.C.: Very pleasant.

G.C.: It was up-market, it was pretty good.

P.C.: Stylish.

G.C.: In fact, he got out of the industry and he sold the Weir restaurant because the industry changed too, at that time, and it would be in 1974, is when he - he's still alive too, I think.

P.C.: Gee, he could be 90.

G.C.: He's still alive, but it was up-market, old fashioned.

P.C.: I mean, things like chateaubriand, which is the old European - which still goes on pretty heavily in the continent. chateaubriand, all those stylish slices of meat and things like that, the French style.

O.H.: Do any of the places that sort of came and went during your period of La Cantina, stick in your mind? The people that perhaps didn't make it?

P.C.: Who didn't make it?

G.C.: Who did not make it? People who tried and just didn't succeed? Oh, you forget those. Really, you know, a classical ---

O.H.: Yes.

G.C.: Yes, no, a classical disaster. Not that I can think of.

P.C.: I think, I think ---

G.C.: They probably occurred, but I don't ---

P.C.: Probably the two that stays in my mind, because I felt was reasonably - this one was really stylish, which we mentioned last time, in Hindley Street, which was just down from Palliardo, and we mentioned it before.

G.C.: There was a lovely little Belgian fellow who opened a little restaurant opposite the brewery. [The Belgian Restaurant] That was a lovely little place. Did not succeed and it was a shame, because his food was superb. Wonderful food. Very, very, very French style, excellent food, and he didn't last. He used to come out and play the piano, in fact.

P.C.: Little, little, little, little Lebanon, or little ---

G.C.: He had a funny name.

P.C.: Little, little - it was a Lebanese place. He used to play - he used to play the piano there.

G.C.: No, he wasn't Lebanese. It was a Lebanese name. It was a funny name, but he was Belgian. He was Belgian. That was a lovely little place that I remember.

P.C.: Hm, when Max Harris used to play - go there quite a lot. He'd support him.

G.C.: Yes, but no, there's no great ---

P.C.: Allegros is the only one that I can think - that stays uppermost in my mind.

G.C.: He was the founder of, of the new -of the Italian.

P.C.: Of the, of the Italian - the up-market Italian-type restaurant.

O.H.: Where was that?

G.C.: Arkaba Steak Cellar, all right?

P.C.: And then he had a little place in Little Rundle Street - in Rundle Street.

G.C.: He started in Rundle Street.

P.C.: He started in Rundle Street, that's right.

G.C.: Under the Liberty Theatre - but I mentioned this earlier, I think.

O.H.: I'll just mention a couple of names. There were a few restaurants that came up during that period that were often - the health inspector was visiting. If any of them mean anything to you, just tell me. The Latino Cafe, at 135 Rundle Street?

G.C.: Cafe Latino? Cafe Latino? Cafe Latino? 135?

P.C.: No, does not ring a bell.

O.H.: It could be on the other side from there.

G.C.: Yes, that's near Cacas somewhere, Cafe Latino.

P.C.: It does not ring a bell.

G.C.: Obviously, I wasn't alive for very long.

O.H.: Cafe Ammonia? Omonia? Omonia?

G.C.: Oh, yes.

P.C.: That's one of the Greek place where they played cards.

G.C.: That was a Greek little cafe where - a typical village-style Greek cafe. People wouldn't go in there unless you were Greek and unless you were one of the boys. It was that type of place. I know that place. That was there for years. I don't know if it's still there.

P.C.: I think it's still there.

G.C.: Probably, yes.

O.H.: And the Canton Restaurant?

G.C.: Oh, that was further down. That, that's yes, that's always a grubby little place, the Canton, yes. That's further down.

O.H.: And the other one was the Athens Restaurant?

G.C.: That's on the other side. That - that's where what's his name started, where the Town House is now, just next door to the Town House.

P.C.: Oh, right, yes, yes. I know which one.

G.C.: Char Grill, Char Grill, but yes, Greek again.

P.C.: But you know, that was part of their ---

G.C.: That was part of the Greek scene, I suppose.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: You didn't - those places, basically, they were for their own community really. You didn't - they weren't - I can't say on the same level as us. It was a whole different scene. A different scene altogether.

O.H.: What sort of relationship did you have with the health inspectors in those days?

P.C.: They were very supportive.

G.C.: Yes, Peter Webb ---

P.C.: They tried to show you - they tried to show you exactly what is the right thing to do to keep your place clean.

G.C.: Yes, when I first started, Peter came in and he said, "Look, this is no good, that's no good," because I had no knowledge. I had no knowledge of anything, quite frankly, at all. No knowledge, and Peter was very helpful. He never once, ever you know ---

P.C.: He would direct you.

G.C.: Yes, he would say, "Look, come and have a look at this," and he would explain it to you, and I was very happy with him, always.

P.C.: The thing is, if you did the right thing, then it was fine. If you didn't, if you dragged the chain, then they would really sort of say, "Hey, listen, we'll put you on notice," but you know, we followed through very quickly.

G.C.: He was still there, even in 1980 - 1979, when I opened up Rigonis. He was still there, Peter Webb, so he's been a health inspector for a long, long, long time.

O.H.: How often would they drop in? Would they come very often, or ---

P.C.: Oh, every six months, every 12 months. If they didn't in six months, definitely 12 months, for sure.

G.C.: Oh, even more, he'd just drop in and have a look around. Look, even I walk into a restaurant today you can sense if there's a problem. You can sense it. You don't have to start looking around.

O.H.: In what way?

G.C.: It's like for example, if ---

P.C.: A sixth sense.

G.C.: Yes, if you and I walk into a room and - a small room, let's say, 30 feet by 30 feet, and you've got 40 people in there and you look around and you see a person, you don't like that person. Why? It's a sense. You just walk in. You feel it, and you know. Don't ask me, but I walk into a place and I can tell you straight away, "This is a good place," or "This is a bad one," and I don't know why.

O.H.: Is that a sense you think you've developed over the time?

G.C.: Yes, I'm sure. I'm sure.

P.C.: Over the - yes, exactly right.

G.C.: It's like serving tables. The body language at tables now, is incredible and as you grow old, you become aware, you're doing it for so long. You can see that this table want to be alone, or this table want to be served quickly, this table, you know, and so on. And you pick up all these little, little innuendos, I suppose, is the word for it. So I see as a health inspector, like Peter Webb, an old troubadour like him, he would know. And every now and then, he'd come and see us, and sit at the bar, have a cup of coffee, no problem.

O.H.: So during the whole time at La Cantina, would you always be in the restaurant?

P.C.: Yes.

G.C.: We lived there.

P.C.: If not, if not together, not for instance - he went away for a couple of years, that was fine. So you just sort of stayed on. Or whatever was required, you'd do.

O.H.: What were your hours like in those days? How many would you have done?

P.C.: They varied.

O.H.: Open every night or ...(indistinct)...

G.C.: Yes, we - except Sundays ---

P.C.: Except Sundays.

G.C.: ---was the only day that we were closed and Saturday lunch time. Otherwise, you know, every day, lunch and dinner.

O.H.: How late would you ---

P.C.: Sometimes 2 o'clock, 3 o'clock in the morning.

G.C.: Yes, I would never get home before 1 o'clock in the morning, and it was really - the hours - the work wasn't heavy, but the hours were terribly long. Terribly, terribly long and people don't understand, but it was continually demanding. It was a continual pressure.

P.C.: It's probably worse today, because with the licensing going in sort of almost 24 hours in some cases. People don't go out until 9 o'clock and they go til 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning, in some places, even with some of the hotels. Hotels are worse.

O.H.: What about in those days? What were the pressures?

G.C.: The difference - the problems you had in those - as opposed to today is, again, like I said earlier, knowledge, ability. Today, with our - with the catering schools we have with the Commonwealth Employment Service, giving hotels and catering industry a special branch. I need a chef, for example, I can go direct to the Commonwealth Employment and

they have a catering section that caters only for waiters and chefs and so on. We have a support base now, which we never had then.

P.C.: You had to advertise then - word-of-mouth.

G.C.: In those days, you had to get people, word-of-mouth. It was very hard to get good staff, train them and then keep them. As soon as they got any better, they were stolen from you and it's one thing we always did, we always trained our own. In fact, I still do it today, but the ability today and the younger people today, it's there, but whereas in those days, that was the hard thing.

O.H.: What do you mean stolen?

G.C.: Some other person would open up a restaurant or something else, you know, there's a good waiter there, so they'd offer more money. And the waiters would say, "Look, I'm offered more money." And I made those mistakes by giving them more money. So if I gave waiter A, you know five pounds a week more, I had problems. And we had those problems, and this was a mistake I had to learn. Whereas, if someone does that to me today, "Look, I've been offered more money," I say, "Goodbye."

O.H.: Did you have any problems in Hindley Street with a sort of rough element at all, in those days?

P.C.: No.

G.C.: No.

P.C.: Not really.

G.C.: No, not at all, and this is why I like this book, this book that Primo has brought here today, by Desmond O'Connor. "No Need to Be Afraid," because who was afraid were the English-Australian element who created - I can't say, the media basically, or whatever, created the fear. "Don't go down there, you know, you've got to be careful." But it was absolutely - we didn't have any problem whatsoever.

P.C.: I think I remember, it was after the second world war, and of course, Italy was - Mussolini was on Hitler's side, but there was - half of Italy was split. In fact, our cousins were at war with the Germans, and they were the - what would you call them? They were only 16 or 17. They were with the - what's the term? The Rebellion, if you like. So they fought the Germans. But it was very confusing for the Allies, because they didn't know which side they were going to go and so consequently Italians - in fact, half the Italians we knew, were interned during the second war, because they were put away because of the fact that they were with the Germans. So this element had sort of gone all the way to keeping people away from Hindley Street, to a degree. Then down came the Latvians and the Balts and that sort of thing. So all this element became - well, people were - didn't want to mix in that sort of sense. So ---

G.C.: Australian people didn't want to mix with us Europeans, as it were, simple as that.

P.C.: That was - but there was no sort of bad element really, in that sort of sense.

O.H.: In the records, I came across only one incident where there was some complaint from restaurateurs there about some larrikins and that's why I raised that one, whether that was a one-off. That was some place called the Jamaican Paradise Coffee Lounge. Do you know anything about that because they were talking about larrikins?

P.C.: Not really. Well, larrikins, I mean, no, I can't say that.

G.C.: No, no, I can't either. You might've had a - for example, the - some boys would have a buck's party and they - and in Hindley Street you had the parking meters, so you'd come out of the movie theatre and you'd find some fellow chained or tied to a movie theatre - to a parking meter and he'd only have his underpants on, and bathed in flour and water and ---

P.C.: It still goes on.

G.C.: It still goes on. And personally, I think it's ridiculous and stupid, but you'd have things of that, I think, but ---

P.C.: There's more brawling going on in Hindley Street today.

G.C.: Yes, absolutely.

P.C.: Almost on a nightly basis, than 40 years ago.

G.C.: Oh, look, we really - I really didn't have any problems at all.

P.C.: I mean, these times you've got a problem with drugs and goodness knows what and that's - whereas alcohol would've been the only thing in our time that would've got people relatively sort of - but that was very minor.

O.H.: That's basically, why I'm asking, because Hindley Street has that sort of reputation today. I wondered whether it had ---

P.C.: No, it was very minor.

G.C.: No, it still had - in comparison, it was the ideals of the 60s, I suppose you'd say it's the same as it is today, but as far as safety is concerned, I'd prefer to be there than now, believe me.

TAPE 7 SIDE B

O.H.: Okay, I wonder about reviewers, did you have reviewers come in very often. Did you invite them in? Or ---

G.C. The media never had that.

P.C. Yes, they did.

G.C. The media never had that until in the latter part of the 60s.

P.C. We had guys like Ian McKay.

G.C. This is the point, but that was the latter part of the 60s when Ian McKay was a journalist for the advertiser, and Don Dunstan came to power. Don Dunstan was a social reformer as far as the liquor license was concerned. He would have - he then employed someone called Laurie Johnson - Judge Laurie Johnson to rearrange the whole system. At that time, in fact, that Primo decided - I had just come back from overseas, I had been away for 18 months, and Primo had then - by the moved the restaurant into the wine scene a little bit. We had wine makers coming there, and of course they would have their own bottle of wine. We had that little room at the back. So even though 10 o'clock closing for the tables we had our little room at the back. So it just progressed from that way. His idea was then, we've got to get into the wine business. In actual fact, it was a green grocer come deli come grocery shop on the corner of Jeffcott and Archer Street, Wellington Square. He said, "Let's buy this." I hummed and harred and - because I'm the conservative one. I said, "How are we going to afford this and so on." At the time you couldn't get bottle shop licenses and they were very expensive. You couldn't go and make an application for one, you had to buy an existing one. So I thought, we still have this place here. Then Primo got very friendly with a fellow from Yalumba called Peter Wall, who was one of the wine makers, together with some other guys. They set up what was called the First and Second Thursday Wine Luncheon Club. Now, we are here sitting at Chesser Cellars. Chesser Cellars was in Adelaide then the premier gentleman's club, without being an official club. This is where people came to be - the old school tie business. You weren't the Adelaide Club, you weren't the Stock Exchange Club, you weren't the Tattersalls Club, but this is the Chesser Cellars. This was managed by a fellow called Alan Archer. You know, it was who was who. So down in Hindley Street, you know, we thought it was rather different and it was the beginning of beefsteak and burgundy clubs that mushroomed all around. All around South Australia. Of course, people who start drinking wine straight away go straight to red wines. All of a sudden instant expert. Then they realise after a year or so, hang on, white wine came on the market and the wine industry never had any white wine. So they planted like mad Rhine Riesling, but that was the big thing. In amongst all this transition, and this growing up, and Adelaide Australian people learning about that wine is not just penny dark plonky, but indeed it was rather chic and elegant, and that's not bad to have a glass of wine with your steak.

P.C. It was the first wine wave.

G.C. Exactly, the first wine wave. In amongst all this you had Laurie Johnson reforming the Act and Primo came up with this liquor store idea. So basically I went there and it was my job to rearrange matters. Indeed, we repeated the same situation like I did at La Cantina. We bought it together and I spent, I don't know, three or four months ---

P.C. Yes, setting it up, yes.

G.C. Setting it up. Knocking down the walls, making it into a wine shop.

O.H. So where did your idea to sort of get into the wine come from?

P.C. Because wine went with food, you see, and more and more we are getting people coming into La Cantina saying have you got a bottle of this, got a bottle of that? Seaview Cabernet Sauvignon is fantastic. Then the old story of matching food with wine. Then you got into real wine, then you got into real food. That's where the marriage started. That's when people like Ian McKay would come in and was given a job to review restaurants or hotels around the town for the paper.

O.H. So he came to La Cantina.

P.C. They came to La Cantina, etcetera.

G.C. Yes, you got to understand Primo - Ian McKay was the same age as Primo and there was a bit of, you know ---

P.C. Camaraderie.

G.C. Camaraderie, and the whole thing. I mentioned the First Thursday and Second Thursday wine club, and the idea, I do not know whose idea that was ---

P.C. It was a fellow called Norm Hankel

G.C. Norm Hankel, yes. Norm Hankel was also a wine maker at Yalumba.

P.C. No, no, he wasn't a wine maker. He was an agriculturalist. He was the one that told Yalumba where to plant the grapes. Sure, he was a wine person, but not to the point of being an oenologist. He never made wine; he does now, that's going back 40 years later. But he was an agriculturalist, to where grapes should be planted etcetera.

G.C. In any case, what they did, they selected so many wine makers. So the first of every month you would have - and I think one of the criteria is they all had to be under the age of 40 or under the age of 35, or something. I think initially it was what, 35 members, or 30 members.

P.C. Yes.

G.C. So also we decided to have the Second Thursday Wine Luncheon Club. So whoever chaired the First Thursday Luncheon Club was an honorary guest at the Second Thursday. And the Second Thursday was guests from La Cantina. We would say, "Do you want to come, have lunch, meet the wine maker." I'm talking now about 1966.

P.C. That was a draw card.

G.C. That was a first. So we would have quite a few people, people who would come to La Cantina and we had to - we prepared lunch, they would pay their \$5 and they'd have to bring their own wine, masked wine. And the wine - when I say masked, all in brown paper bags so you didn't know what you were drinking and you had to - so we would put the food and have match - try and match wine, food, the whole bit. And it became a fun thing. So while the customers were learning we were learning. We used to experiment with the food. We would make certain dishes. And it just grew up on that way. We still had that in 1967. In 68 we opened the wine shop in North Adelaide. As soon as that was opened we had a waiter at La Cantina called Jeff Upsdale. An Englishman. He would've been in his late 50s, I would say, at the time. Rather knowledgeable, and old school - he was one of our mentors in the wine waiting world.

P.C. He knew how to ---

G.C. His parents had a hotel in London so he knew about waiters, he knew about how to serve a table. He knew a little bit about wine.

P.C. Very prim and proper.

G.C. Very prim and proper. So this is one of our first mentors, along with the Austrian chef, Leo Froschell that I mentioned earlier. He is another one of our mentors. Again, another professional.

O.H. He was a waiter at La Cantina at the time.

G.C. Jeff Upsdale was. So when we opened up the wine shop, we had him out there. Initially, Primo and I were there and Jeff went out there.

P.C. No, no, take the next step, we then opened up Charlie Browns.

G.C. Yes.

P.C. Which was the cheaper version of food and wine. You got a slice of steak for a dollar; you got a glass of wine for what - 20 cents or 50 cents or whatever it might be.

G.C. What happened in actual fact ---

P.C. I will just finish off. Then La Cantina was then sold, that's when he went to North Adelaide to run the shop up there. And we moved over to Chesser - Charlie Browns.

G.C. For a time we had firstly my father was getting a bit old, and he had a young butcher working for him. So we used to get our meat from him basically. South - that end of Franklin Street was dying. His business was - let's say, less than a quarter of what it used to be. He would enjoy pottering around so he would give us the meat for La Cantina and so on. And of course, once every now and then we would pay him, quite often we didn't. Of course, he felt, I'm supporting you, and it was the getting closer to the sons who left him, I suppose. After about - I'd say 2 years of the wine shop, Primo - and now we're talking about 1969, Primo started to get a little bit bored. This has been a pattern. You will see a bit later. He's

going to get a surprise, too. I can't put up with all these things; he got very fed up with La Cantina, so we had the wine shop so the life changed a bit for both of us. He got married, had two daughters, and of course the demands on him were much greater than me, so he wanted to change his lifestyle. So he was at the wine shop, I had La Cantina.

O.H. So when you initially started the wine shop, how did you balance the time between the two.

G.C. We tried to do a little bit each, a week each, but that didn't, you know, he'd have a week, I'd have a week. So at least we'd have our nights off. We tried this. It just didn't work. At that time I had a friend of mine called Fernando Martin who owned a wine saloon at Hindmarsh. He approached me, and he said, "Look, do you want an interest in the wine saloon." Again, we are still going through this transition with Laurie Johnson and the Licensing Act. I said, "I don't know." Primo said, "Yes, wine bar," you know, and so on. Here I am, the conservative me again, "No, no, no, I don't think so." Fernando Martin said, "Look, if you don't take on this license, the Licensing Court is going to take my license away because the place is being closed. If you've got a license you must use it." It was one of 9 wine saloons in South Australia. Penny dark place. I said, "I don't know," you know, take on another restaurant. We've already got the butcher shop going, you know, etcetera, etcetera. Anyway, I went away for a cruise. When I came back my brother said to me, "I've already signed a lease with Fernando Martin, we're going to take on the liquor store - the wine saloon." I thought, "Oh, shit."

O.H. So what happened while he was away.

P.C. That's what happened.

O.H. You made the decision to -

P.C. I thought - I could see it really working. There was no doubt. I could see the demand that was coming from the general public who were looking for something a bit on the cheaper side.

G.C. You know, wine saloon, so I thought, "Oh, shit." He said, "Come on, what are you going to do?" I remember one night sitting in a car across the road, it was raining, and I was sitting there and I thought, what am I going to do with this place. It was two shops joined as one. There was a house at the back with a little shop in the front. And I sat there all night. I sat there until about 2, 3 o'clock in the morning thinking what could I do with this place. Trying to use my imagination again. I spent 3 months there, hands-on, hammer and nail, and coming up with this thing. At the time we had a wine maker who was moonlighting working with us in the liquor store. But this time Primo was back at the liquor store. And we still had La Cantina. Jeff Upsdale was at the liquor store, Primo was at La Cantina and I was doing Charlie Browns. I just told you the name. At the time we had this wine maker who was working on Saturdays, Saturday mornings. He lived in Jeffcott Street. He was coming to work and he wanted to learn - see a bit about marketing. He was in - he used to work for Hardys. His name is Brian Croser, who of course, is the prime mover of Petaluma. Considers himself the best wine maker in the southern hemisphere. But Brian Croser was a great aficionado of Charlie - of Schultz, the cartoonist. He would come to the wine shop on Saturday mornings when I was there and we'd talk about Charlie Brown. Did you read

Charlie Brown's cartoon, so on, and so on. At the time, I thought, what are we going to call this place. Both Primo and I, on one trip in Melbourne, we loved this Jimmy Watsons, wine bar Jimmy Watsons, in Melbourne. We thought something like this would be - you know, this is what we have to do. I thought of the name, Charlie Brown. Primo thought good idea, all right. So he kept saying to me, "When are you going to finish this bloody place? When are you going to finish it?" So I remember the last day, I finished painting, had the key, and I went to him at the wine shop and said, "Here's the key, you make it happen." That's how it started. I remember glasses of port for 5 cents; glasses of wine for 10 cents. And my mother kept saying always work for the working people, and it just went off with a bang. And at that time that we had - we made application for the license, wine saloon licenses closed at 9 o'clock. And at 9 o'clock, every person had to be off the premises. In other words, the premises had to be closed, locked up. From the day 1, at 9 o'clock we stopped serving liquor, alcohol. But we couldn't get the people out, at all. Even Laurie Johnson and his wife would come there, the judge. At 9 o'clock he would step off the premises, but his wife would stay in then until she finished her glass of wine. The police station was across the road, and never once were we convicted. But every night the law was broken. Charlie Browns revolutionised the catering industry in South Australia, because before then, when you went to eat you had a collar and tie and suit. No matter where you were. Whether you went to La Cantina, to Ernests, to wherever, it made no difference. That was the way it was presented. Charlie Browns was casual. We had wooden tables, wooden tables, lino floor, wooden chairs. It was a rough and ready happy place. The big drink was apple cider, and again Primo with Peter Wall, the wine maker from Yalumba, and Peter Lehmann started making their own cider. We set up this little company called Samuel Forby. Samuel Forby was a great name because the going thing at the time was called S for B. Look at that, that's S for B - shit for brains. So we called it Samuel Forby. That little exercise of Peter Lehmann, who was then wine maker for Saltrams - Peter Lehmann was a wine maker for them, he was fermenting apples and putting it in Riesling bottles, and calling it

P.C. Zuchspritz.

G.C. Zuchspritz or Applesaft. Of course, when you have wine tastings, every now and again he'd put in this bottle of Riesling. And you'd be amazed how many people say, what a lovely Riesling this is. And it was apple wine. That's what started it. We had a demand for cider so with Primo, Lehmann and Wall, we set up and we used to make our own cider. That developed very big because we were selling cider to Sydney then.

O.H. What memories do you have of Charlie Browns? Work that you did ---

P.C. It was exactly just that. I mean, people from La Cantina gradually came over. So at that stage we had had the Adelaide airport concession. You had La Cantina, you had the bottle shop and Charlie Browns.

O.H. You were running all those at the same time.

P.C. Yes, but the four I think didn't last any longer than about, what 6 months, 12 months; 12 months, maybe.

G.C. Yes ---

P.C. Our idea was to get - to sell La Cantina. It really, really was, because at that stage my daughters were growing up and I was getting a lot of pressure from - like for instance, my daughter went into Charlie Browns and she was 8. She said, "Is this where Daddy lives?"

G.C. It's a fact, he was never home.

P.C. Which was the truth, I was never home. So La Cantina went first. But at that stage, our reputation had preceded us, and if we opened up anything, the following was there. So we developed the following. So people would buy wine at the Wellington Square bottle shop, and they could come to Charlie Browns and drink it over there. So that's how it went.

G.C. Yes, Saturdays, particular, it was political day. You had Don Dunstan, the Premier, half the cabinet and downstairs - it was a house with a little shop attached next door. So we had a courtyard, the first courtyard in South Australia. Umbrellas stuck out the back. Out the back we cemented the whole back yard. I designed a place where - what Primo used to do from our father's butcher shop, you walk up to the kitchen, you'd place your order of food. We'd have steak, raw steak, porterhouse. People would buy your own porterhouse steak, then you'd go out the back and cook it.

P.C. Cook it yourself.

G.C. Cook it yourself.

P.C. Which is now done at the British Hotel.

G.C. Which is - you know, that was another idea that I picked up. I don't know where I got that idea from.

P.C. I think Jimmy Watsons might have had someone do it. May have.

G.C. Yes, that's right. They used to do it in Melbourne.

P.C. Mm, it was just a cheap, easy, relaxed sort of place, that's what it was about.

G.C. On Friday nights, Primo had some Greek friends, came with a Bazooka band.

P.C. That's right.

G.C. By 9 o'clock you had people on the tables doing Zorba the Greek dance, because Zorba was fashionable in those days. It was a party atmosphere. Every night was a party atmosphere. But it was also for serious eaters. It was cheap, and serious eaters. All of a sudden, people came there casual with shirts and pants, you know, not having a suit or tie on. It was - it was new to them; it was fun. It was a fun place. Indeed, if you talk to people today, people of our age, even younger, they all have fond memories of Charlie Browns.

P.C. Memories of it.

O.H. What about La Cantina, did that stay pretty much the same up until you sold it.

P.C. It held itself all the way ---

G.C. It held its own right up until the end.

P.C. It was time to move out.

G.C. It was time to move out.

O.H. Why?

P.C. Timing.

G.C. Timing. The industry, Charlie Browns - new industry, wine and food now. Coffee lounges were a thing of the past. Even though it was a coffee lounge restaurant, the scene changed. The Licensing Act was changing, so just coffee for itself, per se wasn't any longer.

P.C. Was no longer.

G.C. You couldn't do a coffee bar like today. Even though that's what I wanted to do because the cafes in Adelaide today is what I had in my mind then, because that's what it was in Europe. Always has been. I couldn't do it then in those days.

P.C. We are basically like 12 years behind Melbourne. Now, coffee bars are starting to spruke up in various places. Like for instance, in the old - the city's---

G.C. You are talking about Savvas' place.

P.C. Savvas' Coffee Shop, is a complete place just for coffee alone. People are drinking short blacks now. Where, if you go to the bar you have one short little black and it gives you that little adrenalin punch. More and more people are doing it.

G.C. It's becoming more an accepted regime. With travel now, of course, communication and let's face it, you go to Europe there's Australians all over the place now. So knowledge - people know.

O.H. By the time you decided to sell up, had Hindley Street itself changed?

P.C. No, it was getting better. People were not being - coming a little more comfortable with it. There were more people moving in that sort of night scene, the licensing area had come into vogue. People were enjoying the fact they could have a glass past 9 o'clock, or whatever it might be. So it was opening up a bit.

O.H. Because I have heard it referred to in that period as a dining strip ---

P.C. To a degree it was.

G.C. Yes, it was really, I suppose. It was the only place that had a night life. It's like now if you go - used to be Melbourne Street, for example, then say O'Connell Street or East Rundle Street, that's the only place with a little bit of activity, friendly activity. That was Hindley Street. Coupled with the few cafes and - you had also, there was a night club that burnt down. You had The Bay Ganew was a night club, that was the Paprika.

P.C. I think that was the Crazy Horse, wasn't it?

G.C. No, the Crazy Horse didn't exist in those ---

P.C. No, Bay Ganew was the one that was burnt down.

G.C. Down Bailetti's street, there was a little night club there, that was a restaurant night club, that got burnt down. So you had a few of those things. You know, singers and actors. The Paprika was always number one. That had a long-running actor by the name of Big Pretzel and she would do a little bit of a striptease and so on. That had been around, but always with food. It did go through a period where it was the only place to go, yes. That would have been in the late sixties into the seventies. Then that started to deteriorate, quite frankly. It's sad the way it is now, really sad.

O.H. How did you feel about selling up? How did you come to the decision that La Cantina ---

P.C. We came to - better get out now.

G.C. Yes, quite frankly, you could see that the industry has been changing. We didn't have the infrastructure, apart from us two, and didn't have - to keep growing, if you like. I always had a bean in my bonnet because of the landlord. And this fellow, Hugh Anderson, was a very keen buyer.

O.H. Did he keep it as La Cantina?

G.C. Yes absolutely.

P.C. As best he could.

G.C. He developed it a little bit. It didn't change too much. He developed it a little bit, but with the advent of Primo not being there, mainly, or myself a little bit, people moved away.

P.C. I think to answer your question it went on for what, 8 or 9 years afterwards.

G.C. As La Cantina?

P.C. Yes, because Paul Limpus with his brother-in-law went in there for ---

G.C. Yes, they would have kept it up until the mid seventies, I would say. To the mid sevenites.

P.C. It had two other owners after us. Three, three other owners.

G.C. Had many more than that. After Limpus.

P.C. Yes, there was one other which he couldn't make it pay.

G.C. There was two - you had Hugh Anderson, then Paul Limpus, and Paul Limpus now is the manager of Bridgewater Mill. And who he sold to, I don't know. But he would have been there until the mid 70s, yes.

O.H. Was there any sadness in giving up your first place, or was that just ---

G.C. No, no. And I've just sold Rigonis and Caon's restaurant, and in this industry, because you give so much it gives back to you, it does. But you give so much and I've always been clinically cold. Once I've sold, that's the end. Charlie Browns, I've only been back twice. No, it's - when I give up, I give up. I'm quite happy.

O.H. What about you, Primo?

P.C. Same thing.

O.H. Same thing. So in that period you had Charlie Browns and the liquor store. How did Rigonis come into the picture then?

G.C. Well, while we had Charlie Browns, Primo was at Charlie Browns, and we now get to the stage where - I don't want to do Charlie Browns any more. One of his clients was a fellow who started in the wholesale business. We decided to buy out the license again, you couldn't get a license, you just couldn't make an application for a license as you could today, so we bought this wholesale place. By that time my father's shop had really gone down so we decided to close the shop. The boarding house was still going, we were renting the boarding house, and eventually that also closed and we just started to rent rooms. So the butcher's shop was empty; we transferred the license from - and I can't think - Charlicks - wasn't it Charlicks? The manager of Charlicks ---

P.C. William, William ---

G.C. William Charlicks - I can't think of his name now, but ---

P.C. The New Zealand company that came here.

G.C. They ---

P.C. It wasn't Charlicks, Charlicks was down the west end, down at the ---

G.C. They were at Hindmarsh and behind the Hindmarsh Oval.

P.C. Your area is right, but Charlicks was down the east - the west end cold stores.

G.C. You're right, yes, sorry. They had wheat, these people had wheat.

P.C. That's right, it's a very big company involved with agricultural - from New Zealand.

G.C. Something with agriculture, and they had a little section for the wine - they had four or five agencies. So when I went there the first time to have a look at this thing what my brother bought - again, what he bought, I thought, what a mess this is. All the bottles were full of dust and - and so we transferred the license to my father's butcher shop. Then I thought - Primo doesn't want to do this. I really - in that time also I'd come up with the idea of South Australia being the gateway for the wine industry for the British Commonwealth, the airport should have a liquor store there. I approached Don Dunstan with the idea. He said, "It's a wonderful idea." I didn't realise it. It's Federal property. It's got nothing to do with Don Dunstan. But a letter from him was a great help. We just walked in, made an application, they gave us permission to set up a little wine shop.

O.H. Had he been a customer back in those days?

P.C. Yes, yes.

G.C. Yes, very much, all the time. So that's how I set up a little liquor store, and I developed the idea of carry bags for 2 bottles and 3 bottles. So I was running the liquor store, the one at the airport and this one, with Jeff Upsdale. By that time I'd set up a little wine club also. We used to deliver wines everywhere in Australia. I had an association with Ansett Freight. I used to send out a monthly newsletter, describing about wine, talking about wine.

P.C. Which we have got, which we have got. That was called Caon Brothers at Wellington Square.

G.C. The liquor store was Caon Brothers, and the wine club, I called it "Wine Buyers of South Australia". With the little newsletter I'd send out we would have an order form so people would give me their money. I'd send the money with the order form and we'd just dispatch wine. So that's what I was doing. Primo was doing Charlie Browns. And of course, the wine maker following, followed Primo to Charlie Browns also. So you had that development.

O.H. You mentioned the boarding house. I wondered - it kept going all the time. Who was it catering for?

G.C. No, no.

P.C. I think he answered the question before by saying the boarding house, we moved out of Franklin Street to get into their own home, and then bit by bit, because the boarding house wasn't going any more. Then it was dying off so the rooms were being rented out. That was it. There was no more cooking there, right. So no longer a boarding house, just lodgers.

G.C. Only for lodging, yes. In the end we rented it to - I can't think of one fellow, for example, and he took possession of the whole lot. He would pay us a flat rent and then he would rent out his rooms and so on.

O.H. So if you can just briefly from there, just tell me in general what happened from that point you were talking about, when Rigonis came into the picture, and then ---

G.C. Well, what in actual fact happened was that we had the wholesale - so now we have the retail, two retail stores, Charlie Browns and the wholesale. At that time it was decided to sell Charlie Browns and we sold it to Don Nicholls, who was Nicholl Cranes, one of his best mates, Murray Smith who was a jockey, who was a bookmaker.

**SEVENTH INTERVIEW WITH PRIMO AND GIOCONDO CAON RECORDED BY
KAREN GEORGE ON 15 OCTOBER 1996 IN THE CHESSER CELLARS**

TAPE 8 SIDE A

O.H.: We finished last week, we were talking a little bit about Charlie Brown's. Just before we got into that sort of era, I wanted to ask you whether, when you were in Hindley Street was there a Hindley Street Traders and were you part of that business association or was there an association ---

P.C.: My understanding of that particular situation was that the Hindley Street Traders didn't start until, I think, a good 10 years after we left.

G.C.: Much later, yes, as far as to my knowledge Hindley Street Traders never - was never there.

O.H.: Was there any kind of association ---

P.C.: No.

G.C.: Not as far as I know. Not as far as I know.

O.H.: When did something come about to bring ---

G.C.: Not in our era. We sold La Cantina in 1969 and - I wasn't aware of one.

P.C.: No, there wasn't.

G.C.: I was not aware of one at the time.

O.H.: So you were pretty much on your own ---

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: Absolutely, Mm.

O.H.: You talked a bit about Ernest's and by Ernest's you mean, Ernest and Little Ernest and you said something about he got out of the industry at the right time because it changed and I wondered what you meant by changing and why.

P.C.: It depends which era you're talking about. He sold his - he had two restaurants going; he had Little Ernest's and Big Ernest's and the Paprika. Now, eventually he sold and got out of it and then he came back perhaps maybe six or seven years later and he opened up a restaurant in - what's it called - at Walkerville and he ran that for about six months and then I think he decided that times had changed for him, there was no longer the sort of era of understanding that he knew. It had changed somehow, so he got out of it and that was the last we heard.

O.H.: I guess what I am looking at is how you see the industry has changed and what makes the changes, that sort of thing ---

P.C.: Well, we're going through change. We're going through change at the moment simply because of the fact that every day dining now has become much more simpler. People can have a plate of food and a glass of wine for \$8, \$10. In fact the Eastern Market, down there, in Little Rundle Street, or Rundle Street there, is a good example of what's going on, where the places are fairly large. They've got - I mean, Rigoni's is a good example of 15 years ago. That was the beginning of it. Now, there have been a lot of me too's, since then and that's exactly how the trade is going these days.

O.H.: Why do you think it happens?

P.C.: Just demand. It's also cheaper. It's easier, and instead of people making a cut lunch, they can have a plate of pasta for \$5, \$6 or whatever it might be.

G.C.: I think you'll find that it comes by eras. It changes. La Cantina was the - we've discussed La Cantina enough and it was a precursor for the era for that style of thing, younger people were looking at, and I was young, Primo and I were both young at that time. Then you had the advent of Don Dunstan coming in and socially changing the licensing laws and so on. Prior to that you had the hotels, you had, you know, the steaks, steak and eggs at hotels or chips and so on. With the advent of Don Dunstan, in fact you started to get - and the Europeans coming in after the war and in the 60s when they started to settle down, the European, you then had the advent of schnitzels, schnitzels and - that was the start. From La Cantina when we sold it in 1969 we stepped out of the industry, not because of us, but the whole Licensing Act ---

P.C.: If I could just butt in there, Chicken Chow Mein was the first Chinese dish that came to Adelaide, I understand. Now, look at the advent of Chinese food; it has now become a very much part of everybody's diet, so it's really grown that way.

G.C.: Yes, and in the late 60s you had the awareness, the Australian awareness of wine. Prior to that, you know, if you drank wine you were a plonky. It was sherry and spirits and beer and not wine. For some reason, I don't know why but we opened Charlie Brown's at Hindmarsh because it was a wine bar; who owned it at the time was a school friend of mine and we saw in Melbourne how there was - not the wine bar scene, but there was one, Jimmy Watson's that was in existence and we thought this is a good idea, it's different, not the same, it's more casual. You had the Ernest at that time where people went out to dinner and they had collar and tie and suits and girls - women got all dressed up, but there was nothing as to casual and, indeed, when we first started it revolutionised the whole industry in South Australia. People saw: hey, this will work, this is different, and that's why it was very popular. I remember when Primo said, "When you're going to finish this thing," so I finished it and gave him the key and my words to him was, "You make it successful," and he did and the first people who was to go there was your friend there from television, Channel 9, Peter something or other and - he used to have a women's - a children's programme.

P.C.: That's right, Peter Sellier.

G.C.: Peter Sellier, and he was very interested in wine. He had a number of younger people, Primo's age, who were all interested in wine and the following started and it first started with his first set of people that attended were advertising agents, people in advertising, and I remember very quickly in the men's toilet, there was something written up in the men's toilet, and I loved it. It's a little poem, and we started this - very sensible graffiti appeared all over the restaurant. Downstairs we had three rooms, white walls, and you saw, you know, very intelligent graffiti, and the flow on started from there and that started the whole scene for wine bars. I knew then that hotels had its day then because hotels couldn't compete with the atmosphere of restaurants or whatever and Charlie Brown's was very, very successful for its era. At the same time the Licensing Court was changing, changing the drinking, therefore the social laws of the State and we're going through another thing now. We're going through a revision of the Licensing Court now. I think you'll find that most restaurants now will become general licences, where you won't have just restaurants and so on. That whole thing's changing again and it's becoming more and more liberal, more and more relaxed.

P.C.: More European.

O.H.: What about the BYO, was Charlie Brown's also ---

P.C.: That's - to a degree it was, but BYO's very popular in Melbourne, but they're coming very slowly coming here, very slowly.

G.C.: It's coming here but very slowly, very very slowly. People, in all the restaurants that we've been involved with, particularly, you know, people bring their own wines. I don't mind, I make a joke and I'd say: Look, if you've got something special by all means bring it, by all means.

P.C.: I think Alphutte, if anybody wants to be BYO at Alphutte, which he doesn't like very much, he'll charge \$10 just to pull the cork. Well, that's fair enough because he's got to supply glasses.

O.H.: At the time that you were running Charlie Browns, you were running your liquor store in North Adelaide, yes.

G.C.: Yes, yes.

P.C.: Yes.

O.H.: What made you open the store in North Adelaide?

P.C.: Demand. We saw people wanted to buy more wine, well, they could buy it by the case.

G.C.: No. We - at La Cantina we - it was Primo, set up what was called the first Thursday, and the second Thursday - I think we mentioned that.

O.H.: Yes, you did, yes.

G.C.: And it was that interest that started to develop the palates in wine, the Australian palate. Business men - you then had the business man's lunch - FBT cleaned all that out but you had an immense amount of interest in wine. Primo himself got very interested in wine and it was his idea in actual fact, to start up the store itself. So while we had that store we also set up a wine club called the South Australian Wine Buyers Club and we used to ship wine all over Australia.

O.H.: I guess I was thinking specifically of why North Adelaide, because we discussed ---

G.C.: Because that was a liquor store, that was a vegetable - a fruit and veg shop, it was a grocery shop and it had a licence. In those days you had to go where licences already existed. You were dictated to by that simple fact alone.

P.C.: So if anybody wanted a case of wine they could go to the store, yes.

O.H.: Had you had much to do with North Adelaide when you were boys or ---

G.C.: Prior?

P.C.: No.

G.C.: Well, I was baptised in - what was that church, where your daughter got married?

P.C.: Oh, God, it was too long ago for me.

G.C.: That's - no we really didn't have anything to do with North Adelaide prior to that.

O.H.: You mention also in that time your father's butcher shop closed down ---

G.C.: Well, we had the whole thing going together. Dad was still alive, we ran - he was running the butchers shop, we had La Cantina, the wine store and Charlie Browns and we opened up the liquor store in the airport. In fact, it was Don Dunstan who rang me and said: look, this is a good idea and I thought: yes, it is. And with his help and a letter to the Federal Government we were the first liquor store to open in Australia at an airport, and we did this because the Barossa Valley is the wine making centre of the British Commonwealth. We used that as an excuse and that is how we started.

O.H.: Tell me about your father. What was it like for him to move out of the shop?

P.C.: I think he realised it was - butchers shops generally speaking around the city - not around the city - supermarkets were coming in and so people were going to a supermarket to pick up all their needs, including meat and things like that, so small shops ---

G.C.: Yes, but people weren't living there any more.

P.C.: Small shops were closing, closing up.

G.C.: Yes. But that whole area, the west end, there was just a whole exodus of people, and all round Franklin Street, Waymouth Street, Grote Street. There just weren't people there any more. So, you know, his business just - was just dropped down and he could see himself that it was just a question of time.

O.H.: Did your mother or your father ever, as time went on once they'd retired from what they were doing, help or do any work in the restaurants?

G.C.: No.

P.C.: No, no, it was all our own doing.

G.C.: We wouldn't have them.

O.H.: Were they ever customers?

P.C.: Oh, often, often.

G.C.: My mother particularly.

P.C.: She wanted to keep a - she wanted to keep a very strong control of her sons. You can't get too far away from her.

G.C.: Here comes the general.

P.C.: Yes.

G.C.: Here comes the general.

P.C.: Right up until she was 82.

O.H.: So she'd come in and check you out?

P.C.: Absolutely, all the time.

G.C.: Yes, yes, all the time. She loved it. We used to carry on and make her feel important - here comes the general. We used - and particularly at Rigoni's or wherever, I used to say: look, you've got to watch her and she would carry on with all the staff, and she enjoyed it.

O.H.: Did she ever tell you what she thought of it.

G.C.: Always, always.

P.C.: Loved it, she loved it.

G.C.: Whether you wanted to hear it or not.

P.C.: She was a very strong lady. I mean, she really kept a good finger on the pulse of what was going on, and she enjoyed that. Because we were successful, she felt successful.

O.H.: You mentioned you also had a sister who was quite a lot younger. Did she become involved in any ---

P.C.: She only assisted us in - as far, you know, as she would help out wherever she could or we needed her. She'd do everything. She'd wash dishes.

G.C.: Carla was at Charlie Browns - when we had Charlie Browns she helped Primo for a little while.

P.C.: Even La Cantina she was there washing dishes etcetera, making sandwiches and things like that.

G.C.: Just the odd occasion. But she early in her life she went to live in Florence. She lived in Florence for many years, 10 years, and she came back to be married. In fact, it was destiny again. Our father wasn't well, we rang her, she came over and Primo had this accountant who was helping him out when he was at the wholesale liquor store and introduced him to my sister. And destiny has it that - after my father died she stayed here for a few months but then she went back to Florence and he ---

P.C.: Chased her.

G.C.: He chased her. He used to knock on my door at midnight and wanted to talk about my sister and I said: look, she's in Florence, go and see her. Oh, do you think she'll come back. Well, ask. And I think it's every woman's dream - he went there and said: I want you to come back to Adelaide and she did. Now they're happily married with two lovely daughters.

O.H.: Your parents, when did they pass away?

P.C.: I think my father passed away 14 years ago and our mother passed away ---

G.C.: No, my father died in 1978, on 30 June, and I always thought, 30 June, he hated the Taxation Department, so 30 June was rather apt in 1978. And our mother died in November two years ago -three years ago.

O.H.: I think you mentioned her funeral was attended by ---

G.C.: It was wonderful, yes.

P.C.: A lot of people that she, you know, was close to, of course.

G.C.: A comment that knowing her, knowing her love of life and love of people and her fun - life had to be a bit of fun and she loved stirring and enjoying. We had a particular Mass, particular ceremony. Primo gave a eulogy that he thought was rather apt.

P.C.: Yes, I thought.

G.C.: Yes, and in fact, as people walked out of that church they said: that wasn't a funeral, it was a celebration, and it was.

P.C.: Well, it was.

G.C.: We wanted to celebrate her life and in fact, afterwards we came down here and we had old Monsignor Tom Horgan, who officiated the Mass, he insisted - in fact there were three priests, they all wanted to be part of it, and after Mass we came here and sat down and had a lovely long lunch, inebriated quite a lot, celebrated my mother. We had a seat for her at this table, we put her scarves and her - she liked always lots of scarves at her seat, and every time we poured ourselves a glass of wine, we poured one for her too, and we celebrated her life and I'm sure that she would have enjoyed that.

O.H.: So when did Charlie Browns sort of move out of the picture, when did that become - when did you decide to sell that?

P.C.: It stayed on - I think we got out, it would have been '74 - I think it stayed on for about 10 years after that, I think.

G.C.: It changed.

P.C.: It changed.

G.C.: It changed.

P.C.: It is now - went into the new era of entertainment, was the topless lunch time place and that's what it still is today.

G.C.: The whole simplicity of the wine bar changed with the new owners. The new owners had a manager. That relationship didn't work out very well, then they employed a Portuguese fellow and he wanted to go up-market restaurant style and put in booths and took away what, in my opinion, what was the wine simplicity of the whole place. It was not Charlie Browns any more. The personality wasn't there, the joviality of Primo's association with people just wasn't there and that whole thing changed, and that lasted for about 18 months, two years and then it just waned away, just what I call another restaurant as it were. It wasn't Charlie Browns any more, it wasn't - people remember Charlie Browns for what it was and the fun place that it was. All of a sudden it became another restaurant and eventually that died and this woman's now got it, called it Lanes.

O.H.: Is it still called Charlie Browns?

G.C.: No, it's called Lanes.

P.C.: It's called Lois's, isn't it?

G.C.: No, Lanes, and she's got another place that she called - you're right, it's called Lois's and she's got another place called Lanes. So she's got Lois and Lanes - Lois, Lanes.

O.H.: So that was the time where you parted company in restaurants?

P.C.: My daughters were getting a bit older and so consequently, my daughter come in one day with my wife and she was only about eight or 10 years old at the time, and she said: oh, is this where Daddy lives? So it was then I realised that they needed to have a bit more direction, and a bit of time with them, you see, so that's when we both decided that we would sell Charlie Browns at the time. So that's when I moved over to the retail bottle shop and he ran the restaurant until it was sold.

G.C.: See, the restaurant - restaurant life is very hard and if a restaurateur is successful it is the cost to the family. I had very sad news a couple of weeks ago when I heard even Leo Shaddock, who's got Alphutte and Lenzerheide - he's now parted with his wife, and that's very sad. But it's not a ---

P.C.: But he's a Swiss ---

G.C.: Apart from being ---

P.C.: I won't say that for public knowledge.

G.C.: Apart from being a profession ---

P.C.: He's a Swedish policeman.

G.C.: Apart from being a profession, it's a lifestyle and it's very cruel and hard to oblige children to live this lifestyle, and the father's never there - the father or the mother. And it is very hard - it is very hard. I'm now - I've now sold out Rigoni's and so on, and I'm so happy it's just not funny.

O.H.: Were there times prior to selling Charlie Browns that you felt that you were sick of the industry?

G.C.: Yes.

P.C.: No.

G.C.: Yes, come on, you do.

P.C.: Maybe for him.

G.C.: It's very hard, it is very hard. So, you know, everything has a period and if the restaurant lifestyle doesn't have the period your lifestyle has a period and you get to that stage where you think that's enough.

P.C.: But quite frankly, this industry you have to be adaptable to the general public. It is a service industry and that's the most important thing of all. If you can't adapt to what the public demands are all about and not adapt to service, then you mustn't stay in it. You've got to get out of it. If you don't like people, if you can't understand what service is all about, then you have to watch it.

O.H.: So once you'd sold Charlie Browns, was there a gap where you were completely out of restaurants?

G.C.: Yes, yes, we both were. We were out all together, from Charlie Browns we had the wholesale licence which Primo took over and I stayed in the retail shop at the airport and at North Adelaide, and eventually in '77 is when we sold the retail shop and the airport. Primo stayed in wholesale and about a year later I opened Rigoni's.

O.H.: So what made you do that?

P.C.: Change.

G.C.: I didn't want to go back into the restaurant business, I really didn't. I was looking quite frankly, at the time, to go into the mineral water business, and I did all my studies, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera, and eventually I thought - long story, I won't bore you with the details of it, but again I would have been right but a bit premature. Mineral water now is a multi-million dollar organisation and I was introduced then by a friend of mine to the buyer of Associated Co-op Wholesalers and I needed a market, a guarantee of a market, and when he spelt out in inverted commas, what it would cost for them to market my produce, you know, it became a very expensive exercise. So I then put that on the shelf one day to bring out Crystal Springs in the future, and I opened, looked in the newspaper and I found Lucifers Fish and Grill, and I bought that and gutted it and started Rigoni's.

P.C.: It was more or less a fish and chip shop.

O.H.: Yes, I was going to say, had you known it as a shop?

G.C.: No, never knew it existed until I read it in the paper.

O.H.: So had you in mind then that you would recreate that old Rigoni's that you talked about?

P.C.: Well, he'd had experience with the Charlie Browns and it was a relocation factor and also adapted to more things of Melbourne, which Melbourne is very much that style, which has taken off. But being the first it was very successful in the city.

O.H.: Did you have a vision for Rigoni's?

G.C.: Yes, I did. I looked at the area, I looked at what was available in that area and I wanted to set up what I considered a very casual Italian or European based on Italian, easy food - make it very casual. That's why I set up the bar in the middle. It was interesting, for the

first 18 months people would not sit at the bar - young girls, you know, 18-20 year old office girls come in and I had no chairs or tables free. I said: sit on the bar - oh, I've got a sore back and all this type of thing, you know. Eventually it started and I don't know how but people started to sit at the bar and became more casual and then the bar became favoured because we had the antipasto table in the middle of the bar to create an ambience of food. We were the first restaurant in South Australia to open the kitchen and I remember the inspector of the Licensing Court and the health inspector, all very worried because you couldn't see kitchens before and I said: no, I want people to see what was going on. And I had all these old ladies in there making pasta and making sauces and it was fun. And particularly on Friday nights for example, they used to sing - sing along, and customers loved it and it was just that - create that ambience of fraternity, of a feeling, of going to Rigoni's and all of a sudden perhaps you're not at Rigoni's, perhaps you're not in Adelaide, perhaps you're somewhere else. Just that added flavour, and eventually it worked. It took about a year and then it took off.

O.H.: Were any of your staff ---

G.C.: I knew it would, I just had a gut feeling it would.

O.H.: Were any of your staff, people that you'd had in the past?

G.C.: No.

P.C.: No.

G.C.: No. Because we sold Charlie Browns in 1973 and, you know, we'd been out of it for many years and I got a big shock because in that period of time the likes of people changed. All of a sudden they knew about wine, they knew a little bit more about food - didn't know anything about Italian food, but they knew a bit more. People, you know, travelled a bit - travelling started, people started to travel and you could see the flavours, the demands, the curiosity starting to demand now.

O.H.: What about you, Primo. Was Primo at all involved in Rigoni's, or was it your sole ---

P.C.: No, no.

G.C.: No, he was already started- very busy in wholesale.

P.C.: He got married, and he discovered what it was like to have a wife.

G.C.: Best thing I ever did.

P.C.: See, there you go, and it's true.

O.H.: So when did Chesser Cellars come back. Was that after Caon's or what was the sort of sequence after Rigoni's?

P.C.: No, no, no. I stuck to the wholesale - I stuck to the wholesale business and of course at that particular time I got more immersed in merchandising and just discovered

another way of what selling product was all about. So I stuck with that, persevered with that. The thing is, you see, I could be home at night, that was the point. And of course with Rigoni's it was a different sort of ball game all together.

G.C.: Primo became the leading wine merchant of Adelaide. He's being very humble, but they used to call him Mr Bollinger.

O.H.: I've just wandered round this room and I've figured it out.

G.C.: Yes, and he was running his wholesale company and I started with Rigoni's and a few years later I opened up Caon's and then four years ago Grimaldi's.

O.H.: Where did the idea for Caon's come from?

G.C.: Strange it - what happened is the - it's only 50 yards down the road from Rigoni's but the landlord one day said to me: oh, look, are you interested in opening another restaurant here, because it was the office for American Airline. And I said: ah - but at that time I was diagnosed as having cholesterol and the doctor said to me: you ought to eat all the things you don't like, and I wasn't mad about fish. He said fish and vegetables and I don't like fish and vegetables and then I had - went to the guy, one of my staff and he said: you always say you'd got a - you know, a fish restaurant would do well and I thought: why not, why not, and that's how the whole thing started, just started from there. Why not a fish restaurant? And I looked at the restaurants in South Australia at the time and you'd got the George's and Paul's Cafes but not really a fish restaurant as such. And that's why I started it.

O.H.: It's a unique way of looking after your cholesterol.

P.C.: That's quite right, not many people can do that.

O.H.: No, no, no. So did you miss not working together in restaurants?

P.C.: No, no. We were both immersed in our own various positions.

G.C.: No, it's a bit different. He was totally into wine wholesale, you know. I went back into this - I didn't want to but, you know, got back into this and then you get just so involved in the catering, so involved, you just don't have time for anything. And we just - I won't say we grew apart, we developed apart, but he had his family and his daughter got married and now he's a grandfather and of course I'm at the thresholds of that. So we're at different levels now. He's the older brother, number one.

O.H.: So where did Grimaldi's and Chesser Cellars come in - are they quite recent?

P.C.: No, no, no. What actually happened is, I've always had an eye on this place and so what ---

O.H.: When you say always, how long?

P.C.: Oh, for years, absolutely years.

G.C.: You've got to understand that we opened La Cantina in 1960 and this place opened in 1963.

P.C.: 31 years ago.

G.C.: So that's 1964.

P.C.: That's right.

G.C.: 1965.

P.C.: Yes, so ---

G.C.: 1965.

P.C.: Then this place become available and I'd had enough of the distribution business, I'd had enough of it and so I see this place as a sort of a - oh, a long term wine bar. We've still got a long way to go with it yet. So it became available and that's when I snapped it up. In the meantime ---

O.H.: What kind of place was it?

P.C.: Nothing's changed. It is exactly as it was in that particular period of time. Of course at that particular time it was almost buffet sort of thing, but I've just added hot food with it as well, so you've got the combination of both. But still that bit of fun with wine as well is here.

G.C.: The interesting thing is, this was very much the old school tie. Alan Archer, who was the then manager and partner, part-owner and there was a couple of other owners, part-owners - there was three of them I think - but this was very much school tie, very much St Peters Boys School and all, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. And when we opened Charlie Browns it would have been what, four or five years after this, it was totally the opposite. And that was one of the ideas of setting up Charlie Browns, to be totally the opposite of this.

O.H.: So has it maintained that, that clientele?

P.C.: Yeah, it's still - with a few careful changes - I don't want to lose the clientele that I've got. I've got to try and maintain them, but also bring in some of the more modern things at the same time, which we're doing slowly. I mean, today was a fairly reasonable sort of day for a Tuesday. As you can see this was all set up for 12 people, and we had the other room upstairs for 12 - that was booked out as well, and the central part of the restaurant was about half full. So it wasn't a bad day for a Tuesday. We've got nothing tonight, but then at least I can get away tonight, whereas Grimaldi's is a different thing altogether. It's been situated underneath a cinema which is open seven days a week.

G.C.: Seven days and seven nights.

P.C.: So it's a different sort of thing there altogether. I mean, you can still have a bowl of soup and a cup of coffee and a plate of spaghetti, which is the system that's developing today, more and more that casual relaxed arena. You can go to Grimaldi's any time, there's always somebody sitting in the restaurant. I don't call it a restaurant, I call it a bistro type thing.

O.H.: Was it Grimaldi's before you took it on. Was it there already or ---

P.C.: No, it was nothing, it was nothing. It has all been started off right from the very beginning. It's a bit - I can put it down to sort of - the standard is excellent but it's not as high a profile as Rigoni's only because Rigoni's is a - in the city, and you've got all the top shot business men, and I'm not saying Grimaldi's doesn't have that, because all those business men they're dressed casually go to Grimaldi's on a weekend. So it's ---

G.C.: The whole market is changing. Rigoni's is now no longer Rigoni's. There's the new owner, new broom, atmosphere's difference, ambience is different. Caon's is the same, a new owner, new broom. This present owner has got a few problems and that sector of the city has died a lot, a lot of the businesses have gone from there. A lot of the buildings in that area are vacant now.

P.C.: Each - if I can say something - each person who opens up a restaurant of some sort, or a bar or a wine bar, puts its personality into it and that's exactly what my brother's saying now. The fellow who bought the place off of him, he developed his own personality into what he thinks, how it should be run. So that's why it's not the same, so he's left it, so the other bloke's changed it.

G.C.: Yes, and I feel rather sad because I don't think it's working.

P.C.: That's for him to sort out.

G.C.: I know it's not working and I can see it happening, and I'm rather sad.

O.H.: I think you said when you walked out of things you sort of closed the door?

P.C.: Well, you have to, you have to.

G.C.: I do, yes, absolutely. It's the only way to do it. It's the only way to do it otherwise you -

O.H.: Do you have any sadness about a place that you perhaps brought up to a certain standard or a certain kind of image, disappearing?

G.C.: Yes, all of them, all of them, yes, yes. Rigoni's was very very good for me, Caon's was very good for me, Charlie Browns, La Cantina, they've all been very good, the wine store - everything we've done, whether I've done it myself or whether I've done it with Primo, it's - they've always been, you know.

P.C.: They've all been successful.

G.C.: All been successful, all been very very good, and you have to eliminate yourself from a sale, it becomes very hard, otherwise it's, you know - changes, we all go on.

O.H.: So thinking over, sort of working in the restaurant business, what do you think, each of you separately, is the hardest part of it and what do you think is the thing that you - well, the best part of it?

P.C.: I think from my point of view, as you get older, the dealing with the public, you become frustrated with them because they don't fully understand what you're trying to do so it needs to be explained in detail and there's that sort of frustration factor of making sure things work correctly.

O.H.: Can you give an example of that?

P.C.: Well, for instance, when you've got a table of say, eight people. Six people turn up and you've got two tables that are set. If my staff don't take that setting away very quickly I get annoyed at that, because those people - it makes room for other people to come and to spread around and make it more easier for them to relax and take part in it. It's only a minor thing but if it happens sort of twice a day and whatever and the staff don't do it, it becomes quite frustrating for you. Or give them a glass of wine in their hand straight away, as soon as they come in, if that's not done immediately or they're looked after. It's part of the service thing. So they're just little things but six things like that per day, just little minor things - like for instance they don't put menus back in the right place or all those little bits and pieces, the frustration gets into you. So it's part of drilling, I suppose.

O.H.: What about you, the hardest part?

G.C.: Well, one of the frustrating parts about it is, for example, you might be home with your family, you might have left early - and it's very hard to leave a restaurant, because as Primo says, if you have reliable staff you have to trust in your staff, but when the cat's away, you know, the mice play a little bit. You've always got that in the back of your mind, because if some people go to the restaurant and something's just not right: I'm not going back there again, and so you work so hard to get to a standard and you lose it so easily for such a minor stupidity. And you might be home, in an early night, enjoying your family and you get a phone call. Someone says: I've come to your restaurant, why aren't you here?

P.C.: Oh, that's quite right.

G.C.: And that is annoying and frustrating. There's no time, quality time.

P.C.: You can't pull yourself away from that.

G.C.: So that is to me one of the most frustrating things, the demand made upon you and you can't divorce yourself from it because you are the restaurant. One of the satisfying parts, for example, is the contacts you make in the daily running of your business. It is an - wonderful if you have a problem, how people come to your aid. Our mother was very ill for example, and the assistance I felt from the most strangest of people and the most strangest of

places, and you're running your businesses and people know that your mother's not well, and the assistance you get is incredible. So the contacts you make in running the business, but it is a people business - it's amazing the satisfaction you feel. Even my wife was in hospital with one of the kids: oh, your husband owns Rigoni's or something, and all of a sudden things - that opens doors and that's one of the satisfying parts.

O.H.: What about you Primo, on the satisfying side?

P.C.: Oh, everything he says. I mean, some of the contacts you make out of this business is fun, you know. There's some very interesting personalities out there, really are, no question about it.

G.C.: Apart from being a service, it's a people business really.

P.C.: That's right, it is too.

G.C.: It's a people business. If you've got the right people, the right personalities, you can give people second quality food and people still love it, they still love it. And in the days gone by, you know, we've got away with murder on some occasions and people still have a wonderful time. Charlie Browns, the food was rather, very very ordinary, very basic, very simple and the people loved coming to Charlie Browns. It was fun, and that's the whole idea of it.

O.H.: You talk about the industry changing at present from what sort of - I think I was talking to you once and I'd finished at the bar, and you were talking about the cafe that are sort of springing up everywhere.

P.C.: The cafe society.

G.C.: Yes, yes.

O.H.: And it's very much the same.

G.C.: They're opening and closing so fast you're not funny. They are what I call me too, they are repeating themselves - five cafes in the last two months have closed up in Unley Road, and they are just repeating the same equation, the same equation. The industry's changing, it's - and in fact any smart man would have changed a year ago. Hotels are finished. In fact, I'm looking at buying a hotel, one that's closed the doors, because it would be a wonderful place to convert into a house. You can buy them cheap and as far as property's concerned it would be wonderful to buy a hotel, live in a hotel, because they don't exist any more. They're too big, they're too cumbersome, they're too, you know, expensive to run and they really don't offer, offer anything. But I'm not saying - I'm only saying that figuratively, I have no intention of buying a hotel, but I'm saying there'll be a lot of wonderful hotel properties that have closed on the market. They're looking at changing the act now, turning all restaurants having a general facility.

P.C.: General facility means it's open 24 hours a day and you can drink at the bar if you want to.

G.C.: License - you can go and get a glass - now for example, to come to Grimaldi's you must sit down and eat before you can get a glass of wine. They're looking at changing all these things to open the whole thing up which is sensible. They have that over - they've always done it in Europe, for example, and they were fine and the Anglo-Saxon laws here are slowly changing. So the industry is now in for a change. We've now gone through - we're in this cafe phase of - we went through a spat of, as Primo says, Chinese food becomes part of the norm, went through Chinese, Thai food, cuisine nouvelle, now we're back to the classic cuisine but it's being offered to you in cafe style. Now people - cafes at the moment in Adelaide are all, you go to the bar, you've got your drink, you serve yourself. This is what we did at Charlie Browns in 1969. It will change. People will now demand table service, they'll start making more demands so cafes have to upgrade themselves, so it's going to be much more expensive to run a cafe. They will have to do this because the demand will come from there. People will have to learn to specialise, that, for example, you want to get a good steak in Adelaide at the moment where can you go - nowhere. There's only one steak house, Cork and Cleaver, they've got one there, one at Glenelg. There's no other steak house.

P.C.: But people are going off meat somewhat.

G.C.: Yes, but it'll - coming back.

P.C.: You can still buy - you can still buy a piece of steak, there's no question about that.

G.C.: It will come back.

P.C.: Well, that's - it depends.

G.C.: It will.

P.C.: It depends on the mood and the change.

G.C.: Sure, but it will. This is another thing, no one is doing that. If I wanted to come back into the industry right now I'd open a steak house in Adelaide, in town somewhere. If you want to get a good steak in town you ain't going anywhere. There's ---

P.C.: Whereas I wouldn't, so there's the difference.

G.C.: You see, I would.

O.H.: That's interesting, yes, yes.

G.C.: Yes. People have to specialise now.

P.C.: And we're both in the same business.

G.C.: Both ex-butchers.

P.C.: Yes. But I wouldn't open up a steak house, but he's very confident.

O.H.: You're going full circle.

P.C.: That's right, but that's what is going on in industry, you've got to feel your way through what you think is going to work, which is not going to work.

O.H.: So as this will be a piece of history as it goes on, what do you think of the East End of Rundle Street today?

P.C.: Oh, it's here to stay. I mean, there's no question about it. You can go down there and you can have what, eight, 10 different types, different nationalities of food.

G.C.: It will change, a lot of the restaurants will close. They are too expensive, their overheads are too dear. A lot of them have changed already and with time you'll find that - look, I can - if you and I walk into Rundle Street now we can go and buy any restaurant. All the restaurants are for sale, every one of them and we could bargain the price down without question, because the rents they're paying are astronomical.

P.C.: Yes, but apart from the rent.

G.C.: The catering industry is a people industry, it's too expensive to maintain staff, it is very expensive. Adelaide prices are ridiculous, we are the cheapest city in Australia for coffee. I opened up Rigoni's in 1980 and I was charging \$1.50 for coffee. Now 16 years later I'm now charging \$1.80 for coffee. That gives you an idea. And our prices are far too cheap. It is unsustainable - good fun, lot of atmosphere, but they'll keep opening and closing and eventually there won't be any more people who will take the risk. There's always somebody around but they won't take the risk because it's too expensive, and you'll find a lot of those restaurants will close, and something else will take its place. And as they were closing I hope the quality stays there because my fear is that the quality will come down and then you will develop another Hindley Street.

O.H.: What about the West End - what do you ---

G.C.: That's where I would -that's where I would go now.

P.C.: Well, well, the interesting part about all that is the university is there now. Now anybody who's got the hotel down at that end of town do very well.

G.C.: Mick McCoy's. Yes, well, who owns it unfortunately is not the right man but - --

P.C.: But irrespective of that the whole point is, is that, you know, with the university being there, there's a bit of long term thinking which you can probably do something with.

G.C.: Yes, the scope there's enormous, absolutely enormous, because two things. One thing that - missing there - interesting - car parking and accommodation for students. All

that area will become academic and that's where Rundle Street should be, right there. It's the art centre is there, you've got all the overseas students will be coming there, the atmosphere is always there. What goes around comes around and if I was going to - I'm too old now, otherwise I would get back in the industry in the West End. Now's the time to get in it because (a) it's cheap, you could buy the property instead of paying \$2000 a week rent. You could buy it and if you had a long term view, it's exactly where I would go.

O.H.: Have any of your children been inspired to go into the industry or are they put off?

P.C.: No.

G.C.: Both my children at the moment, work in the industry. They don't work for their father and I don't think anyone should. We both worked for our Dad. I - both of them don't want to stay in the industry and that's why I'm very happy for them to work in the industry now so they can see themselves the cost of it. I don't regret - I don't begrudge any restaurateur becoming a millionaire, because if he is out of this industry he's worked hard for it.

P.C.: Quite right, I agree with that. It's a demanding business and if you can make some money out of it, good luck, he deserves it.

G.C.: He deserves every penny, yes.

P.C.: Particularly in this - particularly in South Australia, because, you know, our prices here are 30 per cent cheaper than Melbourne.

G.C.: Yes, it's very hard to run a restaurant, very very hard.

O.H.: Are there particular restaurants around at the moment that you think the best or good, that are successful?

G.C.: Run well?

P.C.: Oh, I think probably his old ex-employee, Cibo, at North Adelaide seems to be, though he's new, and so it's going to take a time for it to settle down to see what it's all about. I think the Oxford Hotel is again, you know, it's good staff, good food, is excellent.

G.C.: Good management.

P.C.: Good management. There are a few around. I mean, Alputte's another one which is - but he's the Big Mac, because his food is always in good condition and it's presentation.

G.C.: That is the secret.

P.C.: And he's done it very well.

G.C.: He is still running the same menu he had 15 years ago and why is it successful, because you go there and you know the standard. It is easy to open a restaurant and to all of a sudden, you know, all the people will come to it and it just flourishes but to maintain it, year after year after year, that's the difficulty.

P.C.: That's the secret.

G.C.: And you'll find that, you know, restaurants have a life cycle - life cycle, they all do, and it is the bravado of the operator then to pick it up and either to start changing his restaurant or etcetera, etcetera.

P.C.: It's the maintenance, the maintaining. The first two years is fine, the first year, three years, maybe but after that you've got to be on your toes to make sure that your customers come back. It's like flying an aeroplane - sorry, it's like an aeroplane service, where's the best service, Ansett or Qantas. No, no, I'm - it's the sort of thing that, you know, which airline do you prefer to fly? You know, is the service better in Ansett or whatever and the same as restaurants.

O.H.: So how much longer do you think you'll both continue in the industry?

P.C.: I don't ever intend to retire.

G.C.: Me another three years tops.

P.C.: Well, I don't ever intend to retire. I mean, if I can plan it in a way that I can come here for a time and then do some of my trekking, whatever it might be which gets me away from the general public, then that's fine with me.

O.H.: So would you do the whole thing all over again?

P.C.: What my life?

G.C.: Good question, no I wouldn't. No, no.

O.H.: You wouldn't.

P.C.: I'd make a few changes. There's no question about that.

G.C.: Yes, no I wouldn't and I think I speak for all restaurateurs - all restaurateurs.

O.H.: Why?

G.C.: Because the - you have no, no personal time. If you are a restaurateur you are restaurateur 24 hours a day.

P.C.: That's true.

G.C.: You have no - it's like being a priest and the demands made upon you. It's incredible. You know, often people ring me up: why can't I get hold of your brother? He should be here to have a drink. I walk in here sometimes: come on, let's go home - oh, I'll just have a drink with this fellow because, you know, he wants to be there and people just want to be associated with you. All they need, all you've got to do is just look in their eye and say: g'day. That's it, that's all you've got to do and they feel good. But it's continuous and you've got to be always attentive to, you know, to acknowledge everybody. And when you walk out of the restaurant, if you run a popular restaurant and you walk down the street, you know, every second person, "hello, hello, hello". And my kids, they say, "Dad, you know everybody". I say "No, I don't know everybody".

P.C.: I mean, it's amazing the amount of people will come into the restaurant and say: I came here today specially to see you and this is my friend so and so, and he's so and so, and he's so and so, so you've got to shake hands three or four times and they've come there to, you know, that's part of the programme. And they like to go somewhere where they are recognised.

G.C.: So it's - and it's enormously demanding, enormously. And when I say it's a lot like being a priest, it's exactly that.

O.H.: When you say you would have made changes, what changes would you make?

P.C.: I haven't given it a lot of thought, but yes, you know, I can't sort of pin - but if I was to sit down and sort of make some pointers on it, I would definitely make some changes, but at the moment I'm not quite sure which ones they would be.

O.H.: Okay. Well, I think we've just about come to the end and I want to thank you both very, very much for being interviewed.

P.C.: No, it was a pleasure.

O.H.: And I think it's been great having the two of you together because it's really - you've worked together so much of your life as well. It's been really wonderful. Thank you.

P.C.: It's a pleasure, Karen, a pleasure, Karen.

G.C.: Pleasure.

O.H.: Thank you.

P.C.: All the best.

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