

Victor Pisapia Profile

A Love of Food

One of Victor Pisapia's fondest memories is sitting on a beach at Martha's Vineyard eating lobster rolls. Another is downing hot tamales in the street in Mexico. His whole personal history has one definitive accent: food.

"I think my greatest influence was my Italian mother and her love for food and giving," says Victor. "I used to deliver homemade pizzas every Friday night to half the town I lived in. No one ever paid because my mother fed everyone out of love."

A Passion for Teaching

Victor started his passion for teaching right out of university where he taught in the ghetto outside of Philadelphia. "I learnt quickly that teaching is one of the hardest career choices," says Victor. The strength you needed to do that job every day was super human," he says. He then went on to face his next challenge "The Kitchen".

The First Restaurant

Victor's entrée in the world of professional cooking came in 1976 when he opened his first business venture, Back Porch Café, in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware USA. "It was definitely out of necessity that I learnt to cook, but the style and excitement came from my Italian heritage and my European travels," says Victor. Everything in this café was made from scratch – there were no shortcuts – so he learned that 'fresh' sells. Back Porch is still open, 33 years later.

Professional Training

After a year in business, Victor went on to study at the New School for Social Research in New York City where he studied Culinary Arts and Restaurant Business. "I was privileged to learn from some of the best culinary teachers in New York," says Victor. "I remember being taught a pate class by the chefs who owned 'Soho Charcuterie'. It was a particularly challenging class, because I used to have to race off the dance floor at Studio 54 to be at class at 9:30 on a Sunday morning. I found out the chefs who taught the class were also just coming off the dance floor. I loved New York."

A Small American Empire

Victor continued to build a small empire of restaurants in the USA, clocking up 6, plus a nightclub that danced a 1000. "It was the 80's. It was wild, fun and we were doing food that people loved. We were the frontiersmen for New American Cuisine"

The Rattlesnake Grill Years

In 1994, Victor moved to Australia to open the award-winning Rattlesnake Grill. It was around this time that he started developing professionally outside the kitchen. "I was approached by Gourmet Traveller to write a few articles," he says. "One was on ceviche, another on Mexican mole sauces." Since then, Victor has appeared on numerous television and radio programs, written many articles and given numerous interviews and presentations.

The Cheeky Years

In 2001 Victor formed a team building company, Cheeky Food Group, bringing team cooking to the corporate market. It was an instant success as the corporate community were starved for good interactive activities that engaged and nourished their teams. Cheeky Food Group was written about in all the top business magazines around Australia, and its brand is still very strong in the market today. As a

true businessman he seized an opportunity to sell this business before the economic downturn, giving him a chance to explore other avenues.

And Now...

Victor now owns and runs his own company, VictorsFood, creating memorable, interactive culinary experiences like team building, cooking parties, cooking classes, corporate events, food travel and market tours, food consulting, training, food coaching, demonstrations and presentations. Victor's passion for seasonal food, local growers and "slow food" drive his mission.

He is especially keen on team building in the corporate market, as he believes food connects people and is a powerful medium for relationship building. "Working in a 'corporation' used to be very impersonal, now business is starting to understand that staff engagement and wellness are key to better profits," Victor says. "We help them achieve this through food; we teach staff how to cook from the basics, so they eat better. This really sticks, because we do it in a way that is fun and gets them bonding with each other."

Even after many years in the business of food, Victor is excited to grow his new baby. He loves to deliver the message: "cooking is for everyone."