

Bernard King

Bernard James King (25 March 1934 – 20 December 2002) was an Australian stage actor, celebrity chef, and television personality.

King was born into a farming family in Maleny, Queensland. He attended a Christian Brothers College in Nudgee, Queensland on a scholarship. After graduation he taught school.

King entered his first talent competition at age eight. He also participated in a World War II fund-raising effort, Smokes for Six Soldiers. While attending college he gained a reputation as a keen student and a powerful debater.

Even though he was working full-time as a teacher after graduation, he found time to participate in amateur theatre productions and variety shows. Part-time work on ABC Radio eventually became sufficient to allow him to give up the teaching post.

His career as a chef began almost accidentally, due to a party he hosted for English actress Vivien Leigh and the Stratford on Avon Theatre Company. The dinner, for 50 people, was at his small apartment in Brisbane. One of the attendees was Maureen Kissell, host of ABC's program *A Woman's World*; she was so impressed that she invited him to present a cooking demonstration on her show in Sydney.

Another party at his residence, attended by Good Morning Australia hostess Del Cartwright, resulted in an invitation to demonstrate his prowess on that program. That soon became a regular part of the program, and then a separate 30-minute program, *King's Kitchen*. He became a judge on the daytime TV talent show *Pot of Gold*, then *Pot Luck*, and *New Faces*. He soon gained a reputation as an ascerbic judge. King took pride in steering the talentless away from show business. He would frequently give a contestant very low scores, such as two out of ten, and would at times simply give them zero.

King pioneered television advertorials, demonstrating the use of sponsor-supplied products. He mounted a cabaret show at Sydney's Roxy Revue Theatre-Restaurant, which ran for 7 years. By 1982 King had become an industry, earning five million dollars from lucrative sponsorship deals, licensing arrangements, a signature range of herbs and spices and wide-ranging media commitments. During the late 1990s he made public appearances in shopping centres, television programs and other public locations to host cooking demonstrations. These appearances were made alongside two well built and scantily clad male assistants dubbed by Kerrie Anne Kennerley as *The Bernardettes* (Craig Bonney and Ian Burn).

King was gay and had many lovers. His biographer, Stephanie Clifford-Smith, says "Fidelity wasn't top of his list". His partner of thirteen years was Alan Marshall. One of his best known platonic friendships was with song and dance man Sammy Davis, Jr. In later years, King struggled with his finances. He mortgaged his house to fund a second season at the troubled Parramatta Riverside Theatres. The season was a flop and the house was lost. King died in the garden of a house where he was living rent-free in exchange for gardening duties, on the Gold Coast, Queensland.

Wikipedia

TRIBUTE

Maleny's cooking icon dies

CELEBRITY chef Bernard King should be remembered for his love of life as much as his sharp sense of humour and cooking prowess, friends said yesterday.

The flamboyant 68-year-old, who was born in Maleny to a dairy farming couple, died on the way to his backyard herb garden on the Gold Coast. He fell from a wall when he apparently suffered a heart attack.

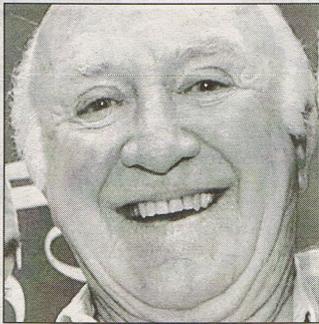
King, a high-profile chef and entertainer, made regular appearances on television and radio programs during a showbiz career starting in the 1960s.

In May this year, the former Maleny State School student had been a special guest at the Sunshine Coast Home Show.

Former Good Morning Australia and Good Morning Melbourne host, 3AK Melbourne talk show personality Annette Allison said King was "like a brother".

"He was closer than a best friend and we looked upon each other as family," Ms Allison said.

Ms Allison said he moved to Mud-



FLAMBOYANT: Bernard King.

geeraba on the Gold Coast from New South Wales about four months ago.

"He had spent the last few weeks with about 12 wheelbarrows of soil and manure creating this fabulous garden and probably overdid it."

King was the Red Simons of his time as a judge on shows such as *New Faces* and *Pot of Gold* where he became known for his frosty glare at contestants.