

Teresa Marona

“Do what you can with whatever comes along”

Teresa Marona is a Campbelltown businesswoman and successful entrepreneur who established her own property development business while running a popular local eatery.

Teresa was born in San Giorgio La Molara, Italy as the eldest of three children and had a very happy childhood. Her family lived in the main piazza across the road from her school. She loved learning especially mathematics and would have liked to have stayed at school and become a maths teacher but left after five years of schooling. At eleven years old, Teresa started sewing, making clothes for herself and her sister, and learnt dressmaking using her treasured Pfaff sewing machine.

Teresa's father was her most significant influence in her life. He was deaf due to a childhood illness and was given a college education by a wealthy patron. By profession he was a shoemaker catering for farmers, walking daily to farms carrying his equipment and was a well-known identity in the community. Teresa helped to keep his accounts and as sometimes they were paid in produce so the family never went without. She also went with her father to buy equipment and deliver the shoes so picked up business acumen from an early age.

At 16, Teresa opened her first business making clothes, a profession she circled back to throughout her career. At this time, many of the local residents were migrating to Australia and so Teresa applied to come to Australia. She flew here as a skilled tradeswoman for \$28 along with her two glory boxes in July 1969.

She moved in with her Aunty and Uncle at Royston Park who ran the Minicozzi supermarket and catered for weddings. Her now husband saw a photo of Teresa in the photography shop next door and started to come in to buy things from her; he bought individual razor blades so that he could keep coming back.

Teresa loved the busyness and gained a lot of experience at the supermarket but working seven days a week meant that she couldn't even go to church. After two and a half years, her Aunty migrated to Adelaide and Teresa moved in with her until she married in 1971.

The young couple moved to Evandale where their daughter was born the next year. Teresa stayed home for a couple of years to focus on her daughter and did some sewing to help with the rent. In 1974 Teresa started work at the Royal Adelaide Hospital as a cleaner and was soon offered a promotion. She was concerned by her lack of English so bought a dictionary and a radio to learn English.

In 1975 an elderly neighbour offered to lend the couple the deposit for a house at St Morris but they still had to struggle with the banks to get a loan as they hadn't been in Australia long enough. Then in 1978 they bought a pizza bar in Pultney St. As they had paid the house off quickly, they went to the bank for a business loan. Despite having no prior experience in hospitality Teresa enjoyed working with people and their daughter slept in the car while they worked, as they had little family here in Australia to support them.

In 1982 they sold the pizza bar and returned to Italy as they had missed their family and culture. Immediately Teresa started sewing again. The couple stayed until 1985 when her husband said he was returning. Teresa found it much harder to leave a second time but knew that there was more opportunity in Australia.

The family rented a 2-bedroom unit from a family friend, for six years sharing one room with their daughter so that they had support for their daughter and could save for a new home, while they both worked in two jobs. Teresa approached a boutique in North Adelaide and after a week's trial was offered a job and worked there for two and a half years. At this point her husband bought a fish and chip shop in Rostrevor where they remained for the next 18 years.

The couple turned the business around from a run-down shop to a state-of-the-art, award-winning premises noted for its cleanliness, customer service and quality products. The Rostrevor Fish Shop became a well-known local business. Teresa sought out support to learn the business and the best cooking techniques from John Di Fede. She is very grateful for his support and mentoring.

Whilst working in the business the couple started to buy and renovate homes, doing most of the work themselves. They were also moving every couple of years as they sold and upgraded houses. They have built a significant number of quality homes in Campbelltown and surrounding areas, a very successful business that they are continuing to a degree even in their supposed retirement.

In 2005 the couple sold the business and Teresa returned to her seamstress work and even made her daughter's wedding dress. She also started back at school at the Marden Senior College at 63 studying towards her SACE for 3 years part time.

Teresa has lived in Campbelltown for a number of years and believes that it offers everything you need and a lovely environment to walk in and enjoy. She appreciates the friendly community and people and has developed a strong relationship with the Council over the years due to the positive reputation they have had for their work in both business and in development.

Teresa has volunteered at the Campania Club for the last 10 years. Initially it was through the offer to do pizzas each month and then as the Club's treasurer and buyer. She values the close-knit community, culture and camaraderie.

Teresa says that she is looking to slow down and get more balance in her life but at the same time she is always open to opportunities. She sees success as being able to do things to the best of her ability and with passion. She would advise others to associate with people who can teach you things and add value to your life, she believes that it has been important in her life to learn from successful people. Her advice to young women is to be patient, be yourself and don't try to keep up with others.

*“Face each day with vigour
and energy”*

