

# In Focus – Dante Giacomini

## The African Connection



In 1972, at age three, Dante, of Italian origin but born in Zambia, moved with his family from Italy to Zimbabwe. Then known as Rhodesia, the country offered a better lifestyle. It was here that Dante's running career began. In Harare he ran cross-country every summer term at high school because it was compulsory for all students, but his track times were never good enough to qualify for annual school athletics meetings. In 1984 he ran his first fun run, a 5km race that started just a few hundred

metres from his house. Later he joined Harare Athletics Club and ran with them for the next few years.

The economy in Zimbabwe was getting progressively worse, so when an opportunity presented itself, the family decided to move to Australia. It took 18 months of paperwork, medicals, etc, but they eventually arrived in Melbourne in 1990 and moved to Perth a few months later.

## The Family Connection

Dante and his father, Aldo, M70 and a longstanding MAWA member, have always motivated each other in their running careers. They have competed together in many races, from 5k up to marathon but Dante still hasn't managed to beat his Dad over any distance beyond half marathon.

Dante is engaged to Louise, a Taiwanese girl whom he met in New Zealand, 3 ½ years ago and they have a 9 month old daughter called Julina. Unfortunately Louise and Julina live in Hsin-chu in Taiwan so he has to rely on Skype phone calls several times a week and annual trips to see them. After nearly five years as an aged carer Dante is about to commence a 2 year Masters degree to become a registered nurse. He hopes that the much higher financial rewards will make it possible to bring his family over from Taiwan.

## Racing Connections

An organised athlete, Dante always plans his race programme in December for the following year. He tries to enter all of Perth's 'Big 5' 5km runs (Bridges, Run for Gold, Perth Half-Marathon, Fremantle Half-Marathon and Fremantle Fun Run) each year. As well as the variety this provides, he finds that the very strong fields inspire him to train harder. Another regular race on his calendar is the WAMC's Pancake Run, which he does mainly for the pancakes afterwards **J**. His favourite club runs are the Mattagarup and Racecourse runs.

Although he is happy to tackle the odd sprint on a Thursday night, Dante would probably call himself a distance runner. In the 2009 WA State Championships he surprised himself with a time of 21:01 in the 5000m, his best time for 20 years. He hopes to better that in our 2010 Nationals where he also plans to run the 1500m. The 5000m is his main focus for the future, and he is aiming to break 20:30 by mid-2010 and 20 minutes by October. He also hopes to crack 45 minutes for the 10km next year.

*CO, January 20*