

JOURNAL FOR MALTESE AROUND THE WORLD



MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

Editor: Frank Scicluna OAM MQR JP Email: maltesejournal@gmail.com.
Former Honorary Consul for Malta in South Australia



A FAMILY CHRISTMAS



Next Issue

Special
Christmas
Edition

Don't
miss it

QAGHAQ TAL-GHASEL

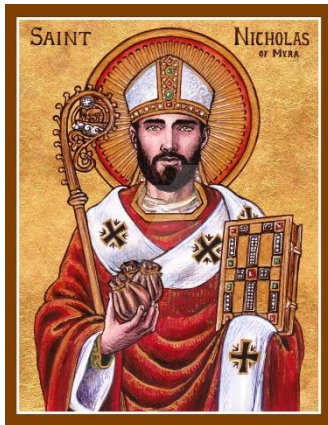


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THE MALTESE E-NEWSLETTER

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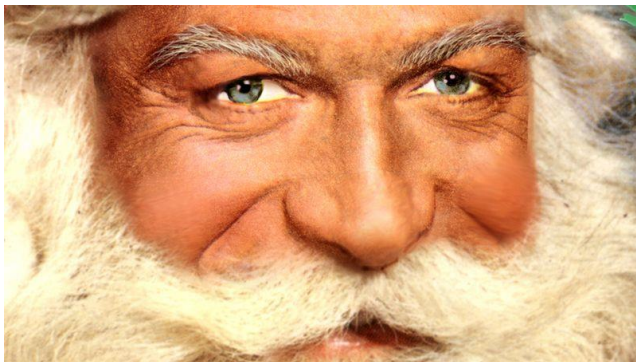


St. Nicholas Day

St. Nicholas Day, feast day (December 6) of St. Nicholas, the 4th-century bishop of Myra. St. Nicholas is the patron saint of Russia and Greece, of a number of cities, and of sailors and children, among many other groups, and was noted for his generosity. Some countries celebrate St. Nicholas Day on its eve, December 5.

History

After the Reformation, St. Nicholas was largely forgotten in Protestant Europe, although his memory was kept alive in Holland as Sinterklaas. There St. Nicholas is said to arrive on horseback on his feast day, dressed in a bishop's red robe and mitre and accompanied by Black Peter (Zwarte Piet), variously described as a freed slave or a Moor, to help him distribute sweets and presents to good children or lumps of coal, potatoes, or switches to bad ones. The Dutch took the tradition to New Amsterdam (now New York City) in the American colonies, where he was transformed into Santa Claus by the English-speaking majority. His legend of a kindly old man was united with old Nordic folktales of a magician who punished naughty children and rewarded good children with presents. The resulting image of Santa Claus in the United States crystallized in the 19th century, and he has ever since remained the patron of the gift-giving festival of Christmas, and is no longer associated with December 6. In Britain he was largely replaced with Father Christmas.



Traditions

Who was the real St. Nicholas? Learn about the life of the historical St. Nicholas, bishop of Myra. In parts of northern Europe, particularly the Low Countries and some German-speaking areas, St. Nicholas Day has remained a time when children are given special cookies, candies, and gifts. In many places, children leave letters for St. Nicholas and carrots or grass for his donkey or horse. In the morning, they find small presents

under their pillows or in the shoes, stockings, or plates they have set out for him. Oranges and chocolate coins are common treats that represent St. Nicholas's legendary rescue of three impoverished girls by paying their marriage dowries with gold. Candy canes, which have the shape of a bishop's crozier, are also given.

It is thought that over the centuries the legendary St. Nicholas was merged with similar cultural and religious figures. Significant among these were the pagan Knecht Ruprecht and the Roman figure of Befana, as well as the Christ Child (Christkind, or Kris Kringle). A number of countries have traditions in which a malevolent character accompanies St. Nicholas. In France, Père Fouettard, who legend holds tried to cook three boys in a barrel of brine, is said to whip naughty children or give them coal. In Germany, Knecht Ruprecht serves as St. Nicholas's servant and gives children who do not know their prayers sticks, stones, or coal. The terrifying devil-like Krampus is common in many central European counties and carries chains, bells, and sometimes a large basket with which to threaten naughty children.

CHRISTMAS IN MALTA

Since a white Christmas is unlikely to be on the cards as it doesn't exactly snow in Malta like in Northern countries, there's still plenty to get you in the holiday mood while you're here. In fact, as the days get a bit colder and we start wearing our jackets indoors, us islanders start preparing for the festive season in our own unique way. Here are the past and present Maltese Christmas traditions for how we celebrate the most wonderful time of the year.



THE BRIGHT STREET LIGHTS

Christmas in the City' has become a yearly event on Malta's cultural calendar, especially for the scores of people who pass through Valletta daily. The lights usually go on in a press conference around a month before Christmas, marking the start of the festive season. A long-standing tradition on the island. The prominent Republic Street and Merchants Street tend to be the most ornate and feature the iconic Christmas tree – made entirely of Mdina glass baubles. This begins a roll-on effect on the rest of the Archipelago as it comes to life with blinking lights hanging about six metres above all streets. The result is

a warm, bright atmosphere as far as the eye can see.

NATIVITY CRIBS One of the oldest Maltese Christmas traditions, dated back to 1607, is the nativity crib (*Presepju*), found in homes and around the island. Clay statues (*pasturi*) represent The Holy Family, three priests, shepherds, sheep and villagers. For five weeks up to Christmas, we grow a white, stringy plant called *Ġulbiena* (vetches) by watering and hiding seeds in the dark. This can replicate hay in cribs or decorate altars and windowsills.

The "Wirja ta' Preseppi" is a display of nativity cribs of all sizes for guests to enjoy. Now it's even become a live attraction with real people and animals walking about. The most famous being in Ghajnsielem, Gozo, with around 100 actors participating every year.

MIDNIGHT MASS AND THE CHILD'S SERMON

This Catholic tradition occurs every year during the night of December 24th. This celebration is special because the sermon isn't given by the priest. Instead, a child between the ages of 7 and 10 tells the Nativity story from the altar.

The first boy to deliver the 'Sermon of the Child' (*Priedka tat-Tifel*) was George Sapiano from Luqa in 1883. Today, the sermon is still a proud moment for the chosen boy or girl child and their family. After

the mass, it's custom for families to indulge in snacks and mulled wine before exchanging greetings and heading home.

TRADITIONAL, FESTIVE FOOD Food is a vital part of any Maltese celebration. The whole extended family will typically join for Christmas Day Lunch, which may last half the day. Most of the customary food and drink, particularly the desserts, are of British influence from when Malta was a colony.

There are Mince pies, filled with mincemeat – which surprisingly is not meat at all, but a mix of dried fruit and spices. The Christmas cake is also a festive dried fruit mix with brandy and orange. We have Christmas log, and the “*Imbuljuta tal-Qastan*” – a Maltese hot chocolate and chestnut drink served throughout the holidays. Meanwhile, from our Italian neighbours, we've now gladly adopted the Panettone.

MALTESE HOUSE DECORATIONS Maltese houses at Christmas time tend to be a hive of decorations from twinkling lights that may well be seen from space, to tinsel and Father Christmas. Cribs and an oversized baby Jesus pop up in the homes of the older generation. Residents drape their balconies with twinkling rope lights, and you're bound to see a mini Father Christmas hanging off one.

Restaurants, stores and hotels will join in the Christmas spirit with their own decor and lighting, plus some special Christmas items or offers. High-rise buildings, particularly in the Sliema and St. Julian's area now also blanket their facades with rope lights, making them look magical.

CHRISTMAS FOR KIDS After Midnight Mass, several towns organise processions where children carry a baby Jesus statue while singing Maltese Carols. “*Ninni La Tibkix Izjed*” (Sleep and cry no more) is one of the more famous ones. This sweet tradition dates back to 1921, the first procession in the village of Hamrun, set up by Saint George Preca.

In schools, students and teachers participate in Christmas pantomimes, carol singing, plays, and crib competitions – and parents are even invited to watch. Each class also typically has a Christmas party, where they put up decorations and bring food to share.

Malta's Unique Christmas Spirit

Malta also shares many international Christmas customs like carols, trees, shopping and gifts. However, there are still some Maltese Christmas traditions, passed down from generations, that make the holidays here extra special. We encourage you to soak up the magical atmosphere at this time of year and have yourself a merry Christmas.

The Editor, Staff and Readers of the Journal for Maltese Living Abroad would like to thank the Multicultural Aged Care MAC of South Australia for providing the Maltese Senior Citizens of South Australia with assistance and printing the journal and distributing it every week. F. Scicluna



Multicultural
Aged Care

The Centre for Excellence
in Cultural Diversity
and Inclusion

MAC

For happier clients
with a better quality of life

*Thank
You*



**Award
'Gieħ il-Qala'**

CHAMPION OF THE MALTESE LIVING ABROAD

DR. RAYMOND XERRI

- Former Consul General of the Republic of Malta to the Commonwealth of Canada
- Former Director - Maltese Living Abroad at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Former First Counsellor at Ministry of Education
- Former Counsellor and Consul-General at Malta High Commission, London, U.K.
- Former Deputy High Commissioner and Consul General of Malta to Australia, New Zealand and The Philippines,

Chev. Dr. Raymond C. Xerri was honored with the bestowment of the highest honor for the village of il-Qala where he resides. In a ceremony attended by many Gozitan-Americans and Gozitan-Canadians at the Anton Buttigieg Hall at the E.T. Dr Anton Buttigieg Primary School in il-Qala bestowed Premju Ġieħ il-Qala 2024 on Dr Xerri for his longstanding service to il-Qala, Gozo, Malta, Europe and around the world especially amongst the 790,000 Diaspora from il-Qalin, Gozo and Malta, mostly found in Australia, Canada, France, the United States and the United Kingdom. The video on his life and works can be found on his Facebook page. This award followed a previous award bestowed on Dr Xerri by the Gozo Rotary Club – Pride of Gozo Award for Community Service 2024 at Queen Mary University (Gozo Campus) last February. Chev. Dr. Raymond C. Xerri served in Canberra, Australia between 1995 and 1998.

Raymond's Brief Biography

Dr Xerri is the son of a Gozitan migrant family in the United States where he was born. In 1991, Raymond returned to Malta where he obtained dual American – Maltese citizenship.

He has addressed, chaired and mentored many local, national, continental, regional and international conferences, seminars and gatherings related to politics, diplomacy, international relations, the environment and particularly in the area of diaspora studies.

Dr Xerri is an author, editor and producer of numerous publications, multimedia and multilingual productions. He is also a founder, co-founder and active member of several Gozitan, Maltese and internationally based Maltese diaspora organisations.

Dr Xerri was the main organiser of twenty-eight editions of the Gozo International Celebration in Gozo (Malta) with attendance and audience from 51 different countries.

He has received numerous international awards and is the initiator and editor of the production series, Gozo and the Gozitans.

**THE EDITOR, STAFF AND READERS OF THE MALTESE JOURNAL CONGRAUTALE
DR. RAYMOND XERRI FOR THIS PRESTIGIOUS AWARD**



GOZITAN MICHAEL BAJADA NAMED AS NATIONAL WORKER OF THE YEAR 2024

Gozitan Michael Bajada has been named as the National Worker of the Year 2024, during a ceremony which recognised the most outstanding workers who have left an extraordinary impact in the field of work.

The awards were divided into ten categories and the winners were announced by Parliamentary Secretary Andy Ellul.

He explained that although this evening is called the National Worker of the Year Award, the recognitions that were given are both on an individual and team basis.

Michael Bajada, who is from Gharb, has worked in the social sector for 35 years. Michael started as a care worker and then became Assistant Head of the Santa Marta Day Centre in Victoria, Gozo.

Over the last 12 years he has been the Head of the same centre, which is a day centre for persons with disabilities.

The full list of winners are as follows:

Michael Bajada – Santa Marta Day Centre – Overall Winner: Worker of the Year 2024

Christabelle D'Amato – Special Olympics Malta – Manager of the Year

Dr Josianne Cutajar – OHSa -Leader of the Year

FSWS ACTS – Therapeutic Services- Team of the Year

Dipartiment tal-Protezzjoni Civili – Control Room Shift B – Most Inclusive Organisation

Christabelle D'Amato – Baxter Ltd – Most Work-Life Balance Organisation

Lottoland – Most Socially Responsible Company

Eman Pulis – Sigma – Best Entrepreneur

Muriel Grech – MG Projects Ltd – Most Inspiring Young Leader

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca -Lifetime Achievement Award. *Photo: DOI/Clifton Fenech*



MESSAĠĠ MILL-KONSLU ĠENERALI TAL-VICTORIA DR GIOCONDA SCHEMBRI



Insellem lill-qarrejja kollha tal-Maltese Journal u nixtieq nringrazzja lis-Sur Frank Scicluna ta' din l-opportunità biex niktbilkom dawn il-kelmtajn għal-okkażjoni ta' dawn il-festi sbieħ tal-Milied. Kif jgħid il-Malti, iż-żmien ma jistenna lil hadd u reġa' wasal Milied ieħor. Żgur li dan iż-żmien iġibilna nostalġija kbira dwar id-drawwiet sbieħ Maltin : il-presepju, it-tiżjin tal-Milied, il-purċissjoni tal-Bambin, il-Quddiesa ta' nofs il-lejl, kif ukoll il-priedka tat-tifel. Għandna nagħmlu kull sforz sabiex inġeddu dawn id-drawwiet tagħna u ngħadduhom lil ta' warajna sabiex ikomplu dawn it-tradizzjonijiet. Dan hu dak li jagħmilna Maltin u jiddistingwina minn popli oħrajn f'soċjeta' multikulturali bħal dik ta' l-Awstralja. Lit-tfal u ż-żgħażaġh tagħna għandna inrabbuhom f'dawn it-tradizzjonijiet biex huma wkoll ikomplu jhaddnu u jiċcelebraw dawn id-drawwiet warajna. Nawgura l-Milied it-tajjeb u s-sena l-ġdida mimlija riżq u saħħa lilkom ilkoll u lill-familji tagħkom u j'Alla li l-għaqda u l-ispiritu ta' paċi li jirrenjaw f'dawn iż-żminijiet ikomplu jkunu magħna tul is-sena kollha.

SINCE 2013, MALTA HAS GRANTED CITIZENSHIP TO 28,045 INDIVIDUALS, SURPASSING THE POPULATION OF BIRKIRKARA, WHICH STOOD AT 25,807 IN THE 2023 CENSUS.



A total of 28,045 people acquired Maltese citizenship between 2013 and 2024.

Home Affairs Minister Byron Camilleri divulged the details in response to a parliamentary question filed by PN MP Chris Said, asking how many people have been granted Maltese citizenship between 2013 to 2024, year by year. Said also asked for the country of origin of these individuals.

There are three ways in which an individual can acquire citizenship; through descent, through naturalisation, and by buying it, after the Malta Individual Investor Programme (MIIP) was launched in 2014, after an amendment to the Citizenship Act. Camilleri's reply did not discern which of the three ways the individuals acquired citizenship. In 2024, so far, 2,795 individuals acquired Maltese citizenship, 143 individuals more than in 2023 (2,652 individuals).

The highest number of people who acquired Maltese citizenship over the past 11 years was 3,610 in 2018, followed by 3,186 in 2017. A major spike could be noted between the years of 2014 and 2015 (902 and 949 individuals acquiring citizenship respectively) and 2016, where there was a sudden increase, to 2,125 people who acquired citizenship.

There was also another increase of more than 1,000 individuals between 2016 and 2017, as the number increased to 3,186 people acquiring citizenship in 2017.

The data did not specify whether citizenship was acquired through descent, naturalisation, or Malta's controversial Individual Investor Programme (IIP), which was replaced with a new scheme in 2020.

The IIP, which allowed individuals to buy Maltese citizenship, was replaced in 2020 following local and international condemnation. While it brought significant revenue to the government, it faced accusations of being a straightforward sale of EU passports with minimal residency requirements.

Under the new programme, capped at 1,500 applications, applicants must reside in Malta for at least one year and invest €750,000 to be eligible for citizenship. The scheme imposes stricter property purchase requirements (€700,000 minimum) and mandates a €10,000 donation to charity.

Despite reforms, the government continues to publish the names of successful applicants alongside those acquiring citizenship through marriage or naturalisation, without distinguishing between categories.



STAĞUNI RESTAURANT 457 SEPPELTSFIELD ROAD, MARANANGA SOUTH AUSTRALIA OPENING

As of the 6th December, 2024, staguni restaurant will be licensed in the supply and sale of alcohol, allowing us to transition into our intended

dining format and offerings.

This will be a gradual transition over the next several weeks, which will include a set menu Thursday dinner service on the 12th and 19th of December, and our Barrio (meaning “neighbourhood”) small plates menu all other services until the first week of January. This will include additional dinner services on the Friday and Saturday before Christmas. Detailed service times will be posted to our socials in the coming days.

As of January 9th, staguni will have transitioned into its intended format:

- Thursday: dinner from 6pm, three/four course set menu
- Friday to Monday: lunch from 11:30am in the dining room, consisting of an a la carte menu, with the option of a set menu/feed me option

Additionally, Friday to Monday will also include drinks and our Barrio menu (consisting of 3-4 snacks) exclusively on the verandah from 3-6pm

This menu design, beverage offering and format is designed to facilitate the sense of place of the restaurant, as well as it's foundational ethos; authenticity, creativity, and community. Showcasing hyper local and South Australian produce, the menu is relevant, seasonal and considered.

The beverage program, headed by Christopher Stagg, encompasses a concise, yet dynamic wine list, with the intention of its changing nature to accomodate showcasing and supporting wine makers as close as up the road, further a far within South Australia, interstate and internationally - offering a variety of styles. Christopher's extensive experience and knowledge within bars both on the east coast, as well as overseas, will ensure strong and creative nonalcoholic options (as already illustrated over the past several weeks), confident classic cocktails, and innovative signature cocktails.

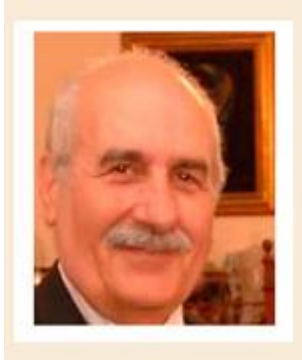
staguni is the first opened venue of the revitalised Marananga School Precinct in Marananga, Western Barossa Valley. **Clare Falzon is the chef and owner, and has designed the venue around their time spent in Europe and the Middle East, and holds a strong emphasis on their Maltese heritage.** staguni's opening comes off the back of a year in which Falzon spent time away from the traditionalism of a restaurant kitchen. Intent on resting and learning, they traveled Australia, and when working, Falzon sought out opportunities in regional communities, the most influential being their time working under Annie Smithers at Du Fermier in Trentham, VIC, as well as running a small 'restaurant' out of Bellwether cellar door in South Australia's Coonawarra.

Clare Falzon 0431 585 705

clare@staguni.com.au admin@staguni.com.au

THE VOICE OF OUR READERS

My dear friend Frank. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to express some thoughts from deep inside me and which may perhaps serve to assist others reading the Maltese Journal, to do some parallel thinking.



The end of year is usually the perfect time to pause and reflect on everything that may have happened, from the highs to the lows, writing it all down can help one to understand one's life journey even better. Furthermore, it can be a great way to keep the memories and learn from them too. Some chosen prompts in this short write-up, may help us to get started exploring, what has happened In the year 2024, that is about to go down into the history books. Let's think about the triumphs, the lessons, the quiet and not so quiet joys, and of course the challenges we went through over the past twelve

months! Somebody once said *"You cannot receive something new if your hands are full of the old"*

This applies very well to our own old habits, mind sets, grudges or disappointments. Letting go of these, can open up space

for a better perspective. It should be pertinent to ask ourselves, some delicate and intimate questions like:

What is the most significant way you have grown as a person this year?

1. What was the happiest moment of your year and why did it bring so much joy?
2. Was there a goal you did not manage to achieve ! What held you back and what did you learn from the experience?
3. What role did gratitude play in your life this year?
4. Reflect on a grudge or unresolved conflict. What can you do to let it go!
5. Imagine you are packing a suitcase for the new year. What emotional baggage would you leave behind?
6. What qualities or habits do you want to cultivate in yourself over the next year 2025!
7. What would be the one fear you want to conquer in the coming year ?

And with these thoughts, I end this write up whilst auguring to you Frank and to all readers of The Maltese Journal, a Very Happy Christmas

and a Bright, Prosperous and Healthy New Year 2025. Sincerely

George Stagno Navarra - Malta

The great time of the year is with us again when we reflect upon our luck to be alive and living in beautiful Australia. In particular we Maltese call two countries home, and what a lovely contrast Malta provides. It



is truly amazing how well Malta is fairing. When in the past, many Maltese sought emigration, now little Malta encourages more skilled workers to help her reach higher goals. These settle in Malta from all corners of the world. I recall vividly being served coffee by this tall, blond blue-eyed young woman evidently not Maltese yet speaking perfect Maltese with a slight dialect to boot. My mouth dropped when she told me that she hailed from E-Katerinburg in Siberia! 'Who wants to stay in Siberia when there is

Malta'. What a compliment!

Top economic management is creating many opportunities in Malta and this is where some Australian politicians need to take heed. I visit Malta regularly and stay updated with most things happening there. There are problems mostly associated with rapid growth but I have total confidence with the way the country is being managed.

Christmas comes to me as a time to recharge my biological batteries and as a challenge to avoid so many culinary delights. I hope you do likewise.

Happy Christmas to all the readers of the Maltese Journal. John Farrugia – Adelaide, Australia



PRESIDENT EMERITUS GEORGE VELLA AND NICKI CAMILLERI HONOURED BY HONORIS CAUSA

[Francesco Catania](#)

President Emeritus George Vella together with Alive Foundation founder and Chairperson Nicki Camilleri were honoured with honoris causa Degrees for valuable contributions made to a country on Friday afternoon.

During the ceremony it was stated that the dedication and impact they have had on Maltese society these individuals

have made a significant contribution in their respective fields.

Nicki Camilleri explained that the foundation's research in the medical field and sport is leading to new therapies, treatments and diagnoses in the field of cancer – while increasing and raising funds for research in this field.

Camilleri explained the need to never stop believing that one day or another we live in a world without the devastating cancer disease.

In the meantime, President Emeritus George Vella stressed that his first love remains medicine but it was the policy that opened his doors to him to see him abroad.

Vella insisted that the human being for more resources, riches, economic and political strength is throwing the world as we know it today into more trouble.

He said that man has not learned anything from the past and is leading to a world of inequality.

He stated that there are those who are choked in wealth and waste, and those who are being deprived of human rights.

The ceremony was attended by, among others, The President of Malta Myriam Spiteri Debono as well as the Leader of the Nationalist Party Bernard Grech accompanied by his Lady AnnMarie Grech.

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE:



Dear readers, amid the hustle and bustle of Christmas time it is a pleasure to be able to spread our greetings through Scicluna's Newsletter wherever there are Maltese residents. I would like to extend these greetings together with those for a Happy and peaceful New Year to each and every one receiving and reading this Newsletter and to extend them to your relatives and friends.

Victor V. Vella NSW AUSTRALIA



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Please find attached another Christmas message this time in Maltese. and it is an audial one...so that the readers will be able to listen the language and hopefully get the message too. It is in the form of a poem I've just written....

Greg Magri - Weavers Of The Pacific

FAMILY OF MALTESE DESCENT TRACED ON TINY BOUNTY PACIFIC ISLAND



Where on earth is Norfolk Island?

Greg Magri is one of four siblings born to Maltese emigrant Peter Magri, who



happens to have married a woman who is in fact a descendant of the mutineers of the British warship HMS Bounty. About a third of the Norfolk Islanders are descendants of the Bounty mutineers, who settled there in 1856 after leaving Pitcairn, another island in the southern Pacific Ocean, which was getting over-populated.

The Magri family, now in its fourth generation on Australian territory. Mr Peter Magri was left for Melbourne with his parents when Malta was suffering the aftermath of the Second World War. "It was 1951 and I was a 10-year-old kid," he told me.

He could not speak in Maltese because he said that unfortunately he's forgotten the language, "but I'm very proud to be Maltese, I've been back (to Malta) twice and I hope to visit again sometime," he enthused. Maltese tourists always want to visit "Sliema" – Mr Magri's home on Norfolk Island.

He explains that the tightly-knit community of the island has a cultural group where various countries are represented by the emigrants. During activities of the group, Mr Magri proudly carries his little Maltese flag, together with another islander having Maltese connections.

Although a few other residents on the island have links with Malta, with surnames like Borg and Scerri, Mr Magri told me that his is the only family on Norfolk Island which has direct Maltese ancestry. All of his four children and six grandchildren also live on the island, although they were born in Melbourne for medical reasons.

Following his marriage to Patricia, whom he met on the island while on holiday, Mr Magri lived in Melbourne for about five years, but has permanently resided on the south Pacific island for the past 34 years. Jenny, his second wife, has been working as a medical doctor on Norfolk Island for 30 years.

Greg started weaving at age 14 when he made his first hat and fell in love with weaving.

Since then, he has represented Norfolk at 5 festivals of pacific art, and displayed this work at 10 museums throughout pacific regions. He additionally has work displayed at West Minister Abby and the British Museum Hawaii. He has worked in all national museums in Australia. Made hats for two governor generals in Australia, Caroline Kennedy. Jeffrey Robinson. Kevin Welsh.

In order to pass down his gift of weaving, Greg has been teaching for years with no cost association. At the moment he is teaching 2-3 people a week. He only has one rule to outsider that they have to acknowledge the Norfolk heritage and culture of weaving and not claim it as their own. The longest Mags has been off Norfolk is 12 months in 55 years. He has seen a lot of the world including but not limited to all the south pacific islands, America, Switzerland, Rome but always comes home so nowhere else compares.

Best thing about Norfolk is the culture, said Grey is that he isn't afraid were ever going to lose it. When first came to Norfolk they bought 26 different styles of weaving. Today we have 22. If you wish to look at his work please visit his website, [Greg Margi.com](http://GregMargi.com)

MALTESE AUSTRALIAN BILLIONAIRE – ADRIAN PORTELLI

'Least we can do': Billionaire wowed by crowd at \$150,000 groceries giveaway in Sydney

By Adam Vidler



Billionaire Adrian Portelli showed up to greet a packed crowd this morning at the start of his promised giveaway of \$150,000 worth of groceries in Sydney.

Portelli, a promotions guru and property investor, earlier announced the giveaway at supermarkets in Penrith and Fairfield West today.

The first giveaway began at 9.30am at the Coles connected to Nepean Village on

Reserve Street, Penrith. Billionaire Adrian Portelli. (9News)

A massive crowd gathered before the giveaway began, with some people having lined up from 4am. Police and extra security were also present for the event, which was only announced yesterday. Portelli said the crowd was "incredible" and showed how much support was needed in the community.

"We don't contact the media, we just come out here," he said.

A big crowd lines up for Portelli's promised \$150,000 groceries giveaway in western Sydney. (9News)

"We've been doing this for a long time. We've done it in multiple states, so it's the least we can do if we can get out there and share."

The action will later shift to the Coles on Hamilton Road at Fairfield West at noon.

Thousands of people are expected to line up again, particularly with the cost of living crisis pushing people closer to a Christmas crunch.

Surprising state where households fork out most for electricity

Extra security is expected to be on hand at both sites to contain the crowds.

NSW Police said in a brief statement they were "aware of an upcoming event and will monitor".

Portelli, the founder of auto enthusiast club LMCT+, made waves earlier this year when he purchased all five homes on offer at *The Block* 2024 auction day.



Adrian Portelli: Gozitan-Australian Millionaire Adrian Portelli: The 7th Richest Young Man in Australia

Adrian 'Mr Lambo' Portelli **shocked viewers on Sunday night when he purchased all five Phillip Island properties on The Block** for a staggering \$15.03million.

The enormous spending spree broke series records, being the first time a single buyer has successfully bid on all the auction properties on offer.

The 35-year-old entrepreneur had earlier posted on social media he would be 'going out with a bang' and stunned the cast when he snapped up all their homes.

Portelli has developed a reputation for his love of buying lavish properties during the show's auctions, after making his fortune through his giveaway business LMCT+.

Combined with his property investing, the Melbourne businessman now has an estimated net worth of a whopping \$1.03billion. Despite his audacious taste, Portelli came from humble

beginnings, dropping out of university to work at his father's truck repair business before moving to [Los Angeles](#) to launch a limousine service for celebrities.

While struggling to pay rent, Portelli found a roommate who helped him develop several successful apps, which he later sold for enormous profits. Portelli has recently become best-known for his luxury collection of sports cars, to go with his multi-million dollar properties and other very rare items.



Adrian 'Mr Lambo' Portelli (pictured) shocked viewers on Sunday night when he purchased all five Phillip Island properties on The Block for a staggering \$15.03million

The successful businessman, who hails from Melbourne's western suburbs, boasts luxury homes all around Australia, and he added a jaw-dropping [Melbourne](#) penthouse to his property portfolio last year. The March 2023 sale broke a record for the city's most expensive apartment after Adrian paid an eye-watering \$39million for the pad.

He reportedly spent another \$6million on modifying and customising the 1200sqm sky home - including craning in his \$3m McLaren Senna GTR as an 'art piece'.

The enormous spending spree broke series records, being the first time a single buyer has successfully bid on all the auction properties

'I'm always humble because where I got to wasn't easy,' Portelli told the AFR when he was named on the Young Rich List. 'Every day, I'd just wake up with the thought of being successful. I was just consumed by it. I was just a bit of a loner and used to motivate myself and just keep pushing.' Portelli has made much of his fortune through promotions company LMCT+, a private lottery business which uses a legal loophole to offer prizes including homes, cars and cash.

He is widely known for his aggressive bidding on The Block, where he hunts houses renovated on the Nine Network reality program to give away to LMCT+'s 100,000 monthly subscribers.

Mr Portelli came to public attention in 2022 by roaring up to an auction day for The Block in a bright yellow Lamborghini.

Last year he had the opportunity to visit Malta and Gozo, reconnecting with his Gozitan heritage and meeting family members he hadn't seen in years. This journey underscores the importance of staying connected to one's roots and heritage, no matter how far success may take you.

'We still love you': Billionaire Adrian Portelli hits back after charges

Billionaire Adrian Portelli will face a South Australian court after being charged with running an unlawful lottery.

Billionaire Adrian Portelli has been charged by South Australian authorities, accused of running an unlawful lottery.

Portelli is facing nine counts of conducting/assisting in the conduct of an unlawful lottery, and his company LMCT+ is facing 10 counts of the same charge.

The alleged offences are said to have occurred between January 29 last year and May 16 this year.

Portelli made [headlines earlier this week after giving away \\$150,000 worth of groceries in Sydney](#).

A massive crowd gathered before the giveaway began, with some people having lined up from 4am in Penrith and Fairfield West. The billionaire bidder first made a name for himself as *Block* royalty after splashing \$16.65 million on four *Block* homes in 2022 and 2023. Portelli is due to face court on January 15, 2025



MALTESE SENIOR CITIZENS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED

49 LeHunt Street Kilburn south Australia 5084

P.O. Box, Kilburn South Australia 5084

Hello, my name is Godwin Gauci.

I am the president of the Maltese Senior Citizens Association of SA you might have seen me and the committee on an earlier issue of the Maltese e-Newsletter. It is almost the end of the year and at this time we celebrate the birth of Jesus. So on that note and on behalf of the committee and members of the association it gives me great pleasure to wish you all and your families and friends a joyful and blessed Christmas Season.

Happy
Christmas



Il-Milied
it-Tajjeb

THE MALTESE COMMUNITY IN NEW YORK CITY

Christmas
Saturday, Dec. 21st 5:30 pm
Family Party
Holiday Display
Kids Arts & Crafts [pizza served]
SANTA VISIT
[parents bring a wrapped labeled gifts]
7pm Tree Lighting
Non Member Kids \$10
RSVP by Dec. 16th

www.themaltesecenter.com

THE MALTESE CENTER
NEW YEAR'S EVE
2025 Party
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31st
8:00 pm
Adults \$95
Children Ages 9 to 15 \$25 | Under 8 Free
Cash Bar *funds allocated to operating budget

RSVP by Dec.26 | Limited Seating | By Reservation Only
Tickets Online www.themaltesecenter.com or 917-807-2874
Ivarone Catering | Music by DJ Chuck | Raffle



I sincerely thank all those who sent a donation

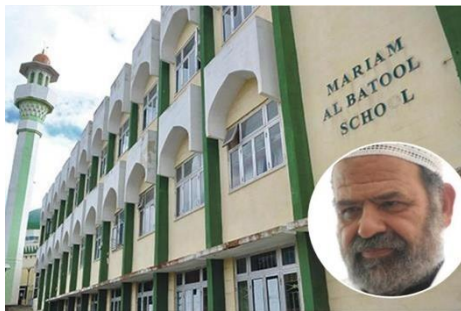
WE NEED HELP TO CONTINUE PRODUCING THE MALTESE JOURNAL



My bank details are Bank Commonwealth (Australia)

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Name - Frank Scicluna



IMAM HITS OUT AT SCHOOL BOMB THREATS - NO KNOWN ENTITY CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY

Muslim school also received 'wicked' threat [Times of Malta](#)

Imam Mohammad Elsadi has hit out at the bomb threat received by schools in Malta on Monday.

The email bomb threat made on Monday to many schools in Malta was "nonsense, absurd and mysterious", the Imam of the

Muslim community in Malta said on Tuesday. [The threat](#) that a bomb had been hidden in a school building came in a message calling for an Islamic caliphate to be established in Malta.

"In my opinion, the threatening statement emailed to many schools in Malta yesterday is nonsense, absurd and mysterious," Mohammad Elsadi said in a statement, adding that its content indicated the ignorance and silliness of its author. He said no known entity had claimed responsibility for it. The emailed statement, he said, served no cause. It was an irresponsible and heinous act that targeted innocent children who went to schools to enjoy a peaceful environment and learn the culture of peace.

It was also an infringement of the children's rights to education, safety and security.

"I have the feeling that this unfortunate statement was issued by a criminal third party who played into extremist hands, aiming at creating enmity and hatred among the followers of faiths," he said, pointing out that the Islamic Mariam Albatool School had received the same threat and the same statement.

Malta, he said, had not been targeted by terrorism from any external or internal entity because it enjoyed very good relations with the Muslim countries, it always supported the just causes of the Islamic and Arab countries, it never restricted the religious freedom of the Muslim community and the Muslim community was trying its best to integrate, serve the interests of the country and contribute to its welfare.

He said the Muslim community in Malta strongly condemned Monday's threat and its "wicked provocative statement" and would keep fighting against extremism, fanaticism and terrorism by spreading and teaching the culture of peaceful existence, tolerance, respect of the law, respect for diversity and loyalty to the country.



Visualizing Christmas: The Nativity Cribbs of Malta and Gozo

Around the world, one of the ways Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ is by placing a Nativity scene in their homes or front yards. Whether in Germany, Australia, Canada, Peru, or

Spain, Nativity scenes depict the Holy Family, the shepherds and sheep, the wise men and camels, and the angels and the star. The people of Malta, a nation of islands in the Mediterranean Sea, have developed distinct traditions to celebrate Christmas. Among the most beautiful is building Nativity “crib” scenes with all the traditional figures—and a few others to help tell the meaning of the story. The history of Nativity crib building traces back to the thirteenth century, when St. Francis of Assisi staged a “live” Nativity scene, complete with animals, at Greccio in central Italy. He based this on the manger scene he saw during a pilgrimage to Bethlehem in the Holy Land. Over the next centuries, the building of cribs with movable figures spread to Poland, Spain, Germany, and throughout Europe in homes, churches, and village markets. On the islands of Malta and Gozo, nativities were first introduced in the early 1600s, with the oldest surviving crib dating to 1670. In the centuries since, building Nativity cribs has become not only an art form—it’s become competitive!

Modern competitive crib-building in Malta began in the 1950s. A Christian organization in Malta (called M.U.S.E.U.M.) first distributed small Nativity kits to every child. As a result, more than 20,000 children would learn the Christmas story and assemble and decorate a Nativity crib or a bambino, a small statue of the infant Jesus on a papier-mâché rock. Just before Christmas, each town would hold a novena, a gathering for singing, prayer, and Scripture reading in the nine days leading up to Christmas. During this festive event, the children’s cribs and bambini would be awarded prizes. Over the years, the interest and skills fostered by these activities led to the formation of local clubs dedicated to building cribs and the organizing of contests to award prizes and recognize the best examples.

Museum of the Bible is hosting an exhibition of the winning cribs from a contest sponsored by the nation’s Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts, and Local Government. These cribs, each approximately four feet square, are beautiful examples of this tradition. You can view images of these cribs and watch video of the artists explaining their work on the museum’s website—they truly must be seen to be appreciated.

Some are set among traditional buildings and scenery in Malta and Gozo, including stone pillars topped by crosses (which dot Malta and Gozo), plants and fish native to the islands, and depictions of religious statues and sculptures found in the villages. One crib is set in a house that was partially demolished during the horrific, sustained bombing the islands suffered during the Second World War. While it may seem out of place to see the Holy Family, shepherds, and angels among the buildings and scenes of Malta, these cribs are visual reminders of the Bible’s description of Jesus as the Son of God, the “word who became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory” (John 1:14).

The Holy Family, set among Maltese scenes of daily life, a reminder of Jesus dwelling among us.

Unique to Maltese cribs are the figurines, called *pasturi*. Over the centuries, special significance has been attached to individual figures to help tell the Christmas story. For example, a “sleeping boy” symbolizes people who do not understand the significance of the birth of the Savior.

A “kneeling shepherd” symbolizes the worship and devotion that should be given to the Christ. Other figurines depict people whom Jesus came to help. Unique to the Maltese crib tradition, a dove is sometimes present, symbolizing the Holy Spirit. And, camels, which are commonly associated with the magi, are not found in Maltese cribs—but cattle, donkeys, and sheep are always there. Musicians are almost always depicted, too, symbolizing the joy and celebration of Jesus’s birth. The quality of the *pasturi* is a major element in judging the winning crib in competitions.

Figure 10: Musicians symbolize the celebration of Jesus's birth; in the background a woman walks wearing a traditional *ghonella*. Pasturi by Jesmond Micallef in the crib by Adrian Gatt.

Figure 11: Musicians in the crib by Ramond Deguara.



The winning crib in the Museum of the Bible exhibition was created by Adrian Gatt and Raymond Zammit, with the *pasturi* by Jesmond Micallef. This Nativity is set in a Maltese house partly demolished during the Second World War. Around the scene, musicians play traditional Maltese instruments, while a woman in traditional dress (*ghonella*) walks with her daughter. You can see this crib and hear Mr. Gatt describe its features in the video below. This crib is now a part of the permanent collection at Museum of the Bible, to be enjoyed by our guests.

The Malta and Gozitan Nativity cribs are on display until

February 2. **By Dr. Jeff Kloha, Chief Curatorial Officer**

(Imbuljuta tal-Qastan)

HOT CHOCOLATE DRINK WITH CHESTNUTS

Imbuljuta is the traditional Maltese drink served after Midnight Mass on Christmas and New Year's Eve. It is the perfect recipe for those special nights where you want something hot, spicy and deliciously seasonal. This drink has that wonderful Christmassy smell to it, with the cloves, cinnamon and chocolate and orange and tangerine rinds as ingredients. Generally it is served in mugs or small bowls and always piping hot.

Ingredients

400g dried chestnuts
175g sugar
50g drinking chocolate
50g dark chocolate chopped in large pieces
grated rind of 1 orange
1 tangerine peel finely chopped
mixed spice
ground cloves

Method

1. Wash chestnuts a couple of times always changing the water after every wash. Place the chestnuts in a large bowl, cover with water again and allow them to soak overnight.
2. The next day first take off any remaining peel then put all the chestnuts and the water into a large saucepan. Add all the other ingredients.
3. Put on a moderate heat till it starts boiling.
4. Reduce the heat and simmer for about 50 minutes or until the chestnuts are tender. If necessary add some boiling water.



**THIS SPACE
COULD BE
YOURS**

**If you have a
story to tell
or a poem or
other
memorabilia
send it to us.**

**BE PART OF
OUR HISTORY**

FOREIGNERS IN MALTA

'They build our homes, they take care and serve us - and yet we treat them badly'

The Commission for Peace and Justice within the Church has launched the report "Beyond GDP II" which focuses on the economic and social contribution of workers in Malta, known as TCNs.

The Church report established that these workers not only contribute to economic sectors in places where Maltese workers do not want to work, but also receive 17% less than the average wage.

From more than 56,000 persons with permission to work in 2023, The Church report shows that 20% of the workers are of foreign origin.

The report established these workers are helping demographic difficulties and shortage of work in the country.

According to the report, workers from India, The Philippines and Nepal are essential in the main sectors of construction, hospitality and support services.

However, the report found that much of the works are of low productive standing and wages payment, responsible for 17% less wages payment.

The President of Kummissjoni Ġustizzja u Paċi (Commission for Justice and Peace) Daniel Darmanin said the report said these workers are contributing through various means to the country's economy. He said that if one reads the report, one basically finds these are supporting the country's economy in all sectors when one goes to a restaurant, to hospital or to tourist administration, and that is every sector of the economy to enable it to continue progressing.

The Church report established these foreign workers are facing many challenges including bureaucratic processing, complicated documentation, secure work conditions, exploitation by those who engage them, very high rents and unacceptable working conditions.

Darmanin said the greatest insecure factor is the stability challenge and many current policies make them feel unstable whether their work ends and finally they have to leave the country.

The report maintains that the actual immigration policy considers these TCNs as an economic resource.



"The Republic of Malta: The First Fifty Years, 1974-2024"

The Republic of Malta: The First Fifty Years, 1974-2024 is an exhibition at the Grand Master's Palace in Valletta, commemorating five decades of the nation's journey as a republic. The exhibition opens for the public on the 7th of December 2024 and runs until March 2025. The exhibition features a rich collection of documents, artefacts, and multimedia displays exploring Malta's struggle for self-determination – outlining the evolution from a people ruled by foreign powers to a res publica, and its achievements

as a sovereign state. The exhibition also underscores the pivotal role of the Presidency in safeguarding democracy and fostering unity. A bilingual, lavishly illustrated book that complements the exhibition will be available for purchase. Entrance to the exhibition is included in the Grand Master's Palace experience, which is fully accessible for persons with mobility challenges. For further information, you may follow Heritage Malta's social media channels, or contact us on: (+356) 2295 4300.

GOZO'S FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS TREAT: 'QAGHAQ TAL-GHASSEL'

It's that time of the year when people cherish the magic of Christmas. And the season would not be the same without the good things to create or buy, including traditional, seasonal produce that spices up the season. Treacle Rings or 'Qaqhaq tal-Ghasel', are among the favourite Christmas fare. The pastry rings, which have a soft filling of black treacle, orange peel, honey and a variety of spices were in olden days known as 'Qaqhaq tal-Qastanija', possibly implying the use of chestnuts.

Here is an authentic recipe:

The Pastry: For the pastry, you will need: 500gr plain flour

200gr unsalted butter

1 tablespoon sugar

1 egg yolk

Some water

Rub the butter into the flour and then

add the sugar and egg yolk. Mix well

and knead, adding water if needed.

Leave the pastry to rest until you're ready

to start preparing the rings.

The Filling:

400gr treacle

200gr caster sugar

2 cups water

150gr semolina

A tablespoon of each of cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves

A tablespoon of orange blossom water

A tablespoon of cocoa powder

Orange and lemon zest and juice

Some anisette liqueur



Take all the ingredients with the exception of the semolina, put them in a pot and slowly bring them to boil. Let the mixture simmer and whilst stirring add the semolina until you have a thick mixture. Let the mixture cool down completely before tackling the rings.

Preparing the Rings: Take the pastry and after rolling it out, cut it out into strips. Keep in mind that the length of the strips will determine the circumference of the rings. Place the filling in the centre of the strips and roll over the pastry to create rope-like shapes. Create rings and then use a knife to make slits at regular intervals. Bake the rings in a moderately hot oven until the rings are looking lightly golden in colour.

Once the rings are baked, you can enjoy them with tea or coffee or even with a glass of wine at dinner. And finally keep in mind that they also make lovely homemade gifts, so why not give them a festive packaging and share them with friends and family!

On the other hand, if you're too rushed to get into the baking mood, or you can't be bothered to source the ingredients then simply visit your favourite bakery or confectionery and bite into the sweetness!

Student Passport Visit Bircirkara Railway Museum

27 December

9.00am-12.00pm

Alternating between
Maltese and English
every hour



On Friday, 27th December 2024, we are inviting curious young explorers who acquired a Visa stamp on their Heritage Malta Student Passport, to step back in time and uncover the magic of Malta's forgotten railway at the Birkirkara Railway Museum!

Participants will embark on a guided tour of Malta's unique railway history, where steam-powered trains once whistled through the island.

Engaging storytelling will transport them to an era of trams and trains, whilst learning how Malta's railway connected Valletta to Mdina and the Three Cities in a time before buses and cars ruled the roads.

Choose your tour: **09:00 (Maltese)**, **10:00 (English)**,

11:00 (Maltese) or **12:00 (English)**. Up to two adults may accompany each student. Ground floor exhibits are wheelchair accessible; however, the first floor is not.

Tickets are FREE, but spots are limited! Secure your place by presenting your Heritage Malta Passport with a valid Visa stamp at any museum or site, or email a clear image of your stamp to: education.heritagemalta@gov.mt.

This December, let's choo-choo back in time and celebrate Malta's railway heritage! Don't miss this unforgettable adventure. Book your spot today!

A man checked into a hotel. There was a computer in his room, so he decided to send a mail to his wife. He accidentally typed the wrong email address, and without realising he sent the mail to a widow who had just returned from her husband's funeral. The widow decided to check her mail, expecting condolence messages from relatives and friends. After reading the first message she fainted. The son rushed into the room, found his mother on the floor and saw the computer screen which read:

To my loving wife, I know you are surprised to hear from me, they have computers here and we are allowed to send mails to loved ones. I've just checked in. How are you and the kids? The place is really nice but I am lonely here. I have made necessary arrangement for your arrival tomorrow. Expecting you darling. I can't wait to see you.



Next Issue

Special
Christmas
Edition

Don't
miss it