



MEDIA RELEASE

Media release
For immediate release

THAT'S AMORE: LOVEABLE NONNAS UNITE FOR GRADI'S NEW MENU AT CROWN

Melbourne, 31 July 2019: Inspired by his close relationship with his own nonna and love for her food and family feasting, Gradi's owner and chef Johnny Di Francesco has searched for Australia's best unsung nonna heroes in Australian kitchens - to star on his Piatti Dei Nonni menu at Gradi at Crown.

Three Aussie nonnas have been plucked from their family kitchen to Gradi - to showcase their much loved family cooking traditions available for all to try during the Piatti Dei Nonni menu which will run from August 14 only at Crown.

As part of the process, the Gradi team searched through almost 100 mouth-watering submissions from Victorian nonnas and nonnos to find three to feature at Gradi Crown. When selecting the winning recipes, the team were looking for recipes that had their own tale and touched on family and generational stories and were blown away with the responses, which delivered all that and more.

After a month-long search, the winning nonnas - Nonna Rita, Nonna Concetta and Nonna Elena's - signature dishes will be available to everyone, not just their lucky nearest and dearest. Each recipe will stay true to its creator – from extra lashings of gorgonzola to hearty dollops of cream – the Gradi chefs will follow each nonna's closely guarded secret recipe to the letter.

Di Francesco says it's been an emotional journey developing this menu with the nonnas, making him reminisce about the influence his own nonna has had on his life and ultimately his career. "My nonna, Angela has been an incredible inspiration to me, living by the ethos that cooking must come from the heart – and that sometimes it's okay to break the rules. She's one of the strongest women I know – even at 93; she's still the boss in the kitchen!"

"Growing up at my nonna's taught me the power of food as a connecting force – it was there that family came together over a shared meal. This is the sentiment we are replicating at Gradi Crown, by making nonna-style cooking available to all Melburnians, no matter their heritage."

Available for a limited time from 14 August, the three winning dishes are:

- **ENTREE – NONNA RITA'S CAULIFLOWER FRITTERS:** Nonna Rita's specialty is her moreish, crispy cauliflower fritters, which get gobbled up at lightning speed at every family get-together. She proudly grows a range of vegetables on her Werribee South farm and is passionate about fresh produce, dishing up these much-loved family favourites every season for the past 45 years.
- **MAIN – NONNA CONCETTA'S SPINACH AND RICOTTA CANNELLONI:** Nonna Concetta knows all about catering for a big family. At just eight-years-old, she was taken out of school to help her mother cook for her 13 siblings, in the small town of Rosolini, Sicily. Her mother's hearty and deliciously cheesy spinach and ricotta cannelloni has always stuck with her – fast-track 67 years and she still cooks with these Sicilian flavours, expressing her love for her family through food.
- **DESSERT – NONNA ELENA'S BIGNE:** In 1973, Nonna Elena went to visit her mother one last time in the medieval village of Cugnoli, Abruzzo. It was an emotional trip, but while there she learnt to make her mother's custard filled choux pastry dessert, bigne. Whenever she feels nostalgic she prepares this indulgent dish, which brings her family, and in turn Nonna Elena much joy. She says this recipe "cannot be written, must be seen and tasted!"



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AT A GLANCE:

WHAT:	Piatti Dei Nonni menu
WHEN:	Wednesday August 14 th – Wednesday September 19 th
WHERE:	Gradi, Crown Melbourne 8 Whiteman Street, Southbank 3006
MENU:	Entrée: Nona Rita's Cauliflower Fritters Main: Nonna Concetta's Spinach & Ricotta Cannelloni Dessert: Nonna Elena's Bigne
Assets available	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interview with Johnny Di Francesco• Interviews with the three select nonnas• Picture opportunity of the three nonnas at the celebratory dinner on 6 August• Video content of each nonna• High-res media imagery
OPENING HOURS:	Monday – Sunday 12pm – 11pm

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