

Alfredo, congratulations on winning the *Rosenblum* in Lille, giving Italy their first world title since 1975. Please tell us something about your family life.

I was born in Turin on 4th June 1969. My father was an actor on the stage, radio and TV. I have no brothers or sisters.

asked 'Who is this little boy who plays like an angel?' and did not play again until I was 13. Then I started playing regularly. My father was a friend of Mrs Lavazza who sponsors bridge teams, and, when I was 15, I was invited to partner **Italo Santia** in her team. We won the Italian Open, but as our

What did you do when you left school?

I was a bridge pro straight away. I also teach bridge privately. My first time for the Italian Open team was 1991 in Killarney partnering **Santia** but we just missed qualifying for the *Bermuda Bowl*. The following year, partnering **Claudio Nunes** in the Junior Europeans at Palaiseau we won the title.

When did you start your partnership with **Lorenzo Lauria**?

It was at the European Teams in Menton in 1993. I was still a junior, but Arnhem the next year was my last appear-

knockouts. Early in '96 we came second in the *Macallan Invitational* in London, and we won it the following year. Then Italy retained the European title in Montecatini and we went to Hammamet for the *Bermuda Bowl*, where we lost to Norway in a very close quarterfinal.

How did your team created by **Francesco Angelini** begin?

The team first played together three years ago and we have won two Italian Championships. **Francesco** is the owner of a private pharmaceuticals company. He was going to play in Lille but has not been feeling very well so we played there as a five man team. I partnered **Lauria** and sometimes **Antonio Sementa**.

You missed the World Individual in Corsica this year. Why was that?

My driving test was arranged for the same time and in Italy it is very difficult to change the date. The good news is that I passed!

If you had a magic wand and could change something about bridge, what would it be?

I am very tolerant of little misdemeanours by the opponents so I don't like the very legalistic players who try to use any tiny infraction to obtain an advantage.

What are your interests outside bridge?

I follow horse-racing and like betting. And I play football in Team Angelini.

Have you any special tip for the readers of *EBL Review* to improve their game?

They should watch the top players in action more!

Alfredo, we are very grateful for your time.

Patrick Jourdain

INTERVIEW WITH



ALFREDO VERSACE

At school were you good at sport?

No, though I played a little tennis, and was interested in football. My subject at school was maths.

When did you start bridge?

I was 11 years old when I played in my first bridge tournament partnering my mother and we won it, but I was annoyed by an opponent who

teammates were **Benito Garozzo** and **Giorgio Belladonna** people were not so surprised!

When did you first represent Italy?

The next year, 1986, when I was 17, I partnered **Norberto Bocchi** in the European Junior Teams in Budapest. Italy was not in the medals. Two years later, in Plovdiv, when I was partnering **Giovanni Delfino**, we came second to France.

ance as a junior. I married **Juliana** that year and we now live in Rome where **Lauria** also lives.

1995 was the year you became European champion?

Yes, in Vilamoura. **Lauria** and I also won the Butler scoring where each pair was assessed separately. We went on to Beijing for the *Bermuda Bowl* but did not qualify for the