

buylines

CHEMICAL engineering and cooking have more in common than you'd think.

Just ask Nico Moretti, who swapped careers to follow his dream. He runs Cooking Passions in Leederville.

How did you make the change from chemical engineering to running cooking classes?

I grew up in London, Ontario, in Canada and my father had the first Italian restaurant there, so I just grew up with food. When I graduated in chemical engineering from university I wanted to travel and came to Australia where I worked my way around in the hospitality industry. I met my wife Belinda here and — after working for Mobil Oil and BHP — I took a redundancy two years ago and decided to set up my own business.

How do your classes work?

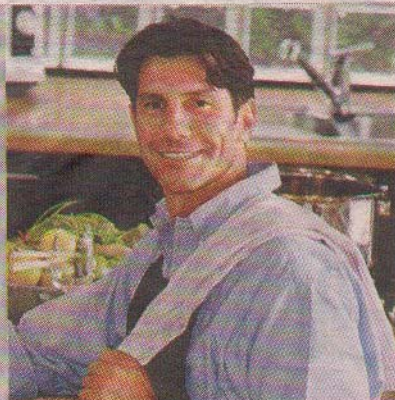
They're held in our home. We have a big, long, island workbench in the kitchen and classes of up to 12 sit around and watch me prepare a three-course meal. It's a bit like going to a friend's place for dinner and watching the action.

What style of dishes do you prepare?

They're all passions — we do Asian Passion, Retro Passion, Risotto Passion and Barbecue Passion. The barbecue one is particularly popular with men.

How do you fit in the classes with the family?

It all works out pretty well. I run the classes two nights a week



between 7pm and 9.30pm and there are day classes as well. The kids wander in and out sometimes and so does the dog, and people seem to like that. Belinda helps and it all adds to the relaxed atmosphere. People bring along a bottle of wine. We have book club groups, lots of couples, even some corporate groups.

What's your most popular class?

Our Sex and the City Passion, which costs \$50 a person. We feature cocktail food ideas for the party season. In 2½ hours we make california rolls, san choy bau tartlets, grilled chorizo and cucumber, chevre champignon, sweet potato frittata, caramelised onion and feta tartlets.

Do you do anything other than the cooking classes?

I also demonstrate the Thermomix, a kitchen appliance that is 15 different appliances in one. This is the world's only cooker-mixer that does sorbets, bread, salads, risottos and custards as well as the usual processor-type things.