



● Miguel... Spanish style.

Ole! Flamenco doesn't lead him a dance

AS the young flamenco dancer moves into the spotlight at a Sydney restaurant, his face and hands expressing the primitive emotions of Spain, rhythm in every supple inch of him, few people would guess that he is Michael Gillmer, a 22-year-old Australian born and raised in Sydney.

"My great-grandparents were Andalusian gipsies, though," said Miguel — he prefers to be called by his professional name — "and I speak their gipsy *calo* dialect as well as Spanish."

Miguel had his first flamenco lesson at 13, and would skip school to see various Spanish dance companies that toured Australia.

"I was with my dancing teacher only a year," he said, "then we had an argument and I left."

The argument was over the rhythm of a particular part of a Spanish *Bulerias*, which the 14-year-old suggested was wrong.

"I'd heard it on a record," he said, "and in the end I proved that I was right."

For the next two years the young "gipsy" taught himself, working out his own techniques by listening to records of Spanish dancers like Jose Greco and Carmen Amaya.

"Once you have learnt the basic steps a lot is improvisation," he said. "There is no definite right or wrong as in classical or regional dancing, and the most difficult thing to master is the rhythm."

Miguel appeared professionally for the first time at 16. During the day he would

study for his Intermediate Certificate, he said, and at night dance the flamenco at a Spanish restaurant on Sydney's North Shore.

When Luisillo visited Australia in 1962, Miguel asked for an audition.

Although the great Mexican flamenco dancer was impressed, he didn't engage him, and Miguel — anxious to save money to see his beloved Spain — started working for his father, doing clerical duties and loading building supplies on to trucks.

"The following year I had saved enough," he said.

"Three days after I landed in Barcelona I met some gipsies — they usually hang around the American bars — and went to stay with them in their village."

Bullfighting

Although living conditions were extremely poor — "I slept in a room with eight people" — Miguel said that he enjoyed every moment of the two weeks he was with them, and learnt a lot from their dancing. "I'd join in when they danced at baptisms and weddings."

Miguel's next stop was Madrid, Spain's first city. There he found a cheap pension, and took a closer look at another passion...

"It has always been a toss-up whether I would be a bullfighter or a professional flamenco dancer," he said. "Actually, there is little difference between the dancer's domination over rhythm and the bullfighter's domination over the bull."



But, deciding there was more security in flamenco dancing, Miguel went to Luisillo's Madrid studio.

"He remembered my audition in Australia, and asked me to join his company," he said. "I toured Spain, France, Germany, and Austria with him."

However, Miguel is still "wrapped" in bullfighting — in fact, since his return to Australia in 1965, he said, he has written two chapters of a novel "about the hardships of a bullfighter."

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MEDICAL MYSTERY

● A doctor, examining a seriously ill patient, finds no medical sign that she is improving. Her condition seems what it was on the previous day—in fact, she says that she feels no better.

Yet the doctor leaves, feeling that the patient is on the road to recovery. What led him to this conclusion? Elementary, my dear Watson! The lipstick clue.

According to an article in an American medical journal, when a sick woman applies lipstick it is often a sign that she is on the mend as surely as spring follows winter.

"When a woman is ill," the doctor wrote, "she usually stops applying make-up. As recovery ensues, there comes a time when she again dons lipstick. This is the lipstick sign."

He also observed that sometimes the lipstick sign may precede any other indication of recovery.

ALL THE WORLD'S A SCHOOL

GOLD COAST schoolboy
Clive Palmer, 12, recently crossed the Equator for the 33rd time since he made his first trip overseas, at two weeks old.

Although he has been around the world three times, and has made 14 trips out of Australia, he has a long way to go to catch up his father, travel agent George Palmer, of Surfers Paradise, who has been taking parties of tourists around the world — which he has circled 39 times — for 37 years.

"Although Clive's schooling has been broken by travel, he is still well up in his sixth grade," said his father.

One of the highlights of the Palmer family's tours was when they penetrated Red China in 1964.

"We travelled aboard a freighter which visited Red Chinese ports for two months," Mr. Palmer said.

"We managed to get permission to land at Shanghai, Peking, and Darien, although we had no visas."

Mr. Palmer filmed a 16mm. color movie of the Great Wall of China, 300 miles inland. As there were no facilities for processing color in China, he was allowed to bring the film back to Australia.

It is now part of his huge film library of more than 100 countries.

During the tour Clive and his parents gathered memories which will last a lifetime, including that of a guard at a barbed wire fence around one of the few Roman Catholic Churches allowed to remain open in 1964.

The Palmers' married daughter, Jean, now 21, bravely asked the guard:

"Is the fence to keep God in or out?"

The Palmer family's most terrifying voyage occurred

aboard a Dutch freighter in the millpond Java Sea, off Indonesia.

Clive was four and a wanderer. While his parents were asleep, he climbed out of the cabin porthole on to a 3in.-wide ledge running along the ship's side.

Screams from women passengers sounded the alert. Two Chinese stewards were lowered over the ship's rail.

As they closed in on Clive, he yelled: "You keep away from me!"

"Leave him alone," bel-lowed the Captain from the bridge, who had stopped the ship and swung out a lifeboat.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Palmer, forcing calmness into her voice, said: "What are you doing out there, Clive?"

"I'm looking for fishies," the four-year-old replied.

Finally, Mrs. Palmer managed to coax him to the porthole by saying: "Come here, love. There's some-

thing I want to brush off your back."

Quickly she grabbed him around the legs, and pulled him to safety.

That was the past. What of the future of one of the

most travelled 12-year-olds in Australia, who wants to be a lawyer when he grows up?

"He'll have to settle down to schoolwork, as education is most important for a boy."

● The Palmers... happy wanderers.



■ According to English historian Sir Arthur Bryant, an authority on Samuel Pepys and his period, even when the 17th-century diarist was kept awake at night by the sound of people snoring, he seemed to find it entertaining. "But, Lord," Pepys wrote in his famous diary, "the mirth which it caused me to be waked in the night by this snoring round about me: I did laugh till I was ready to burst!"