

AN INTERVIEW WITH RAYMOND CAPALDI

Its Time To Start Enjoying Life



With food being a major part of his life from as early as he can remember, it was inevitable that Raymond Capaldi would develop a passion for food. Born in Scotland to a family in the food business, he has many fond memories of being a child and playing in the kitchens, surrounded by those closest to him, in his family, naturally times he cherishes. Combine this with the countless family gatherings, centered around food, where stories, connections, and the warmth of family was shared by all. So powerful were these influences, that they cemented the foundations for this passion of food, and of life.

This passion fueled a determination for success, in turn creating opportunities, opportunities Raymond eagerly accepted. Such as working at the legendary Dorchester Hotel in London, after leaving Scotland in 1986, being awarded the “Scottish Chef Of The Year Title”, in 1992. Working at the British Embassy in Moscow, the Park Lane Hotel in Hong Kong, Hotel Martinez in Cannes, and the list goes on. It was then in the late 90’s that Raymond was in charge of Hotel Sofitel in Melbourne, where he memorably established the Sofitel Cooking Academy, which is still in operation and has trained and inspired many of Australia’s top culinary professionals.

This love of food is reflected in what Raymond likes to eat, he loves good Chinese food, and cannot go past a quality bacon sandwich, not every day of course, but now and then. *“The bacon has to be good quality though, either slightly salted, or carefully smoked, you know real bacon, pork flavour, none of this pretend stuff!”*



Raymond discussed how chemicals, and additives in foods today are scary and in his opinion could be the reasons why we have many of the food intolerances, especially found in children. Poor quality food, as in the nutritional value, also contributes to the overweight issues we see so prevalent today in our young. ***“Combine this with too much time on computers, tablets and phones, there is not sufficient effort then devoted to exercising, to burn off those additives.”***

Raymond's time saving tip for parents & families is to always have on hand disposable foil containers, which he uses at home to cook off his vegetables, in the oven. ***“Add some simple olive oil and a sprinkle of salt, and caramalise those vegis in the oven, there is nothing better, it is quick, easy, and no mess to clean up. Just throw away the foil when finished, couldn't be easier”***

Get the kids more active, get them outside and increase the intake of fresh vegetables, ***“I love Brussel sprouts roasted off in the oven in this way, try them out!”*** Raymond doesn't just talk the talk, he practices these lessons, with a diet high in fruits & vegetables, and time

set aside each and every day for a 12 km run, which also helps to relax him.

We asked what are some of the things you could not do without, and first on the list was:

1. Pecorino Cheese
2. Vegies – ***“I cannot live without my vegies.”***
3. Chocolate
4. Sourdough Bread ***“the real stuff though, none of this poor quality ingredients”***

If there is one lesson which comes through loud and clear it is to always use good quality ingredients, as Raymond said, ***“how can you get good nutritional value out of a loaf of bread that costs \$1?”***

Moving forward, after closing the doors on the successful Hare & Grace restaurant in Melbourne, Raymond is looking to just take care of Raymond, to enjoy life a little more. He still has several business interests, including a successful consultancy operation, though has the advantage now of choosing where and when to devote his life precious time.