



### Dining Around Sydney Magazine

Best Restaurants of Australia: [www.bestrestaurants.com.au](http://www.bestrestaurants.com.au)

Best Gift Certificates: [www.bestgiftcertificates.com.au](http://www.bestgiftcertificates.com.au)

Best Venues of Australia: [www.bestvenues.com.au](http://www.bestvenues.com.au)

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2 October 2009

## FROM MENUS TO VENUES, IT'S A FAMILY CONCERN AT DE GROOTS

Brainstorming ideas together around the meeting table and sourcing the latest chic venues for clients' weddings, parties and functions is now daily practice for restaurant and hospitality specialist Maureen de Groot and her daughter Yolanda.

As a parent, the chance to spend quality time with your adult children may become tricky, as they become more independent, developing their own careers and setting out to fulfill their own ambitions. So it's not surprising that the day in 2005 when Yolanda de Groot decided to focus her online media industry energies on the family business was a very happy one for her mother, founder and CEO of *de Groots Media*. Since then, this mother-daughter working relationship has been nothing short of a winning formula.

Maureen's first taste of the hospitality industry came in the '70s, when she landed a job at Sydney's Menzies Hotel as Assistant to the Food & Beverage Manager before heading overseas to fulfill sales and marketing roles with the Westin International in Canada and Mandarin Hotel in Hong Kong. She spent a while in Los Angeles and even worked as secretary to Bing Crosby. Ultimately she returned to Australia and set up and ran a corporate travel agency in Sydney for some years, before purchasing Top Ten Dining Magazine in 1995.

In 1997 the Sydney Morning Herald announced they were building a restaurant website and, keen to be the first, Maureen hired a developer to put all the magazine content on her new site *Best Restaurants of Australia*. This was the first time a website had attempted to survey the national dining scene and it became the one of the most popular restaurant portals in Australia. Today, it still remains the leading restaurant information site in this country.

[Best Restaurants](http://www.bestrestaurants.com.au) is so much more than just a restaurant directory, Maureen says, offering detailed information that's constantly kept up-to-date with industry news, restaurant specials and promotions. Maureen has a high visible presence amongst her industry colleagues and enjoys the face-to-face part of the business. "I believe to successfully work with restaurants you have to be involved in what they do and build personal relationships with the interesting and dedicated people who run them," she says.

These days, whilst Maureen describes herself as a far cry from technically savvy and still prefers to concentrate on the "people" side of the business developing relationships, she doesn't underestimate the importance of keeping abreast of the new developments in the cyber world. "Technology is not a strength of mine, but I realise that the way people demand information now has changed remarkably," she says. Maureen laughs as she recalls a recent business meeting where she and Yolanda were surrounded by I.T. experts. "I'd be lost without Yolanda. She understands all the 'Gen Y talk', we work well together and we have a lot of fun at the same time too," admits Maureen.

Yolanda's work experience was largely gained in the advertising and online media industry, which gave her an excellent foundation in the demands of the online era, before moving over to join her mother. "My generation has a deep understanding of customers' online wants and

need for access to instant information. You can't afford to turn your back for a minute. With online media there are so many opportunities out there," she says. In 2006, Yolanda headed up the development of [Best Venues](#), a national website showcasing the best of what Australia has to offer in terms of function and event venues.

The key to her business' continuing success, Maureen says, is that her team today continues to provide the same face-to-face service that they always have since the "pre-internet" days. Good customer service, she says, is one thing that will never go out of fashion.

Maureen and Yolanda's latest initiative is developing mini video clips of restaurants and events for inclusion on their site. "As the future of TV is online we'll be launching a web-video site next year. Not only do we hope to offer our clients a cost effective visual platform to reach a large audience but also to give our viewers a taste of what is on offer before they purchase".

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#### **About de Groots Media**

*de Groots Media* is a leading and long-established supplier of quality restaurant and hospitality information throughout Australia. The company hosts a number of websites including [Best Restaurants](#), [Best Venues](#), [Best Clubs](#) and [Best Gift Certificates](#) all of which complement each other and exchange readership. *de Groots Media* also publishes *Dining Around Sydney*, a complimentary travel magazine delivered to 5-star hotels, concierges and high-end corporations in Sydney.

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