



that's amore

Three beautiful places to call home and the love of his life, Chris Harrison has it all, writes **Joeleen Bettini**

It's the end of a marathon interview, the longest I've ever done, and yet it feels I've still so much to learn about this animated, comical and witty Australian ... or is that Italian? It's hard to tell.

Author and freelance journalist Chris Harrison is the epitome of the wayward Aussie traveller. His attire speaks volumes about the metamorphosis he has experienced after some 1460 days in one of the world's most captivating and notoriously fashion-conscious countries. His accent too, shows signs of European exposure.

But it's not these qualities alone that indicate an intrinsic shift in the free-spirited vagabond. It's the gesturing of his hands when he talks – to the extent of drenching his Armani, or was it Gap, jeans with the remnants of his English breakfast.

It's also apparent in his way of thinking and in his approach to life.

For all this, Chris says he has one "intoxicating" woman to thank. A woman with "eyes the colour of Guinness" and "the patience of a saint". A woman he describes as Daniela, with "one I" who hails from the tiny fishing village of Andrano in Italy's south and serves as the heroine in his debut book.

Head Over Heel – Seduced by a Southern Italian – is doing some seducing of its own, sending the Australian literary world into a tailspin since its release.

Though the impact of the many rave reviews is still to be seen, there's one thing that's certain: not since Sarah Turnbull's *Almost French* have I read an account of an Australian living abroad as moving, insightful and side-splittingly hilarious as this from "Cris Arrison ... with an H".

After a weekend spent cackling over linguistic faux pas and shaking my head at the idiosyncrasies of an impossible nation, I have no doubt of the book's worth.

Of course, that doesn't stop me from asking Chris why he thought the story of life in a sun-drenched coastal town in the "heel of Italy's boot" worthy of the five painstaking years it would take to produce.

"I decided that I would write the book one morning at my breakfast table. It was about a

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