



# Food for thought

Health should be served with common sense on the side



ROLAND ROCCHICCIOLI

I have been dropping into Pellegrini's Espresso Bar in Bourke Street since 1970, when they provided the lasagne that was eaten on stage during the ground breaking American play *The Boys in the Band*. I have been eating their pasta ever since. They shout at me in Italian, and use my real name – Rolando. I say – hand on heart – it is one of the treats I miss when I am away from Melbourne. Given the choice of restaurants today, it is hard to imagine this Bourke Street haven was one of the first Italian places in the city. Their now defunct and much lamented ristorante in Crossley Street served the best cold raw beef and raw cabbage and Russian salads.

Pellegrini's served freshly squeezed orange juice long before it was fashionable, or available, anywhere else in Mel-

bourne. The awkward extractor was a stainless steel, imported Italian contraption that sat behind the counter, and made a hell of racket devouring huge navel and Valencia oranges. It was a crude machine that left the pips in the juice and a quantity of pulp, which had to be eaten with a long-handled spoon.

When I was there recently, I noticed the extractor was gone. I was agog at the explanation: "After 54 years, the Health Department decided it was against the regulations. They said we were not allowed to cut and handle the oranges in the way we did."

The creme caramel and the irresistible apple strudel have also been removed from the semi-open display area and placed in an ugly glass case.

On many a cold theatre matinee day,

## “It’s establishments like Pellegrini’s that make Melbourne the food capital of Australia”

I sought refuge at the table in the open kitchen area of Pellegrini’s. The Health Department wanted that gone, also. Of course, we need food handling control; however, we need to exercise a modicum of that elusive commodity, common sense.

Pellegrini’s is an institution, not a chops-and-three-vegies joint. They have served their unpretentious, delicious, hearty home cooking to generations of satisfied customers. When it comes to rules and regulations, sometimes we need to consider the prevailing circumstances, including the track record. It’s establishments like Pellegrini’s that make Melbourne the food capital of Australia. Let’s not be silly and throw out the baby with the bath water.

### Snug as a bug

For a time, I knew more about baby wear than you might imagine. When my niece and nephew were babies I was living in London. Looking for Christmas presents, I discovered Mothercare UK in Oxford Street stocked a range of innovative children’s sleeping merchandise, which I

sent to my sister. The sleeping bag with sleeves was a great hit – especially for a child who kicked off the rugs, turned blue with cold, and cried all night.

Melanie Grant and her husband, former Bulldogs captain Chris Grant, have three young children, and after the birth of their first child, Melanie recognised a niche for children’s sleepwear. Five years ago she put her design and marketing skills to good use, and came up with Snugglebum, an inspired range for children using machine washable 100 per cent super-soft cotton. Australian owned and designed, the range is now available across Australia. My late mother, Beria, was a fine seamstress, and some items in the catalogue remind me of what she made. Snugglebum sleepwear comes in prints and stripes, the designs fit snugly over nappies, and the snap tabs allow for growing children. Melanie has also designed a sleeping bag.

*For more information, visit*  
[www.snugglebum.com.au](http://www.snugglebum.com.au) **mwm**

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