

OPPOSITE: Connie Rotolo and her daughter Rosalie Rotolo-Hassan.



MENU

CILIEGIE DI RISO

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LASAGNE

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PORK FILLET COTOLETTA WITH FENNEL AND ORANGE SALAD

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ITALIAN CELEBRATION CAKE



SIDE BY SIDE

SETTLE IN FOR AN ITALIAN FEAST WITH THE FAMILY BEHIND LEGENDARY FOOD AND WINE DESTINATION BOTTEGA ROTOLO

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Connie Rotolo and her daughter Rosalie Rotolo-Hassan move with ease and efficiency in a well-rehearsed routine – kneading pasta dough, rolling arancini, crumbing pork – as they lovingly prepare a Sunday feast of Italian ‘cucina’.

Not that there aren’t disagreements. Whether it’s a family celebration such as this, or the cooking classes they run together each month, the pair don’t always see eye to eye. Is the pasta too wet? Are the arancini too big? Does the lasagne need more time in the oven? The two women refuse to compromise on anything when it comes to food.

While their names might not be as familiar as some of our better-known chefs or winemakers, Connie and Rosalie have been pivotal in procuring and promoting ingredients Adelaideans now take for granted.

Their story begins more than 40 years ago when Connie sold her smallgoods store at Welland to set up Athens Gourmet Foods in the Central Market with her husband, Alfonso (better known as Fonz).

Athens was one of the first places in Adelaide to stock Asian and Middle Eastern groceries. It introduced olive oil as a premium bottled product and imported the best cheeses from Europe. Rosalie started working in her parents’ shop when she was 12, standing on a plank of wood positioned under the counter so she could see over the top. It taught her early on that “business is about building relationships with your customers”.

It’s a lesson Rosalie says has been crucial to the success of Bottega Rotolo, the importing and distribution business she started in 1995 soon after her parents’ store closed. The Bottega Rotolo store in Norwood is a favourite of food lovers who come for cheeses, smallgoods and pasta. Connie and Fonz are familiar faces there, working for Rosalie now.

But the shop is only a small part – 10 per cent, Rosalie estimates – of the business. The big money comes from supplying Adelaide’s restaurants with the exclusive ingredients demanded by our best chefs. In the past year, Bottega Rotolo has expanded, opening outlets in Sydney and Melbourne. It’s all part of a plan that will allow the business to operate with less input from Rosalie and her husband, Matthew Hassan.

There have been sacrifices. Rosalie has built her company while raising her two boys, Nicholas, nine, and Daniel, six. In both cases, she was back at work within days of giving birth. “We love our food because it brings our family together. But doing what I love is pulling my family away,” Rosalie says.

This brings us back to lunch, a regular tradition, more special today because it is Nicholas’ birthday. The hungry boys are getting restless, even after sneaking a few Ciliegie di Riso. They’re after lasagne, but it can’t come out until Connie is sure it is hot enough. “We cook well together. She always tells me off about how I’m doing something, but we cook well,” Rosalie says.

Bottega Rotolo, 7 Osmond Tce, Norwood, 8362 0455, bottegarotolo.com.au.



ABOVE: Ciliegie di Riso (rice cherries). Pork fillet cotoletta with fennel and orange salad.

OPPOSITE: Matthew and Rosalie, Connie and granddaughter Alessia Rotolo.



LASAGNE

serves 12

pasta

600g lo Pastaia flour*
6 eggs
Pinch of salt
2 tbsp water

ragu

400g yearling rump
350g pork fillet
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 stick celery, finely chopped
1 carrot, finely chopped
1 brown onion, finely chopped
125ml (½ cup) red or white wine
140g tomato paste
1.5 litres Agostino Recca tomato passata
1 small bunch of basil, torn
Salt and pepper, to taste

meatballs

150g beef and pork mince, reserved from the ragu
½ cup fresh breadcrumbs
½ cup Parmigiano Reggiano, freshly grated
1 egg
1 tbsp chopped, fresh parsley
Salt and pepper, to taste

bechamel sauce

500ml milk
35g plain flour
60g unsalted butter
1 whole nutmeg, grated

to assemble

1 cup Parmigiano Reggiano, freshly grated
500g fresh mozzarella
30g unsalted butter

To make the pasta Place flour on the bench and create a well in the centre. In a bowl, lightly beat eggs and add a pinch of salt. Pour beaten eggs in the well and slowly combine with flour. Gradually add small amounts of water to bring the dough together. The dough needs to be firm. Knead until smooth. Wrap dough in cling wrap and set aside at room temperature for 30mins. When ready to make the pasta, place a large pot of salted water over medium-high heat and bring to the boil. Cut the dough into eight even pieces. Set aside the pieces not being immediately used and cover with cling wrap to prevent them drying. Flatten the dough with your hands and begin to feed through a pasta machine, sprinkling with flour to prevent sticking. Continue to roll the dough through the machine several times, using a smaller setting each time, finishing at the second-last setting. Place each rolled sheet



on a floured surface to prevent sticking. Fill a large bowl with cold water. Blanch each sheet individually for 20secs in the boiling water, then place immediately into cold water. Remove once cool and set aside on tea towels to drain.

To prepare the meatballs Mince together 400g rump and 350g pork. Measure 150g of mixture for meatballs and reserve the rest for the ragu. Combine 150g mince mixture with breadcrumbs, Parmigiano Reggiano, egg and parsley. Form into balls, about the size of a 10c, and set aside.

To make the ragu Place a wide-bottom saucepan over medium heat and add olive oil, celery, carrot and onion. Add a pinch of salt to draw out the excess moisture from the vegetables and keep them from browning. Cook for about 15-20mins until the vegetables are translucent and soft, but not browned. Add the reserved mince mixture and cook until browned, slightly caramelised and with no liquid remaining in the pan. Add wine and deglaze the bottom of the pan (Connie prefers to use red wine, as it makes the ragu richer). Cook until wine has evaporated. Create a well in the centre, add tomato paste and cook paste, stirring continuously for 2-3mins. You may need to add a little bit of water to help remove the tomato paste from the bottom of the pan. Add passata and bring to the boil. Add meatballs, basil and season with salt and pepper. Cover, reduce the heat to low, and simmer for about 1 hour.

To make bechamel sauce Heat milk until almost boiling and set aside. In a medium-size saucepan, melt butter. Once melted, add plain flour and stir continuously for 2-3mins to make a roux (thickened mixture), ensuring it does not brown. Remove from heat and add the warm milk gradually, stirring continuously to combine evenly. Grate in a pinch of nutmeg and set aside.

To assemble lasagne Preheat oven to 160°C. Lightly grease the base and sides of a 25x35cm baking dish. Line the dish with sheets of pasta so the sheets hang over the sides (this will prevent the lasagne from spilling out into the oven while cooking). Spread a layer of ragu, then a layer of bechamel, then sprinkle with Parmigiano Reggiano and torn pieces of mozzarella. Repeat until the dish is full, then fold in the edges of pasta. Cover with a layer of ragu and bechamel. Sprinkle with grated Parmigiano Reggiano and mozzarella, and top with small knobs of butter. Cover with baking paper and then foil. Bake in the oven for 1½ hours at 160°C. Increase the heat to 180°C, remove foil and paper, and bake for 15mins until golden brown. Remove from oven and allow to rest for 15mins before serving. *This flour is a blend of 00 flour and semolina designed for pasta. Available at Bottega Rotolo.

CILIEGIE DI RISO (RICE CHERRIES)

makes 30-40

1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 brown onion, finely diced
200g Vialone Nano* (semifino Italian rice)
200ml chicken stock
200ml milk
120g gorgonzola piccante, cut into small cubes
50g Grana Padano (Italian parmesan), grated
Salt and pepper
1 cup flour
2 eggs, beaten
1 cup dried breadcrumbs
extra olive oil, to fry

This recipe can be started the day before Heat olive oil in a saucepan over a medium heat. Saute onion until softened, add the rice then toast lightly for 2mins. Add chicken stock and milk. Cook for 15mins. Add the gorgonzola and stir through grated Grana Padano. Season to taste. Set aside to cool.

On the day Roll the rice mixture into small cherry-sized balls. It should make about 30-40. Dust them in flour, then dip in beaten eggs and roll in breadcrumbs. Deep fry the ‘cherries’ in olive oil for about 2mins or until golden brown. Drain on absorbent paper and serve warm.

*Available at Bottega Rotolo.



LEFT: Alfonso with grandsons Nicholas and Daniel.

ITALIAN CELEBRATION CAKE

serves 12

crema pasticcera

(pastry cream)

1 litre (4 cups) milk
 ½ vanilla bean
 8 egg yolks
 200g caster sugar
 100g plain flour, sifted
 Peel of 1 lemon

200g Callebaut white
 chocolate callets

sponge

6 extra large eggs
 1½ cups caster sugar
 1½ cups cornflour
 ½ tsp bicarb of soda
 ½ tsp cream of tartar

chocolate ganache

300g cream
 300g Callebaut
 dark chocolate

To make the pastry cream This can be made up to 24 hours in advance. Bring milk and vanilla bean to the boil in a heavy-based saucepan. Remove from heat and discard the vanilla bean. In a bowl, whisk egg yolks and sugar until light and fluffy. Gradually whisk in flour until the mixture is smooth. Pour hot milk slowly in, whisking well. Return the mixture to the saucepan and add lemon peel. Whisking constantly, cook over a medium heat until it turns to a thick custard consistency. Remove from heat, discard lemon peel, and let the custard cool, whisking to keep a crust from forming. Cover and refrigerate.

To make white chocolate curls These can also be made in advance. Melt white chocolate callets in a double boiler or place a bowl over simmering water. Stir until smooth, then pour onto a marble slab and spread thinly with a flat knife or spatula. Cool at room temperature, and then form curls using a large flat knife. Set aside until required.

To make the sponge Preheat oven to 180°C. Beat eggs and sugar until light and fluffy. The mixture is ready when a figure eight can be made with a raised spoon. In a separate bowl, sift cornflour, bicarb of soda and cream of tartar together, then sift again. Fold the twice-sifted flour into the egg mixture until just combined. Pour into a greased and lined 25cm (10 inch) cake tin and bake for 55mins at 180°C (160°C fan-forced). Turn out and set aside to cool. Once cool, slice the sponge into three even layers.

To make chocolate ganache In a saucepan over a medium-low heat, bring cream to the boil. Remove from heat, add dark chocolate and stir until smooth. Leave to cool slightly before using.

To assemble the cake Spread the pastry cream evenly between each layer. Pour chocolate ganache over the cake, smoothing the top and sides with an offset spatula or palette knife. Allow to sit at room temperature until the ganache is set, then decorate with white chocolate curls.

Tip For a moist sponge, combine ½ cup warm water with 2 tbsp cocoa powder and, before covering sponge with ganache, use a pastry brush to moisten sides and top of cake with cocoa water.

PORK FILLET COTOLETTA WITH FENNEL AND ORANGE SALAD

serves 12

2 pork fillets
 Salt
 1 cup plain flour
 4 eggs
 2 cups freshly made sourdough breadcrumbs
 1 cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano
 Sage leaves, finely chopped
 Olive oil, for frying

salad

3 oranges, peeled
 1 fennel bulb, thinly sliced
 2 large handfuls of rocket leaves
 ½ cup kalamata olives
 1 tbsp Leonardi Balsama Bianco (white balsamic)*
 3 tbsp Valentina Cubi Verbasco extra-virgin olive oil*
 Salt, to taste

To make pork cotoletta Remove fat from pork fillets, then cut each fillet into six medallions approximately 3cm thick. Pound each medallion with a meat mallet to flatten, sprinkle with salt. Lightly coat in flour, dusting off any excess. In a flat bowl or dish, lightly beat the eggs. In another dish, combine the breadcrumbs, Parmigiano Reggiano and chopped sage. Dip each piece of meat in the egg, then cover with breadcrumb mix. Place the meat on a plate and rest in the fridge for 1 hour. Heat olive oil until very hot, but not smoking. Fry the pork until golden and serve immediately.

To make salad Over a small bowl to catch the juice, carefully segment oranges with a sharp knife, avoiding the pith. Reserve any orange juice for the dressing. In a bowl, toss together fennel, orange segments, rocket and olives. To make the dressing, whisk together the white balsamic, olive oil, orange juice and salt. Drizzle over the salad and serve.