

CONTRACT BRIDGE

Deal proves master right

John Wignall

The Victorian player Ian McCance has played internationally for Australia and at the age of 80 refuses to play Seniors bridge, considering himself good enough to compete in the Open events. This deal proves him right. East dealt with only his side vulnerable.

N.		E.	
♠ 10 5 4 3		♠ A 1 9 2	
♥ 7 3 2		♥ A K 5	
♦ 8 7 5 3		♦ Q J 10	
♣ Q 8		♣ A K 4	
W.		S.	
♠ K 7 6		♠ Q 8	
♥ Q 10 9		♥ J 8 6 4	
♦ A 4 2		♦ K 9 6	
♣ J 10 6 3		♣ 9 7 5 2	
The auction was:		S	
W	N	E	S
2♥	No	2NT	No
4NT	No	6NT	All Pass

East's sequence of two diamonds followed by two no-trumps showed a balanced hand with 20 to 22 high-card points, so West raised him to four no-trumps. With a maximum, McCance was happy to bid six. South led a club, covered by the jack, queen and ace. The declarer could now see nine sure tricks and, needing three more, had to decide how to tackle the spade suit. This depended on the layout of the diamonds. At the second trick McCance led the queen of diamonds which was covered by the king and ace. With the total now up to 11 sure tricks the declarer simply had to play the spades so as to make three tricks from them as safely as possible. This he did by playing the ace and then low to the king. When the queen fell the hand was all over, but had it not fallen he would have been in position to lead towards the jack and nine. The only time he would not make three tricks in spades would have been if South had started with the queen, the 10 and two small cards and in that case there was no play for the contract.

N.		E.	
♠ A 10 2		♠ 9 8 4 3	
♥ Q 9		♥ K 10 4 3 2	
♦ Q 9 4		♦ 8	
♣ A 10 4 2		♣ K Q 5	
W.		S.	
♠ K Q J 6 5		♠ 7	
♥ A J 7 5		♥ 8 6	
♦ 3		♦ A K 10 7 6 5 2	
♣ 8 7 3		♣ 9 6	

The auction was soon over when South opened the bidding with a pre-emptive four diamonds and North raised him to five. Since, as the cards lie, East-West can make four hearts or four spades, losing only a trick in spades, one in diamonds and the ace of clubs, South was always going to score well on the board. He should, of course, lose three tricks, two hearts and a club, but he did rather better. Against five diamonds, West naturally led the king of spades, and sizing up the situation very quickly the declarer called for a low spade from dummy, leaving West on lead. The defenders had to take their two tricks in hearts immediately but it was not so easy. West instead continued with a second spade and South had his chance. He won with dummy's ace, discarding a club. He cashed the ace of clubs and ruffed a club high. Crossing to the queen of diamonds he ruffed a second club high. With the suit breaking three-three he now had two established clubs in dummy so he could cross to the nine of diamonds and discard both his losing hearts on them. He made 12 tricks for a very well-played hand.

Kiwi flavour in Tuscan

Cooking classes at a restored Italian farmhouse have a tutor with an Edmonds Cookbook nearby. He also likens beaten egg whites to the Southern Alps. DENISE IRVINE joins one of his classes.

Malcolm Ayres is the king of his Tuscan farmhouse, as he gives instructions for making Italian culinary treasures such as tagliatelle with a delicious duck sauce, carpaccio, aubergine and mozzarella terrine, and a divine zucchini pudding.

"Beat the egg whites until they look like the peaks of the Southern Alps," he advises, as our group of nine friends clusters around a table for the painstaking production of the zucchini, a decadent spongy creation filled with chocolate, nuts, dried fruits and whipped cream.

There is an eager volunteer among us to do the whipping. So six eggs are carefully separated, and the whites beaten according to Ayres' instructions. Soon to be whirled perfectly stiff peaks — definitely the Southern Alps — a reminder of his New Zealand roots, now happily transplanted in Tuscany earth. Next, says our instructor, the white peaks must be ever-so-gently folded into the yolks.

So we watch as the egg folder expertly flicks her whisk in this commodious kitchen where New Zealand classic the Edmonds Cookbook sits side by side with Italian culinary Bible Il Cucchiaio d'Argento (the Silver Spoon), perhaps unconscious symbols of a Kiwi-Italian marriage, and a shared love of food.

Malcolm Ayres, an art historian, is from Apatu — between Tauranga and Katikati — and is a former pupil of Hamilton's St Paul's Collegiate. He met his Italian wife, Daniela di Cesare, in Brazil in 1996, followed her to Italy, and they are now the owners of Podere Finerri, a four-hectare property about 30km from the ancient Etruscan city of Siena in central Italy. The 18th-century, brick-and-stone farmhouse was a ruin when they bought it, and the pair spent a couple of years restoring it, transforming the highly-piggledy building into a comfortable home for themselves, plus apartment accommodation for visitors, marketed as The Lazy Olive.

Then came the cooking classes, which they fell into almost by accident. Podere Finerri is distinctly rural, lying at the end of a long gravel road, after the lovely drive from Siena through gentle hills, vineyards, olive groves and views of ink green cypress trees marching up the ridge lines to pink stone houses. When Malcolm and Daniela first started taking guests in their Lazy Olive apartments, they offered to cook an evening meal for anyone not wishing to go out to restaurants. "Suddenly," says Malcolm, "we found ourselves doing dinner for 12 people."

Both keen cooks, Malcolm and Daniela immersed themselves in Tuscan recipes and produce, sourcing local meats, fruits, cheeses and wine so they could provide authentic dishes for their guests. Malcolm planted a vegetable garden, now thriving in what he says is inhospitable clay, and the olive plantation on the property ensured a regular flow of fruity organic oil.

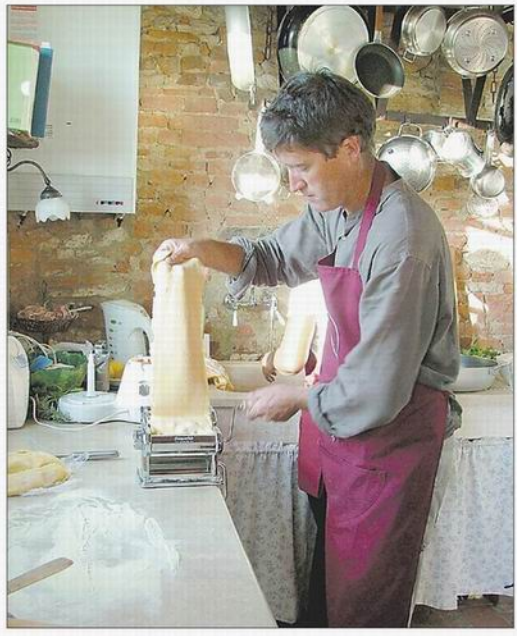
Cooking classes are now among their many activities, with Malcolm, a lecturer in the English department at the University of Siena, and Daniela, an architect specialising in Tuscan restorations, juggling demands of work, guests, cook schools and their young daughters Alice, seven, and Arven, two.

Our group books a day's class with Malcolm, and we kick off this eat-fest with a visit to the big mid-week food market in Siena to shop for provisions. Under Malcolm's expert eye we choose plump purple aubergines, sun-ripened tomatoes, purple radicchio, beans, roast artichokes, buffalo mozzarella, pecorino cheese, rich, fruity green olives, breads, herbs and gorgeous porchetta, the Italian stuffed pork pig.

Malcolm did the rounds of his favourite stall-holders, greeting, tasting, chatting: there's the family who has done up from Naples overnight with delicate buffalo mozzarella, the various fruit and veg sellers, and a plump, talkative woman selling aromatic porchetta. As we queue at her stall, she becomes less cheerful when a couple of tourists slap a porchetta sandwich back at her and claim she has ripped them off by putting a tiny amount of meat in it. The porchetta lady listens politely at first, and as they continue to berate her, she replies in voluble Italian.

"What did she say," I ask Malcolm, who speaks good Italian. "Hmm," he grins, giving a parodied version of how the porchetta lady had kind of directed the tourists as to where they could stick their sandwich.

We drove out to Asciano — Malcolm and Daniela's nearest town — then on to the gravel road that



Clockwise: from top left, Malcolm Ayres works his pasta machine; duck sauce; and tomato dish. Photos: Denise Irvine

winds to Podere Finerri, their farmhouse sitting high above a valley of perfectly ploughed fields awaiting plantings of wheat and barley. It is a sunny autumn day, and the couple set up the fruits of the market for lunch on a green trestle under a vine-covered pergola.

We toast our trip, the food, our hosts, our surroundings, anything for another sip of Italian purple prosecco in such a splendid place, with the smoky blue hills of Siena in the distance. Then we tuck into the simplest and most delicious of meals: bread, mozzarella, tomatoes and basil, cured meats, salad greens and fruit, before getting down to the serious business of kneading focaccia, making pasta, duck sauce and dealing to the egg whites.

Malcolm kits us out in black aprons and works us hard all afternoon, although a few of our number manage to skive off for a quick siesta in the living room (prosecco, jet-lag and a warm afternoon taking its toll).

The trickiest task is the individual aubergine terrines served with homemade tomato sauce; we line ramekins with paper-thin strips of roasted aubergine skin (the flesh scraped cleanly off), then fill the ramekins with chopped mozzarella and roasted aubergine. Removing the flesh without destroying the fragile skin taxes some of the team, and

descending to earth.

We are joined for drinks and dinner by four Lazy Olive guests, who by coincidence are New Zealanders. Malcolm, Daniela and Maria plate up by dish, with much discussion about who has slaved the hardest on the various works of art.

The best, of course, the zucchini, is saved until last; the peaks of the Southern Alps have been tamed into a rich, nicely rounded spongy cake, tasting damn fine on a terrace in the hills of Tuscany.

Website: www.thelazyolive.com



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Canterbury Regional Council (ECan)

A message from

Sir Kerry Burke Chairman

"With leadership from the strong 2021 team, the Regional Council has made real progress in the last three years."

- Air pollution is down
- Bus passengers are up
- City and rural water resources are being protected.

But plenty remains to be done. I urge you to vote for our full team to keep the progress going"

Kerry Burke

Air Quality

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007
Value	33	29	28	13

Number of nights May-August where pollution exceeded standard

The Clean Heat Project and other ECan policies have dramatically improved winter air quality and household warmth in Christchurch. We will complete the Clean Heat Project by 2013.

Christchurch South
Burke Kerry Kirk Bob

Christchurch North
Carroll Anne Knox John

Christchurch East
Budd Richard Cunningham Elizabeth

Christchurch West
Harris Evan Thomson Keith

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