



## Our homestay experience

Garry and I have been hosting international students over many years mainly students and teachers on short term study groups. After having Sofia Otto, a German girl for 9 months in 2015, we decided that we would like to welcome another long term student to our home. Garry and I were asked if we would host an Italian girl for 6 months in 2016. We naturally said yes and so Beatrice Alpo, Bea for short, arrived to our home on the 8th July 2016.

Bea was from Pinerio Turin, Italy and has an older sister. Bea had not been to Australia before and was excited to see what Brisbane had to offer.

It did not take too long for Bea to settle into our family life and was trying her hand at cooking under her father's instructions who was always on hand via Skype to ensure that she made the pizza dough correctly and more. Thinking that there was a secret recipe to getting pasta just perfect I asked Bea how long she cooked pasta for, to my surprise she read the box and said 11 minutes before turning on a timer and precisely timing the process! Oh why had I never thought to read the instructions? 😊

During her time we had some wonderful experiences including whale watching, a day walking the streets in Sydney to see all the sights, Toowoomba, Ballina and Byron Bay a must do. The main thing we seemed to do a lot of was laugh.

When Bea returned to her home we had promised her that we would visit, as one does never actually thinking you ever will. Well we were fortunate enough to have a free four day time frame as we travelled from Russia to the Balkans so a trip was planned and we ventured to the little village of Pinerio Turin. As we left the airport we were welcomed by a beaming Bea and it was as if time vanished, we were bundled into the car with her very excited Dad driving and travelled to her family's home. Arriving at Bea's home was like being met by old friends as a lavish Italian lunch was ready for us along with beautiful red wine. That night they invited a group of 20+ friends to meet us and partied on until 2am. The days flew as we experienced amazing Italian hospitality and saw many wonderful sights.

Next we hope that Bea and her parents will travel to visit us next year and maybe like us you never think it will happen until it does.

