

Spaghetti!

I HAD A FLASHBACK THE OTHER night. We'd been enjoying some chat-time over dinner with our 21-year-old grandson and his lovely young partner. He's a gentle giant, this lad, with a special place in his grandparents' hearts. And later that night I recalled another meal he and I had shared. On his 10th birthday. At *Lone Star* restaurant ...

He ordered a big little steak, as I recall, with fries and tomato sauce – I ordered chicken stuffed with camembert and a side of buffalo chips. And while waiting for the food to arrive, as he sucked his lemonade and noisily crunched his ice-blocks, I gave him an impromptu geography test.

"London is the capital of which country?" I demanded – and he got it right: "England."

"How about Paris?" I tried – "France," he replied, looking smug.

"Well, tell me where's New York?" – "In America," he said with a grin that signalled this was way too easy.

"Okay, smarty-pants," I said. "How about Canberra ... Athens ... Nairobi ... Beijing ...?" And the kid nailed them all, darn it!

But I finally tripped him up on Rome. "What country is Rome the capital of?" I quizzed. And, to my delight, he didn't know.

"It's in the Mediterranean," I clued him.



But he still couldn't make the connection.

"It's where they sing, 'O sole mio!'"

I tried, giving voice to the first few lines. But he'd never heard the stupid song, and other diners were starting to stare.

"It's where spaghetti comes from!"

I offered, my very last concession.

And, sure enough, his eyes lit up. With confidence in his voice and victory written all over his 10-year-old face, he shouted "Supermarket!"

So, forget what you thought you knew, and forget what you've heard before. Because I have it on good authority: Rome is now the capital of Supermarket! And that's the way it will stay ...

JOHN (GRAPEVINE'S FOUNDER) LOVES ALL THINGS ITALIAN ... ESPECIALLY LONG, SLIPPERY SPAGHETTI SMOTHERED IN SPLASHY TOMATO SAUCE ... AND HE CAN SING 'O SOLE MIO' (WELL, THE FIRST FEW LINES) WITH THE BEST OF THIS WORLD'S TENORS.
