



Spotlight on the Member: Pasquale Cervera – A Life of Adventure, Escape, and Resilience

In the sun-drenched greens of Plantation's golf courses, where the air hums with the crack of drivers and the camaraderie of the MGA, few stories rival the cinematic saga of Pasquale Cervera. Born on March 6, 1943, on the idyllic island of Ischia—tucked like a jewel beside Capri in the Bay of Naples—Pasquale grew up amid salty breezes and volcanic soils of a place once crowned the world's most beautiful island by *Leisure* magazine. As the youngest of six siblings in a family rooted for generations on the island, young Pasquale embodied the spirited curiosity of his heritage. His surname, Cervera, hints at Spanish lineage from a town north of Barcelona, a nod to the seafaring migrations that shaped his ancestors.

Pasquale's early years followed island life's simple rhythms, shadowed by World War II. His father had survived imprisonment in Libya as a prisoner of war, instilling quiet strength in the family. From his mother, Pasquale learned a timeless lesson: "always respect those older than you"—guidance that would steer him through tempest ahead. By age 14, he worked at a local hotel, building a work ethic beyond his years. But Ischia couldn't hold his adventurous soul. At 16—just two months shy of 17 and despite his parents' protests—he headed to Germany in 1960, passport in hand and dreams ignited. "I needed permission from my parents," he recalls with a wry smile, "but my spirit couldn't wait."

In West Germany's Cold War chill, Pasquale landed a busboy job in a Hilton Hotel's dining room—a symbol of American optimism in a fractured world. Amid clinking silverware and hushed talks, he met shadowy American government contacts from a CIA-backed private group. Their mission: smuggling families and dreamers across the Iron Curtain from East to West Berlin. The Wall had risen months earlier, in August 1961, entombing hopes. Yet Pasquale's quick wit and resolve drew him in; hired immediately, he joined their secret network.

The setup evoked a spy thriller. Posing as laborers, they tunneled under the Spree River—200 feet wide, a gulf of despair—exiting in an Eastern Germany cemetery. Pasquale's days off turned to mercy runs: ushering 70 to 80 souls to freedom, often families with scant belongings. "It was about giving them a shot at life," he says plainly. But danger shadowed them. On November 14, 1961, betrayal hit. A striking East German spy named Marian—infiltrated into their circle—exposed the operation. Pasquale and two friends were caught mid-extraction, prying open a tombstone that led to their tunnel. The Stasi, East Germany's ruthless secret police, descended.

Three years of brutal confinement followed in a Stasi prison. The first eight months dissolved in isolation, a mental crush eroding time and spirit. Prisoners jolted awake at 2 or 3 a.m. to guards' night sticks and looming interrogations—a cruel communist dirge. "I hate the communists still; they were merciless," Pasquale admits, voice firm yet laced with pain. His will endured. Freed to Ischia in 1964, he bore wounds but no defeat, reuniting with a family broken by three years of tormenting silence. No news of his arrest reached them; they assumed the worst—that their bold son had vanished forever behind the Iron Curtain, likely dead. West Germany gave him 5,000 marks; the U.S., a visa forward. But the homecoming's raw relief exploded through Italian media: Pasquale faced intense radio and TV interviews, his defiance gripping the public. His father, long consumed by sorrow and certain of the loss, brimmed with fierce pride at his son's unyielding spirit—a survivor risen from oblivion. On June 24, 1965, Pasquale arrived in America, poised to rebuild.

New York City's vigor embraced him. As a waiter in an Italian restaurant, he labored 11 years, ascending to manager on grit alone. In 1979, ambition bloomed: he launched his first spot in Manhattan, infusing skyscraper bustle with Ischian authenticity. Triumph cascaded—one eatery in the city, five across Long Island—crowning him a restaurateur powerhouse. Romance sparked too: In 1968's disco whirl, he met Bruna amid Manhattan's lights and beats. After a year's wooing, they wed, nesting in Astoria with family aspirations and they were blessed with two cherished daughters. Bruna, his steadfast partner, skips the links—freeing Pasquale to unleash his drive in bocce and MGA rounds.

Now, amid Plantation's and Bridgetown's warm communities—relishing trips and daughter-raised joys with Bruna—Pasquale shares earned insight. "Listen," he counsels. "Think carefully before you act. Life brims with errors, but mine? An exciting adventure." Sole remorse: the pain inflicted on his kin, who weathered the void and dread. Yet his father's pride sustains, echoing the saga of the Italian youth who outwitted the Wall.

Pasquale Cervera's odyssey—from Ischia's blue bays to Berlin's hidden passages, New York's kitchens, and Plantation's turf—celebrates his soul's drive for liberty and freedom. In the MGA, he's no mere player; he's a legend incarnate, proving the best shots arise from deepest roughs.



Pasquale and his wife Bruna on their Honeymoon