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Herald Sun

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Work with passion

It's never too late to become a master chef writes **Kate Prestt**

CELEBRITY chef and Skills Victoria ambassador Guy Grossi wants people with a passion for cooking to know it's never too late to enter the kitchen.

"It's never too late," he says. "But make sure you love it or you'll question why you've done it every day."

Grossi has more than 25 years' experience in the hospitality industry and is using this to help raise the profile of TAFE and training qualifications.

"Starting out in the kitchen you need to gain skill and experience to become good at what you do," he says.

"You'll make a lot of mistakes. You can't expect to walk into any career and get it right the first time."

As a schoolboy Grossi spent weekends and school holidays following his father Pietro around the commercial kitchens where he worked.

"Other kids were doing things they enjoyed; my father had me working in the kitchen. He thought it was enjoyable for me, but I'd end up sweeping floors, peeling potatoes and washing dishes," he says.

At 15 Grossi wanted independence and enough money to take out beautiful girls, so he left school to become a chef.

"I thought I'd feel comfortable in the kitchen, but then I started my professional career and it was very different to my years of helping Dad. I had to



Learn what you love: Skills Victoria ambassador Guy Grossi says any time is a good one to start in the kitchen.

learn responsibility," he says.

Enrolling in Commercial Cookery at Box Hill Institute of TAFE, Grossi completed his Certificate III (a three-year course with one year on-the-job training) in 1984.

"I'd had good mentors both at school and at work and I began to find that I was very proud of what I did, and wanted to be the best I could be."

Now Grossi and his wife Melissa own three restaurants — Mirka at Tolarno hotel, Grossi Trattoria (Bangkok) and Mel-

bourne's oldest Italian restaurant Grossi Florentino. Grossi's fourth restaurant opens in Melbourne in October.

During his career Grossi has released two Italian cookbooks and he will release a third later this year.

He recently co-hosted the SBS series *Italian Food Safari* and has appeared on *MasterChef Australia*, but his involvement in the kitchen is still very much hands-on.

"I try to get into the kitchen as often as I can," he says.

"I feel, while I still enjoy it, I like to be there for our younger staff, to give them a first-hand feel for it."

But Grossi also believes he still has plenty to learn.

"I still haven't hit my straps. Something tells me I'm still learning and I'll continue to get better at what I do all the time."

Guy Grossi will be appearing at the Herald Sun Career Expo, Friday July 30 at noon.

More > www.careerexpo.com.au