

# For All Her Travels, Florence Austral Is A Home Lover

## Charming Soprano Chats With The "Radio Record" About Cooking, Sewing And Dieting



**T**HE word 'Home' seems rather a misnomer sometimes, for we really spend much more time away from our home than in it," remarked Madame Florence Austral, the Australian soprano who last week started her broadcasting tour of the New Zealand national stations. Madame Austral, wife of John Amadio, the celebrated Wellington flautist, is really a home-lover and a home-maker. They own a lovely property at Hampstead, which is sufficiently far from the heart of London to allow them "breathing space."

This artistic pair spent many months planning out their home. Attractive gardens were laid out, a hard tennis court was prepared, and a large music-room was equipped as a miniature concert hall. Just as everything was completed the two artists had to sail for a long tour of America.

Madame Austral is as adaptable as the average colonial. She can enjoy a solid afternoon's tennis and then, if necessary, prepare a dainty meal or stitch away at some intricate tapestry. Cooking, plain or fancy sewing, knitting and tapestry-work are her favourite hobbies when the weather keeps her indoors. A good game of contract bridge is her keenest relaxation. (This is not a hint for New Zealand hostesses.)

As far as Madame knows, there was never any musical talent in her family, and her phenomenal voice "just happened," so to speak. But she confided to the "Radio Record" that her flair for home-making, and especially for cooking, she attributes directly to her mother. Mrs. Fawaz was noted for her cooking, and many of her recipes are to be found in the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union Cookery Book. As a small girl Florence Austral—then Florence Fawaz—had every opportunity

of becoming an efficient housekeeper, for her mother insisted on her having a share of preparing and serving the family dinner regularly, and also making cakes and scones for the week-end.

The tasks were not penalties, for the small Florence was an eager pupil, her only ambition at that time being to shine as a cook and housekeeper. Nowadays with her staff of trained English maids, Madame Austral still insists on making all the special "tit-bits" when she gives a dinner party at her London home, and she admitted that she still got a thrill when experimenting with new recipes.

Madame Austral's tapestry work is another congenial and useful pursuit, and it is the rule rather than the exception for the singer to occupy herself stitching at a piece of tapestry in between her items at a concert. It is some years since she started working panels for a special suite in her home. Nine chair panels and the cover for a music-stool have been completed.

"Expensive simplicity" is the keynote of the evening gowns worn by this golden-voiced soprano. Madame expressed the opinion that over-decoration in the matter of adornments is avoided overseas nowadays. Her colour creed is to "Wear what suits you," even if those colours don't happen to be fashionable at the moment. Because Madame Austral herself is

very fair, she finds that many folk take it for granted that black would be favoured by her for evening wear. But, in fact, her preference is for white.

One of her black gowns is a model fashioned of georgette, a skirt finished with long flares just touching the floor in front and ending in a short train at the back. Touches of colour are lent by turquoise-blue embroideries outlining a flesh-coloured georgette vest, the embroideries continuing. (Cont. on next page.)

### Madame's Slimming Diet

**WHEN** Madame Austral returned to Australia two and a-half years ago, after an absence of four years from the Commonwealth, she was a noticeably slimmer woman than before. The change, she is good-natured enough to admit, lessened her weight by three stone! Here is what she ate to do it:

No breakfast—merely a cup of coffee made on milk.

Luncheon of salad greens without dressing, brown bread and black coffee.

Dinner (at 5.30 on concert nights and 7 p.m. on other nights) consists of meat, plenty of vegetables of all kinds and fresh fruit. No gravy, sauces, cream or pastry allowed.

Supper consisting of hot or cold asparagus and some fresh fruit (a pear for preference).