



leisurely life in Italy's rolling hills.

"Chrissie and I dreamed of buying a house and renting out a room, we just got a bit carried away, and back in those days it was possible to borrow money from nice Italian bank managers.

"Chrissie first visited the property with her aunt and sat in the rubble – it was very much a ruin – among the blackberries, they looked down the valley and Chrissie said 'this is it'.

"Then she discovered that five minutes down the road there was an amazing golf course and castle, and she realised she wouldn't have too much trouble selling it to me as I had spent my summer evenings as a teenager playing on the Lorne golf course."

While Mr Lang's industry experience dovetailed nicely into his latest venture, he said the transformation from farmhouse to Casa San Gabriel wasn't quite so smooth.

"The Italian bureaucracy is extremely complicated and difficult to negotiate.

"We bought the property in February 2003, married that August and then moved out straight into a builder's finish, no windows, doors or hot water.

"It was the hottest summer in 40 years so the lack of hot water wasn't a problem, but we had a pool but couldn't paint it for fear of the paint blistering in the heat.

"We felt like we had jumped head first into Dante's inferno."

After suffering through months of renovating in extreme heat, the Langs are now proud to have transformed a pile of stones into a property people love to come and relax, unwind and gaze down the valley at amazing views.



AFTER CUTTING HIS TEETH IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY AT THE LORNE HOTEL AND LORNE MILK BAR AS A TEENAGER, MR LANG NOW HOSTS GUESTS FROM ACROSS THE UK, USA, CANADA, SOUTH AFRICA, SCANDINAVIA, NEW ZEALAND, ASIA AND AUSTRALIA.

They now spend their days with their daughters Elisabetta, 9, and Lucia, 7, enjoying the utopian surrounds and showing guests local restaurants, vineyard tours and fresh produce markets.

"It's an amazing place for our children to grow up and they are lucky to meet so many interesting

people from all over the world," Mr Lang said. "I counted a couple of years ago and we had people from more than 30 countries stay during the year.

"I think the best part of living here is the warm evenings when we sit out on the terrace with a glass of wine from the vineyards down the valley and talk with the family about the day.

"It's great to be able to share it with other people and to help make their holidays that little bit more special.

"It's a lovely part of the world, very much like Lorne which we still visit every two years, and I feel very lucky to have lived in both of these beautiful places."

For more information on the Langs' property, visit casasangabriel.com.

