

# The PA55Y0N of Vincent

Vincent Simone was born in Foggia, Italy on 15<sup>th</sup> March, 1978. He has one sister, Alessandra, who is also a dancer, teaching Street, Hip Hop and Aerobics in her spare time, as she is currently studying at University.



So, how did this ordinary little boy become one of the World's best dancers, entertaining millions each week with his charming flattery? His first taste of dancing came at seven and a half when his parents wanted to go dancing and took him along with them, so that he did not get up to mischief. He joined in and got seriously hooked. Soon other, extended family members, including five cousins, got involved.

The young Vincent enjoyed the flattery of receiving compliments as everyone remarked on his talent. Along with the compliments Vincent found his first partner rather 'cute', and thus began his passion for dancing. With so many of his family interested in dance, Vincent had the backing of his parents, and Papa made sure that they practiced for two hours every day to reach their goals.

Although Vincent was always the smallest at school he was never bullied, as he had bigger friends who would protect him. He was always a smart little lad and was especially good at mathematics as he was good with numbers. He was also good at English Grammar although he readily admits that his pronunciation and conversation was not quite up to the mark. Even when he came to England there was still little improvement, as he stayed with Flavia's parents who only spoke Italian. However, due to appearing on 'Strictly', which brought many more contacts and therefore practice, his spoken English began to improve.

At ten and a half Vincent entered his first dance competition in Roma. "Everyone looked big and old" he recalls. His partner was a year older and slightly taller than himself so he felt very tiny compared with everyone else. However, out of the 50 couples who entered Vincent and his partner took first place.



He then went on to win the Italian Liscio Championship five times, became the 11-14 year old Ballroom Champion four times and also won the Ten Dance Juvenile Championship.

By the age of twelve Vincent was already helping his parents teach dance and came to England when he was 17 to take part in the serious dancing competitions that are held in England. "England is the centre of Ballroom Dancing," says Vincent.

To begin with he used to come over for a week learning to dance, then return to Italy for a week to teach, earning enough for the next trip back to England. Then for a while he taught in both countries as he enjoys teaching, and hopes this comes across in his lessons.

His first dance partner in England did not work out, as once again she was taller than him. It did not take long before he partnered up with Flavia and the rest is history. They turned professional in 2001 and achieved:

UK Professional Ten Dance Champions 2002-2006

UK Professional Showdance Champions 2003-2006

Negracha Club UK Argentine Tango Champions, 2006

IDO World Argentine Tango Finalists, 2005 and 2006 (3<sup>rd</sup> place overall - winners, Show Tango section)



"I have a real passion for dance, and I believe that hard work can go a long way."

They then joined 'Strictly' for the 4<sup>th</sup> series in autumn 2006 and won the hearts of the general public and celebrity partners. Vincent with his outgoing, flirtatious manner and Flavia with her quieter charm. The couple are now beginning their fourth season with this ever popular television show.

Vincent admits to being interested in all styles of dance which is why he and Flavia are Ten Dance Champions but he finds it difficult to name a 'favourite' dance, as it all depends on the day, the mood, the venue and the music. "A lot of dance is about feeling the music. Music flavours the taste in dances," he told us, and went on to confess a preference for the 'moody' dances - The Rumba, Argentine Tango, and Ballroom Tango (rather like himself - passionate, flirtatious and sensual).



As one of the most influential couples in Britain regarding the popularity of the Argentine Tango we were interested to find out what first inspired Vincent and Flavia to take up this genre.

Vincent had always had a special feeling for Tango. He and Flavia had been to see the film 'The Tango Lesson', which was followed by a couple of shows. Consequently, they resolved to find a teacher the very next day.

They called Ralf and Kele from Kensington Dance Studio who moved them a long way down the road of dancing Argentine Tango. They then trained with, and still have sessions with the best Argentine Tango teachers, Monica and Omar Los Campos.

Between training and appearing on 'Strictly Come Dancing', as well as going on tour with the company, Vincent and Flavia also teach at their own school in Guildford, have made a DVD\* and make regular guest show dance appearances. Apart from the travelling involved in getting to and from various venues around the country and providing a great display of their dancing skills, the pair spend many hours signing autographs, having their photographs taken with fans and chatting amicably with them.

It makes one wonder if there is time for anything else with such very busy schedules. Given the time, Vincent likes to try and keep fit at the gym, watches some television, and quite enjoys working with computers. He is fascinated by them and used to play with them a lot, trying out different software. If he wasn't dancing, he thinks that he would possibly be involved with computers in some way, as he picks things up reasonably quickly without being taught. Unfortunately, he does not have the time anymore to pursue this interest.

Even as far as holidays are concerned there has been time to snatch a few days here and there, but he finds it very difficult to turn down all the requests to perform. He told us "This we probably did too much, so we are now blocking out bits of the diary to make sure we get the holidays. One needs holidays to stay healthy."

Likewise, he only gets a chance to see his family two or three times a year and more often than not Vincent buys the tickets for them to visit him, as he has had very little opportunity to go to see them.

At the time of speaking with Vincent his parents had come over to see his pride and joy, his new baby son. Vincent, like other new, papas, took pleasure in furnishing us with the details that his girlfriend, Susan Duddy, had given birth to Luca William Simone, weighing just under 8lbs, on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August at 9.18am at her parents home in Belfast.



Vincent says "He is gorgeous and perfect - just like his dad - and thanks to my Susan to have made this dream come true."

Until Vincent became a proud papa his greatest passion (other than dancing) was his love of cars - fast cars! By his own admission he is very flashy and a typical Italian man, "So I love fast, flash cars. The flashier the better!" At the moment he drives a very sleek, black Hyundai Coope, with his own special number plate - PA55YON.

When asked about his future plans and ambitions Vincent said, "It is difficult to plan ahead. We are taking each year as it comes." We do know, however, that it is his dream to own a Ferrari one day!

In next month's issue the 'charm of Flavia'.

\* Vincent and Flavia have recently released two instructional Argentine Tango DVD's.

For details visit [www.vincentandflavia.com](http://www.vincentandflavia.com).



Progression in passionate rides?