



Cyprian Ndlovu is host of Club 808 and The Jump.

Mastering the art of never giving up

By Munya Vomo

IF YOU look at successful people from all walks of life you'll find they rarely had it easy growing up. Somewhere in their quest to be great they encountered huge obstacles along the way.

For example, legendary basketball player Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team – they didn't think he measured up, and he proved them wrong. Then there's JK Rowling. Many publishing houses rejected her *Harry Potter* books, but look where she is now.

Local TV show host Cyprian Ndlovu belongs to this club of people, folk so passionate about their work they don't let failure stand in their way.

After coming second to Sandile Ntshingila in the last MTV Base VJ Search, Ndlovu didn't hang his head in shame. Instead, he went on to hustle his way into hosting TV programmes.

Vuzu Entertainment was the first to hire him and then he was roped in by e.tv's big music show, *Club 808*, which he hosts with Boity Thulo.

A gym rat, Ndlovu also claimed the attention of the health chain Planet Fitness, for which he is now an ambassador. This is just a small glimpse of the young man's accomplishments.

Tell us about your journey into the arts world. My journey in the arts has not been an easy one. I dealt with a lot of rejection when I was trying to get into the industry. These challenges have made the journey worth it, nonetheless.

When MTV VJ Search didn't work out for you, were you discouraged from continuing? I think my parents were more discouraged than I was. The drive back to Durban afterwards

wasn't a merry one. I was the one telling them that: "Yo, a missed opportunity is a chance to get ready for the next better thing." As crushed as I was not to win, I was always optimistic.

How did the Vuzu TV gig come about? How did it change your life?

A producer from the show contacted me shortly after the VJ search, asked me to come to the studios and do a screen test. I did the screen test and waited for a response from the channel to give the go-ahead and the rest, as they say, is history.

Club 808 is a big show. How does it feel being part of that?

Man, it's a dream come true for me. I've always wanted to do a music show for as long as I can remember and right now I am living that dream. It came at the most perfect time in my life as I was ready for it. Every day on set is a catch up session with friends.

What's your relationship like with your co-host, Boity Thulo?

There are a lot of cool, special and funny moments shared on that set, but the one thing I love about our relationship is the transparency. Being honest with one another in a respectful way makes our jobs super easy.

Which successful local TV hosts do you look up to and why?

Robert Marawa and Phat Joe. They're both incredible at what they do and they have longevity in the business, which is what I look for.

You are now also on radio. What's that experience like compared with TV?

They are very different from each other, but complement one another so well. Radio is extremely technical and, like TV,

a lot goes into a show. It's been one of my biggest challenges in the entertainment industry, but the hard work is paying off.

You are a fitness enthusiast. How did you get into that?

Yes, very much so. I've always been very active and into sports. I was a gymnast for 10 years. When I got older I started going to the gym more.

How often do you go to gym?

Minimum once a day but on a good day twice, five days a week

Planet fitness has selected you as an ambassador: how does that feel?

It's always great when you do or represent something you believe in and love doing. My relationship with Planet Fitness is just that; it makes a lot of sense. I do, after all, spend most of my time there.

What price does fame come with?

For me it hasn't been anything hectic. Life is still very normal, I just happen to do the jobs I love and have always wanted to do. The one thing I've learnt is to be constantly aware of my surroundings and the people I keep close to me.

Do you ever have any crazy fan experiences?

Being asked to lift up my shirt was the most hectic and awkward moment, but the fan was so adamant that I did it. Unfortunately for her, the shirt stayed on.

What other projects are you working on?

I'm just focusing on *Club 808* and *The Jump*, which is my show on YFM for now. It's all about pacing myself and not rushing into something that will leave me overwhelmed. I'm happy with where I'm at professionally.

If you hadn't followed this path? I'd be in the corporate sector working as an economist.

By Laurice Taitz

IT'S AN understatement to say Joburg's slickest Italian restaurant Gemelli is internationally inspired. It is owned by Lesotho-born Alessandro Mosupi Khojane, whose early years (age 2 to 9) were spent in Italy with his diplomat parents, and presided over by chef Paulo Santo who, while of Portuguese extraction, has spent years in Italian kitchens.

Gemelli is set in a space inspired by the style of a New York loft (Khojane's dream was to bust tables in New York City).

While the interiors (by Studio A) exude contemporary elegance with a mix of wood, leather and concrete and a rich-hued palette of bronze and copper tones, the décor piece de resistance is a mural created by LA-based street artists Cyrle, conjuring the might of ancient Rome, adorning the wall of the marble bar that runs the length of the restaurant.

Another homage to the restaurant's roots is the eye-catching boot of Italy wall art made from wine and champagne corks.

Even on the busiest nights, and

Italian cuisine served in a vibrant setting

GEMELLI CUCINA BAR
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that seems to be every night, you'll find Khojane welcoming patrons, taking time to explain the menu and recommend particular dishes.

This is no garden-variety Italian restaurant. There is a vibrant atmosphere and a truly cosmopolitan crowd. Each plate is a play of flavour; colour and detail full of fresh, seasonal and ethically sourced ingredients.

Highlights of the starter and side menus include the truffle mushroom risotto, with its four types of mushrooms, the cauliflower, leek and truffle soup and the contemporary take on the classic Caprese salad, with tomato jelly and house pesto. There is a classic pasta selection so

traditionalists will feel at home – puttanesca, aglio olio – and other innovative dishes such as Penne Alessandro, an artful combination of prawn tails, smoked chicken, and prosecco-mustard cream.

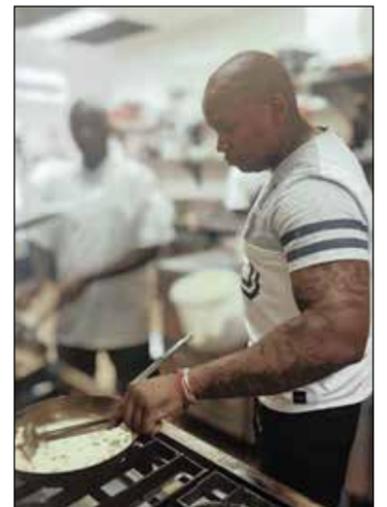
You'll find a hearty selection of meat dishes, plus prawns, sea bass and sole for mains served with Gemelli's rich signature flair.

For dessert, Mosupi says the cheesecake baked with nougat, cranberry and almond meringue and accompanied by marzipan gelato is a firm favourite. The twist on the classic Tiramisu – with espresso syrup, Oreo cookie crumbs, a mousse of mascarpone and espresso custard – is worthy of applause. It would be wrong to leave without sampling the cocktail menu. Toast Gemelli's



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international standing with The Mad Italian – a vodka, Aperol, syrup, lemon juice, fresh basil and tonic water blend – or try the Lesotho Lady, a mix of gin, grapefruit juice and cola tonic, lemonade and bitters. There's a choice of Italian and local craft beers and a well-priced wine list.



Gemelli's is owned by Lesotho-born Alessandro Mosupi Khojane.

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