

= Carmella Cammeniti =

Carmella Cammeniti (previously Silvani and Sister Mary Catherine) is a fictional character from the Australian Network Ten soap opera Neighbours , played by Natalie Blair . She appeared on a recurring basis from 2003 ? 05 , then became a main character from 2006 ? 08 , before making a final guest appearance in 2011 . Carmella was created as a replacement for Nina Tucker , portrayed by Delta Goodrem , who was written out of the series when Goodrem became ill . Her early storylines , including a romance with Connor O 'Neill (Patrick Harvey) , were originally intended for Nina . The daughter of a protective gangster father , Carmella was initially a " fun , feisty " character . She gradually became " tortured [and] depressive " , with storylines which saw her attract the attention of a stalker , become a nun , suffer facial scarring , develop an addiction to prescription medication and lose her husband after a bushfire .

Carmella was the second member of the Cammeniti family to appear in Neighbours , after her father , Rocco (Robert Forza) . She was later joined by her mother , sister , and two cousins . She had long @-@ standing relationships with Marco Silvani (Jesse Rosenfeld) and Oliver Barnes (David Hoflin) , the father of her daughter , Chloe (Sarah May) . When Blair resigned from the serial in 2007 in order to pursue new projects , the producers arranged for a separated Carmella and Oliver to reunite . The two briefly returned three years later , to consolidate their family unit .

Blair won the " Most Popular New Female Talent " Logie Award for her portrayal of Carmella , and was additionally nominated for several Golden Logies and Inside Soap Awards . Critics have deemed Carmella as one of the series ' most popular characters . Blair 's versatility has attracted praise , though several publications have highlighted the implausibility of many of Carmella 's storylines .

= = Storylines = =

Carmella is introduced as a barmaid at the Erinsborough bar Lou 's Place . She becomes romantically involved with her colleague , Connor O 'Neill (Patrick Harvey) , to the disapproval of her father Rocco (Robert Forza) . A feud with Connor 's ex @-@ girlfriend , Michelle Scully (Kate Keltie) , results in Carmella slapping her and leaving the area . She later returns in 2004 , reconciles with Connor and helps him to maintain access to his daughter Madeleine (Madison Lu) . To prove that she is business @-@ minded , Carmella becomes a magazine editor . She departs from Erinsborough suddenly after she becomes the victim of a stalker , Frank Romano (Lliam Amor) . Before she leaves , she drives around with a shotgun in an attempt to kill Frank . Upon her return , Carmella loses Connor 's affection to Serena Bishop (Lara Sacher) . She attempts to ruin their relationship , which results in Serena 's mother Liljana (Marcella Russo) slapping her to warn her off . Carmella then tries a different approach ; she borrows money from her mother Lucia (Maria Mercedes) to pay for an operation Madeleine needs , then blackmails Connor into spending time with her . She claims to have borrowed the money from a crime mob who are harassing her for repayment , which prompts Connor to steal money to try to pay it back . When Carmella realises the trouble she has caused , she tells Connor the truth and leaves .

After a period of absence , Carmella 's mother sends Connor on a secret mission to find her daughter . He discovers that Carmella has become a nun , and is living in a convent as Sister Mary Catherine . During her time as a nun , she grows close to Ned Parker (Daniel O 'Connor) , who encourages her to become a recording artist after hearing her sing . Carmella does it to make him happy , but admits that she does not really enjoy singing . She withdraws from their relationship as she feels that Ned is prying too much into her private affairs .

Carmella admits she arranged the sale of her cousin Teresa 's (Hannah Greenwood) unwanted baby . A fellow nun suggests that she takes time off from the convent . She complies and leaves her role as a nun behind . Teresa has a breakdown and throws a saucepan of boiling water at Carmella , who is left with severe facial scarring and becomes increasingly secluded . She is convinced by Will Griggs (Christian Clark) to have plastic surgery to lessen the scarring . Ned tells Carmella that he loves her , but Carmella has fallen in love with Will . Soon thereafter , Will leaves the country

without notice . His younger brother Oliver Barnes (David Hoflin) arrives , and explains that Will had a double identity . Carmella has short @-@ lived relationships with Oliver and teenager Ringo Brown (Sam Clark) . She becomes addicted to prescription drugs , and later discovers that she is pregnant with Oliver 's baby , and may have harmed the baby through her addiction .

Carmella begins an online business with Marco Silvani (Jesse Rosenfeld) , and develops an attraction to him . She initially resists as she is still in love with Oliver , but learns to her disappointment that he does not reciprocate her feelings . Carmella gives birth prematurely by Caesarean section ; the condition of her daughter , Chloe (Sarah May) , who is placed in the neonatal intensive @-@ care unit , quickly improves . Mother and daughter move in with Marco , prompting a jealous Oliver to file for sole custody of Chloe , though he later rescinds this decision . Marco proposes to Carmella and she accepts , however later that day he is severely injured in a bushfire . Carmella marries him from his hospital bed , and Marco dies shortly afterwards . Following his death , Carmella believes she is haunted by Marco 's spirit . Oliver moves to New York , but she declines his invitation to accompany him . He later moves to Portugal , and in December 2008 , Carmella and Chloe leave to be with him . They briefly return to Erinsborough when Oliver 's mother Rebecca (Jane Hall) breaks up with her husband Paul (Stefan Dennis) , to convince her to come and live with them .

= = Development = =

= = = Creation and characterisation = = =

Carmella was created following Delta Goodrem 's sudden departure from Neighbours due to illness . Three months ' worth of scripts were rewritten , and Carmella was introduced to fill the void left by Goodrem 's character , Nina Tucker . As a school graduate , Blair had unsuccessfully auditioned for another role in the serial , but impressed casting director Jan Russ . Six months later , Russ contacted Blair and asked her to audition for the role of Carmella . She was cast immediately , due to the urgent need to fill the void left by Goodrem . She played Carmella on an episodic basis in 2003 , then returned for a longer period in 2004 , and briefly in 2005 . Blair returned to Neighbours in 2006 , and in September 2007 , signed a contract keeping her in the show for another year .

The serial 's official website described Carmella as " the youngest daughter of local mafioso Rocco Cammeniti . She grew up spoilt and sheltered from the real world , which made her a force to be reckoned with as soon as she was old enough to break free of her father 's influence . " Carmella underwent many changes during her tenure . Blair initially described her as a " fun , feisty and foxy sort of character " . However , Carmella became depressed through her life 's travails , having been stalked by Frank Romano , sold her cousin Teresa 's baby and subsequently become a nun . Before her official confirmation in the convent , Carmella goes clubbing with ex @-@ boyfriend Connor . Describing Carmella 's reasoning , Blair stated : " Carmella is thinking , ' Is what I 'm about to go ahead with , - becoming a nun - the right choice ? ' She wants to be sure she 's making the right decision about what she 'll do for the rest of her life . " Blair confirmed that after that night Carmella had " all the answers that she needed " to live the rest of her life . Blair enjoyed the opportunity to play a nun , but was glad when the storyline concluded as it meant Carmella got to have fun again .

= = = Relationships = = =

Carmella 's relationship with Connor was originally scripted for Nina Tucker , but was transferred to Carmella by the producers on Goodrem 's departure . Upon Carmella 's introduction , her only family member was her mobster father Rocco , who had been sent to prison . In 2006 , Carmella was given a sister , when Natalie Saleeba was cast in the role of Rosetta Cammeniti . Blair opined that Rosie 's inclusion brought out different sides to Carmella 's character . Many viewers told Blair they felt the casting was good because they look alike . One of the significant changes to Carmella was that she started having fun again ? Blair felt this meant they worked well together . Later , Erin McNaught

was cast as her cousin Sienna Cammeniti . McNaught commented that there had been a rivalry between the cousins in their youth , so it would be interesting to see what unfolded between them .

Following the dissolution of Carmella 's relationship with Oliver , Blair commented that Oliver would " always have a special place in Carmella 's heart " . Although Carmella began dating Marco , Blair felt that Chloe 's premature birth strengthened the connection between Carmella and Oliver . She explained that Carmella " feels desolate and suddenly the connection Carmella 's always had with Oliver is heightened . Together they name their baby Chloe and it 's Marco who feels shut out . " Following Chloe 's birth , Carmella decided to put her love life to one side , and put her baby daughter first . She told Marco she did not want him in her life ; he planned to leave town without a word to her , except a love note and a present to Chloe . Discussing the state of her relationship with Oliver and Marco at this point , Blair assessed : " I don 't think it 's so much of a love triangle anymore . Oliver made his feelings for Carmella very clear - he doesn 't love her in that way . But he still doesn 't want another man looking after his child . So there 'll be more tension between the [three] of them . And things get even more complicated over the next few months . "

Marco was later killed in a bush fire disaster . Describing the filming process , Blair stated : " Shooting the scenes for the bush fire and everything surrounding it - the wedding - the funeral - was so draining . It was full on . " Blair had to film scenes involving Carmella singing at Marco 's funeral , which she deemed " close to home " because she had done it at her grandmother 's funeral . She found it distressing , as they filmed in a real graveyard . She had previously been reluctant to sing on @-@ screen but felt it was justified for Marco 's funeral . Blair commented on Carmella 's repetitive bad luck , stating : " She 's gone through so much already , just to get to this point . This should really be a happy time for her , but it 's not . " After all the hurdles she faced , Carmella became a stronger person . Blair said it saw her become well @-@ equipped to look after her child .

= = = Departure and return = = =

In 2008 , Blair expressed frustration that Carmella had become a " very tortured , depressive character and there was no light at the end of the tunnel . " She described the role , which went through enormous transformations , as being one that had pushed her acting abilities . Blair 's pleas to the show producers to let the down @-@ on @-@ luck Carmella be up @-@ beat again were rejected . In June 2008 , the actress confirmed her plans to leave the series when her contract expired . Speaking of her decision to leave , Blair said : " I made the decision in December [...] I am eager to try new things and go to a place where people have no idea what I have done , I want to experiment with what works for me and what doesn 't as a performer . " Producers confirmed they did not intend to kill her character off , as they hoped for her to return again in the future . A spokesperson for the programme 's broadcaster , Network Ten , stated : " Obviously , we 've loved having Natalie on the show all these years and we 're really sad to see her go [...] and hope to see her on Ramsay Street again one day in the future . " Blair later admitted she was surprised at her rise popularity whilst playing Carmella .

Carmella 's exit storyline was devised months prior to Blair 's departure . Producers had planned to reunite Carmella and Oliver and have them leave together , however Hoflin decided to go travelling , meaning he was unavailable for filming . Prior to Hoflin 's departure , he and Blair filmed scenes showing their reunion . Scripts were quickly rewritten to portray Oliver in Portugal , where Hoflin was in real life , instead of New York where Oliver left for upon his exit . Describing her reaction to Carmella 's scripts towards the end , Blair commented : " After a while I 'd open my script and say , ' Please give me one scene where I 'm smiling ' . And then I 'd read the script and think , ' Damn - no smiling scenes again ' . " Blair had originally hoped that Carmella would be killed on @-@ screen , as she felt a dramatic send off would have been fitting . After the " tragic " final year Carmella underwent , Blair decided she was happy with the exit because " something finally goes right for her " . Blair also opined : " It 's a really lovely story and I think the fans will be happy with it . " Carmella 's " happy exit storyline " saw her leaving in a taxi surrounded by all of her friends waving her off , after they convinced her to start a new life with Oliver .

In September 2010 , it was revealed that Blair and Hoflin would return to film scenes in the last two weeks of production in 2010 , and the episodes would be shown in early 2011 . Carmella returns for two episodes in March 2011 . Blair said she could not resist the return , which acts as a catalyst in Rebecca Robinson 's (Jane Hall) departure . Blair felt it fitting because both Carmella and Oliver have history with Paul Robinson (Stefan Dennis) and want to " protect Rebecca and watch out for her best interests " .

= = Reception = =

In his book *Super Aussie Soaps* , Andrew Mercado brands Carmella , the mobster 's daughter , as " the mafia princess " . In 2005 , Blair won a Logie Award for " Most Popular New Female Talent " following her appearances as Carmella . By the time Blair was made an official cast member , *The Courier @-@ Mail* declared that Carmella was a Ramsay Street favourite . The actress was also nominated for a Golden Logie for " Most Popular Personality " in 2007 , and once again 2008 . Blair was nominated in the category of " Sexiest Female " at the 2007 Inside Soap Awards , and had a joint nomination with David Hoflin for " Best Couple " . Fiona Byrne of the *Herald Sun* remarked that Carmella was becoming one of the show 's most popular characters . At the following year 's Inside Soap Awards , she was nominated in the " Best Storyline " category for her custody battle over Chloe with Oliver , as well as " Sexiest Female " again .

Scott Ellis of the *Sydney Morning Herald* 's television magazine stated that , even compared to the slightly surreal standards of most soap operas , Carmella has " been through a wringer " . He made a point of the many storylines that transformed the character : " A former party girl turned nun , Carmella has been stalked , slapped , scalded , scarred and even sold a baby . She 's found and lost love at least three times , given birth , fought a custody battle , fought kleptomania , and fought various members of her family . " In the same vein , *The Daily Telegraph* praised Carmella 's versatility in going from " baby peddler to nun , before suffering severe facial burns that required re @-@ constructive surgery . " *Inside Soap* opined that 2008 for Carmella was " tragedy after tragedy " . What 's on TV deemed Carmella 's scalding with boiling water her most explosive scene , and the *Daily Record* called it karma for selling Teresa 's baby .

Despite her popularity with the viewers , Carmella was negatively received by Ruth Deller of television website *Lowculture* . On how to get the magic back into *Neighbours* , Deller said " Axe Carmella . Or at least make her a nun again , which was the only time she was interesting " . Deller also said she would have rather seen Carmella and Marco leave the show instead of Rosetta and Frazer . *The Liverpool Daily Post* said that they had seen implausible storylines in the serial , but Carmella seeing Marco 's ghost " takes the biscuit " . However , they concluded " At least he offers Carmella some much @-@ needed support . " *The Daily Record* said the ghost scenes were more unforgettable than Bouncer 's dream . On the subject of her funeral song they added : " Oddly , none of her friends think she 's gone mad , despite an impromptu version of ' *Amazing Grace* ' . " Readers of *Inside Soap* were asked who Oliver should be with out of Carmella and Elle . Carmella came first with sixty @-@ six percent of the vote .