



# The Italian job

David and Chrissie Lang were looking for a challenge when they decided to transform a rundown Italian farmhouse into an accommodation retreat. David tells *Mex Cooper* about the ups and down of living in an Umbrian valley

**W**aves of green hills and mountains roll around the stone terrace of David and Chrissie Lang's Italian farmhouse.

Nestled in the middle of an Umbrian valley, it's far from the flat farmland of Victoria's Western Plains where David grew up on a Cressy sheep farm.

On summer nights the couple sit and gaze at nearby villages and villas, some older than white Australia, dog Cuba at their feet and one-year-old daughter Elisabetta bouncing on a knee.

They often sip a chilled glass of vino bianco (that's white wine to you) and drink in the joy of their Italian adventure.

Despite the photos he e-mails that make you want to sigh and slip into the frame, David says turning a farming property into an accommodation retreat has been a dream with its own nightmares.

"It's lots of hard work, it's not just a romantic thing," the former Geelong College student insists.

"Some parts are lovely, like when you are having a pizza night (the couple host one every Tuesday night for guests) and it is light until 10pm and you are sitting on the terrace thinking how wonderful it is. But other times you are battling away against bureaucracy and there is a lot of work to be done."

David and Chrissie Lang have restored an Italian stone farmhouse and turned three farm buildings into self-contained accommodation cottages.

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