

# The Australian Women's Register

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## Gay Bilson interviewed by Heather Rusden [sound recording]

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**Repository** National Library of Australia, Oral History and Folklore Collection

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**Reference** [ORAL TRC 3029](#)

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**Date Range** 25-Mar-94 - 25-Mar-94

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**Access** Access open for research, personal copies and public use. ?Access open for research, personal copies and public

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**Finding Aid** Corrected transcript available (typescript, 47 leaves)

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### Details

3 sound tape reels (ca. 153 min.)??Bilson, restaurateur and chef, speaks of her childhood in Hawthorn, memories of her grandmother and her cooking, how her difficult adolescence isolated her from her family, her love of reading during her university days, how she experienced her first restaurant in 1963 while on a date, how she began reading recipe books and practising table layout in preparing dinner parties, how she eventually married an electrical engineering student and moved to the States so he could work for IBM, how she developed her cooking skills in California, how she eventually left him with their two sons and returned to their home in Carlton, how in 1972 she met up with Tony Bilson and helped him establish his Sydney restaurant Bon Gout, which became a meeting place for Labor politicians and supporters.??In 1975 they came to purchase Berowra Waters Inn and choose Glenn Murcutt as their architect, the artists that have influenced her, how she managed to maintain fresh supplies of fruits, vegetables and other perishables from Sydney, how they managed the restaurant waste products without local council assistance, how she coped as sole manager after Bilson left her in 1980, her partnership with chef Jannis Dyrirtsis since 1982, her role in inspiring her staff to give perfection, how she organised the staff, her use of fixed price meals to assist survive slow periods, how three course meals are becoming unfashionable, how distinctive is Australian cuisine.

### Author Details

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