

# Giovanna Marmorale



## EARLY LIFE

Giovanna grew up as the fifth of seven children on the family farm in Paduli in the Campania region of Italy. Growing up on the farm meant that from an age of about 6 the children helped with the farm chores and household activities like making bread and biscuits.

Giovanna started school at 7, here she thrived and gained tremendous support from teachers. Unfortunately, much against her will she was expected by family to not complete high school. Due to hard economic times, gender and the distance of her nearest high school it was expected that she would learn to do the cooking, sewing and bread and cheese making at home.

Giovanna married Pino, a local boy, when they were 17 and soon after had their first daughter. Pino came from a generation of cheese makers, with Italy suffering from work shortages they had to stop making cheese. This spurred on his dream to go to Australia, Giovanna, as a patriotic Italian and being very close to her family, was not keen to migrate but her husband was adamant.

Australia was paying the way for skilled migrants to stay for a minimum of 2 years, so he said they had nothing to lose and decided to go.

On April 24, 1974, the young family arrived in Adelaide. Pino immediately loved it and was already keeping himself busy with organised work. They moved into St Morris and were welcomed by Italian neighbours and some relatives to the neighbourhood. On arrival they had enough for a fridge, a second-hand bed, chairs and table and so after receiving his first week's wages, the family went to K-Mart to buy anything they needed, this felt like a real luxury! It wasn't long before Giovanna started to work in the evenings, cleaning at Channel 10. Feeling the distance from their homeland and family, Giovanna and Pino united and relied on each other to provide a future for their young family.

## WORKING LIFE

Anticipating the onset of building shortages in the 1980s the ambitious couple decided to look for a business and decided on a delicatessen on the Parade. They soon built up a strong clientele with Giovanna's traditional and delicious lunches including a wide range of Italian products. Over the 2 years they had the delicatessen, they realised that there was a shortage of cheese makers locally and it was hard to fill customer orders for things like fresh ricotta. A born and bred cheese maker, Pino was keen to sell the business and start a cheese factory.

The first years of starting a cheese making business were tough and full of many hurdles, however this did not hold the family back. Pino returned to Italy, leaving Giovanna with her two young daughters for 5 weeks, to research modern techniques.

La Vera ricotta was all made by hand in the early days but as they had not established a customer base and with many overheads barely any money was made. This led them to approach Coles, who were happy to take their ricotta, which really got the business underway. Nowadays, La Vera Cheese sell to Foodland, Romeo's Retail, Drake, IGA, speciality stores and Australia wide.

Pino and Giovanna had great vision over the next three years and with the help from family and friends and positive acceptance by customers they were able to take La Vera to the next stage of a growing business. The Dairy Board were also positive about their efforts to make Australian cheeses.



By 1988 La Vera had already outgrown its Payneham Road premises, this led the couple to look for a block closer to their home in Paradise and they bought what had been a joinery next to the Rez on Hamilton Road. Soon they were able to make ricotta, mozzarella, bocconcini and experiment with stracchino and brie. This factory is still producing high-quality, award-winning cheese true to its Italian heritage. Their daughter Sabrina Mamorale, with her deep passion and respect for the genuine art of cheesemaking, now runs the business alongside her parents.

Today you will still find Pino and Giovanna working daily at the La Vera cheese factory and on Saturdays, Giovanna works in the bottega where she enjoys meeting her customers. The team has grown to include some talented people working with cheese making and in the bottega, Giovanna spends her time managing the quality control and packaging and staff, who are mainly long-term employees. As Giovanna says, “We are so still passionate about our work, even now 38 years on and can’t see retirement any time soon”.

From a young couple who could not do what loved in their home country, through hard work and a strong family unit have contributed to educating and providing Australia with incredible artisan cheese preserved by generations. La Vera is proudly known for the most famous artisan ricotta and other mozzarella products such as Mozzarella Di Bufala. La Vera now offers 33 varieties and they have won many awards for their cheeses and sell their products around Australia.

### CAMPBELLTOWN CONNECTIONS

Giovanna and Pino built their own house by hand in Paradise, South Australia at the same time as they were establishing La Vera Cheese. Pino was keen to live in a newly developing area, initially, Giovanna, who didn’t drive felt that it was too far away and so had to learn to drive. Giovanna now sees Campbelltown as ‘her village’ and can’t see herself living anywhere else. A true Italian pioneer of this area, she feels proud of what this community has produced.

### REFLECTIONS

Always holding family close, Giovanna cherishes downtime shared with their granddaughters and friends enjoying what she’s always loved most, baking and socialising with her local community

The couple have always been a strong team, optimistic and always believed that they could do it despite the obstacles and difficulties along the way.

Giovanna sees success as putting yourself fully, mind and body, into what you do. Working together as a strong partnership with her husband she believes has been the key to their success, Giovanna said “We found our own way, not always the easy way, but our way”.

The advice Giovanna would give to her younger self would be not to worry so much, especially about leaving Italy, go and search for your future. “Australia has been the lucky country for us and can still be with hard work and commitment”.

Her advice to women of today is that if you have a dream follow it. School is not for everyone, so don’t be scared, if you have something to offer, go for it.

**“Nothing comes from the sky, make opportunities for yourself”**