

and she says to Dino, "This is not good. We must speak to the butcher."

We have mashed zucchini and a salad dressed with a red-wine vinegar and oil. The salad has bitter chicory hearts. We finish with strawberries and fresh cream in liqueur and lemon juice. Coffee and cream. We have drunk a South Australian white burgundy throughout the meal and although Lena offers an Italian brandy, Dino says no, and we finish the meal with Johnny Walker scotch.

Mamma Lena is Lena Gustin, but she says, "Call me Mamma Lena. Nobody knows who Lena Gustin is. Everybody knows Mamma Lena."

Lena Gustin has an MBE and is a *cavaliere*, the Italian equivalent to a knight. Dino is a *cavaliere*, too. She is also a member of the Women's Advisory Council and the Ethnic Broadcasting Council. Dino and Lena settled in Bankstown when they arrived in Australia in May 1956, with their two young children, Roberto and Rosalba. Roberto, like Rosalba, is successful in business in Singapore now. Back in Italy, Dino had been a journalist and broadcaster. Lena had worked as a teacher. She is fluent in French and Spanish, as well as her native tongue. Her Italian is what is called pure — accentless, the classic Italian. All the dialects can identify with her.

The story of Mamma Lena is the history of ethnic radio in Sydney. She tells me of her current radio programme. She broadcasts on 2SER-FM between 6 and 7pm on Saturday and Sunday nights, but for many years she was the voice the punters heard on the Italian programme on 2KY from 7.30 to 10pm Monday to Friday.

The Italian programme on 2KY finished on August 28. "I feel it was discrimination," she says bitterly. Dino says 2KY has lost \$250,000 a year in advertising by dropping the programme. A 2KY spokesman said \$200,000. The advertising on the programme was bi-lingual and cost \$75 for a 60-second spot. 2KY was reportedly trying to attract the same advertisers back at \$10 a spot.

Alan Ireland, the assistant station



Mamma Lena in the studio at 2SER-FM.

manager, admitted the loss of revenue. "I'm expected to make it up," he said. "It's going to take a while. No, it wasn't discrimination. We've become the TAB station and we couldn't do the Italian programme and cover the dogs and trots, too. We had to decide to do one thing or the other.

"When Mamma Lena first started, we were covering one or two meetings a night. Now we cover every race the TAB bets on and,

frankly, that's heavy coverage. We think racing is better for the long-term interests of the station. If we get the ratings, we'll get the advertising and the revenue back.

"I've the greatest respect for Mamma Lena, but when 2CH dropped its ethnic programme it went to the top of the ratings."

Mamma Lena started her radio career on 2SM in November 1956. She broadcast community announcements initially and that led to a