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Q MAGAZINE

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2012 MS GAY & TS
AUSTRALIA PAGEANT

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q comment: **LOVE LETTERS**

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They welcome love letters from young people from all backgrounds and will take love letters in any form that is accessible to you. Closing date for submissions is October 1.



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Brett Hayhoe t/a Q Magazine
ABN 21 631 209 230



q feature: MS GAY & MS TS PAGEANT

by Iaan Atmanegara

The Rio-esque drumbeats were deafening. Like a sequence of explosions, twenty beauty contestants sashayed in their barely-there cossies in a whirlwind of feathers, sequins and glitter. The 400 strong-crowd wolf-whistled and applauded wildly. But somehow you realised that this was not your run-on-the-mill-kinda-pageant when you overheard amongst the audience: "She's more beautiful than a woman."

The crowd had gathered in the ballroom of Shoppingtown Hotel, Doncaster, Melbourne on 3 February to witness the crowning of Ms Gay and Ms Transsexual Australia 2012. Now into its third year, Gayzha Davao, the Organiser from Victorian Secrets Promotions said: "I am ecstatic that it has grown to this scale. This shows that the objectives of this Pageant are reaching a wider audience."

Chinta Woo-Allcock, Ms Gay Australia 2011, explained: "Transsexuals, transgendered females and transvestites are often frowned upon by some in the community because of perceived differences. In the same way, the miseducation and misconceptions of what is a drag queen are also prevalent in our community."

The Pageant hopes to engage in dialogue with LGBTI persons and the general public about the diversity that is in our community. Conversely, by taking contests like these out of gay bars and clubs, it is desired that the general public will be able to be educated about and can appreciate the beauty in this diversity."

The Pageant had two categories; the Ms Gay category saw participation from drag queens and performers while the Ms Transsexual category consisted of contestants who mostly identify themselves as female. Gayzha said: "The girls choose the category they self-identify with based on some general guidelines. We do not want to impose who should be in which category as this does not recognise the complexities and sensitivities of self-identification within our community."



The contestants were judged on the traditional pageant categories such as Best in Swimwear, Best in Formal Gown and the nail-biting Q&A for the 3 finalists in each category. The main highlight of the Pageant was the Talent segment in which the Ms Gay Australia 2012 winner, Martini Ice (QLD), amazed her audience with her spot-on impersonation of every (well, almost) drag queen's idol, Liza Minnelli, with a mash-up of the infamous Cabaret and New York, New York while balancing precariously on her 9-inch heels. While most contestants lip-synced for their lives, Shar Leng (NSW) actually sang with live vocals and another, Gabriella Mendoza (VIC) poi twirled into the hearts of the audience.

Statuesque, blonde and beautiful, Vanessa Priestly (VIC) who was crowned Ms Transsexual Australia 2012 started performing at a tender age of 14. She has worked alongside legends such as Monique St John and Chanelle St Laurent touring QLD and NSW with Les Girls in 2000. In 2001 Vanessa was in Boylesque with the recent DIVA

Lifetime Awardee, Christy McNicol, and Carlotta.

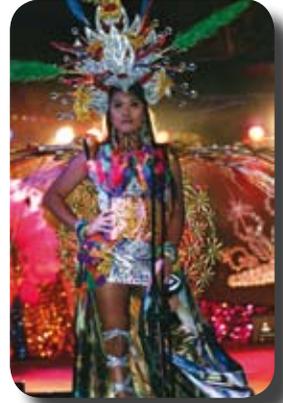
Though she has had many successes in her career, there were disappointments that reflect the obstacles transgendered females face daily. In 2001 she entered the reality show, Search for a Supermodel. Unfortunately, Vanessa said: "I was disqualified for apparently breaking the rules. The only rules the show had then were that contestants needed to be within a certain age bracket, turned up for the casting with bare face and be an Australian citizen. I suspected that the disqualification was due to my gender."





Recounting her experience auditioning for Australia's Next Top Model early last year, she said: "Ten years later Australia still isn't ready for a transgendered model despite the over whelming successes of Andrej Pejic and Tea L in the European fashion industry."

The vivacious and voluptuous Ms Gay Australia 2012 winner, Martini Ice (QLD), started as Martina Havapavalova in Waga Waga some 10 years ago. With sheer hard work, amazing talent and a great corset, she has since been a drag celebrity in Brisbane and the Gold Coast where she is currently based. With her infectious laugh, Martini said: "I have performed at MP's, Escape, Sportsman Hotel, The Beat Mega Club, The Wickham, Fluffy, Out West, Diversity and Lashes, making me the only drag queen to have performed at every major gay club and social event in South East Queensland."



When asked about her plans post-pageant, speaking like a true beauty queen, Martini said: "Adelaide in March for website launch with Shirley Vine, gigs in NT and Perth and general PR stuff in Brisssy and GC." An aspiring comedienne, Martini is looking into stand up comedy and the main goal is opening her own cabaret restaurant and hosting her one wo-man show.

Martini's win in this category also meant that for two consecutive years the Ms Gay Australia title has been won by drag queens from Queensland. In 2011, Chinta Woo-Allcock from Brisbane took home the title. The runners-up in this year's Ms Transsexual Australia category are Daniella Cavalli (NSW) and Gabriella Mendoza (VIC). The runners up in the Ms Gay Australia are Jana Fox (NSW) and Talon Marquiese (NSW).



q lifestyle: with PETE DILLON

Roll up. Roll up and let the orgy of indulgence begin. The Melbourne Food and Wine Festival rolls into town, and in to overdrive on March 2nd, and this truly is one of the great gastronomic gatherings on planet earth. The 2012 Festival is celebrating 20 years and so will run for 20 days rather than ten. My liver has seen a bit of my program and is quite possibly planning a strike or some sort of boycott, as the program for a foodie like me can be very intense. Kidneys, heart and other vital organs may also be planning some sort of industrial action.

In the past 20 years, the event has welcomed some of the most noticeable food personalities in the world – all who have made the lengthy journey 'Down Under' to experience the culinary delights that abound in the World's Most Livable City.

Let's look at the top ten restaurants in 2012 as voted by S. Pellegrino (as is done every year). This year, they will be announced at London's Guildhall on April 30th, but I digress. Looking at the list for 2011, we can see how many of the best chefs in the world have visited Melbourne for the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival:



In order 1 -10 of the worlds best restaurants and chefs...

- The number 1 restaurant in 2011 (and most likely in 2012) is Noma in Denmark. Chef Rene Redzepi has visited our fine shores and was a guest of the festival in 2009 and is back again in 2012.
- Mugaritz in Spain was number 3 on the list. Chef Andoni Arduiz has been a guest of the festival several times, most recently in 2010
- At number 4 sits Osteria Francescana under the guidance of chef Massimo Bottura. Bottura again visits Melbourne in 2012
- The Fat Duck is the 5th best restaurant in the world, and of course one of the most recognized chefs in the world, Heston Blumenthal was here for the 2009 Melbourne Food and Wine Festival.
- D.O.M is chef Alex Atala's Brazilian Restaurant - he was a guest of the festival in 2010 and sits at number 7 on the S Pellegrino list.
- At number 8 is Arzak in Spain – and Elena Arzak was one of the 2011 festival attractions.
- Ninth on the top ten list is Le Chateaubriand in France. The man behind this venue is Inaki Aizpitarte. He was a guest of the 2009 Melbourne Food and Wine Festival.
- Finally at Number 10 on the list is Per Se, the second of chef Thomas Keller's restaurants. Keller is better known for his French Laundry which peaked in 2004 at Number 1.

This demonstrates that the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival is one of the best in the world, and attracts the most amazing food talent from around the world. Then of course there are those that are not part of that elite list but are indeed most recognizable. In 2011 we saw the very sexy Nigella Lawson, jelly kings Bompas and Parr, food cart supremo, LA's Roy Choi and Margaret Xu from Hong Kong, in 2010 we were graced with the presence of David Chang, who will be back for the 2012 festival.

There are a great many events that still have tickets available for the 2012 festival, some of them free and others not. It is a great excuse if you are in Melbourne to experience something extraordinary or be part of something that you won't ever forget.

A stroll along the Yarra River on the opening weekend of the festival is a great way to start. There is a focus on the river this year and there are many events happening throughout the 20 days that are very reasonable priced. If you would prefer indoors, then check out the program guide and see what is happening that you can attend.

There are foodie films if that takes your fancy – these are free and run 2-9 March in Federation Square. The Twilight Farmers Market is on Thursday 8th March in Footscray and is another great free event. Markets are a great way to immerse yourself in the festival and whether you are visiting regional Victoria or in Melbourne, there will always be some fresh produce to purchase, grown and sold by locals at accredited Markets.

Finally, check out the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival Greenhouse by Joost in Queensbridge Square at Southbank. Prices from \$15 for breakfast lunch and dinner and truly a unique spot to visit. Open throughout the festival from 8am to 10pm.

The Melbourne Food and Wine Festival clearly offers something for every body and is a worthwhile reason to visit Melbourne, or a great way to celebrate living here. Either way you are guaranteed of a good time.

For more information from Pete on tipples and tucker, tune in to Cravings on Joy 94.9 in Melbourne or listen live around the world – every Saturday from 1-2pm.

q money: with EVAN DAVIS

Director, Mates Rates Money – evan@matesratesmoney.com.au

Some hospitality businesses just ooze success and polish. Ultimately this hints at their likely success and longevity. Other businesses however, seem to fall short. Sometimes so short that you are left wondering how they ever got started.

Hubby and I were attending an inner city 'grungy' Melbourne art gallery event. This is typically something that this city does well. The gallery space was a converted warehouse with a student 'dive café' at the front and the 'Art Space' out the back.

There were a number of pieces in the show we were keen to see early and buy on the spot if we both liked them. We managed to get to the event early and thought we'd have a drink and snack while we waited for the show to start.

I approached the bar to order some food and booze from the most clichéd hipster I have ever seen. The suit he was wearing was an old, really old and maybe his granddads. He had altered the trousers to shorts, was wearing a pencil thin tie over a filthy white shirt and had two different black shoes on.

He tried to take my order while pouring two beers for an irritated previous customer who he was still waiting. The music was so loud it took four attempts to convey the simple order which in a fluster he wrote down wrong. I corrected him and then got a death stare! He lent over the counter to take my payment, in the process knocking the tip jar to the floor. Like his chances of getting a tip, the jar smashed. The irony wasn't lost on me as I watched coins roll around the bar.

In a deliberately theatrical fashion he took my change from the till drawer before he clumsily slammed the cash register drawer shut with his hips. This time coins showered the room. The 'grungy' students in the bar were delighted! I did get an apology however... 'Sozzz' he lisped.

I have never worked in hospitality so probably am not qualified to give advice. Or maybe I am just too old and NOT cool enough for this type of venue. That said some staff training has to be good for your clients, your staff and your bottom line. You'll have to make more money, particularly if your employees are flinging the stuff across the room.

There are training organisations like AVTES (Australian Vocational Training & Employment Services – www.avtes.com.au) that specialise in hospitality and retail training. With the heavy government incentives for this training often they don't even cost the owner of the business anything to get their staff trained.

If yours is a hospitality business and you want your staff to work and the RIGHT staff to stay, talk with Tom Kendal from AVTES 1300 764 418.

I've heard employers question the value of spending time or money training to their staff only to lose them. But I think even worse than that, what if you don't provide the training (expensive or otherwise) and they stay?



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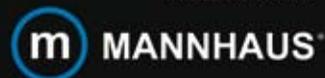
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q world: WP & WORKPLACE SUMMIT

While East London is gearing up for the Olympics and Buckingham Palace prepares for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, Soho is preparing for its own moment in the global spotlight – WorldPride 2012.



Registration for walking groups and floats to take part in the Parade have opened and with communities from around the world entering this year spaces are expected to be filled quickly. The annual call for volunteers to help out in the run-up and throughout the festival is also now open. Pride London is a charity run entirely by volunteers without whom we couldn't stage the largest un-ticketed event in Europe.

The LGBT community from across the globe is expected to descend on the city for two weeks from 23 June – 8 July for a festival of art, culture and campaigning culminating with the Parade through central London on Saturday 7 July. As well as the usual programme of events this year Pride London will also be hosting a conference at Senate House to discuss the issues facing the global LGBT community today. Speakers are already confirmed from countries including Jamaica, Sri Lanka and Pakistan to discuss how we can all work together to improve. The central theme of the whole fortnight will be to call for the global decriminalisation of homosexuality, especially within the Commonwealth.

On Parade day itself a star-studded line-up will lead celebrations on the Main Stage while Soho will be taken over by attractions including · Dance Stage – featuring the hottest London DJs · Tesco Family Area – providing a more chilled-out place for families to join the fun · A very special one off dance party in a unique venue featuring International DJ line up, fantastic visuals plus lots lots more · Soho will also host a market place selling all things LGBT

Chair of Pride London Patrick Williams said: "WorldPride is much more than just a party. There are 41 countries in the Commonwealth where homosexuality illegal and in some cases punishable by death. This summer we want to give the global LGBT a safe place to celebrate and be proud regardless of who they love, but we will also be using our time in the spotlight to campaign for a safer environment for them to return to. I want to extend an invitation to everyone in London, the UK and around the world to join us for WorldPride."

The deadline for entry to the parade is 4 May 2012. Register a float or walking group: <http://www.pridelondon.org/getinvolved/floats>. Sign up as a volunteer: <http://www.pridelondon.org/getinvolved/volunteering>. WorldPride takes place at least every five years in a city chosen by InterPride, the global licensing body for Pride organisations. The last one was held in Jerusalem in 2006 and the next one will be in Toronto in 2014.

For more information on Pride London and WorldPride go to www.pridelondon.org

The Global LGBT Workplace Summit, organized by Out & Equal Workplace Advocates with support from a number of partner organizations, will bring together hundreds of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employee leaders, talent management



Workplace
Advocates

professionals and executives to share leading practices in global LGBT workplace inclusion over two days in July. Participants will explore the tools available that will make a difference in their workplaces around the world – and how inclusive employers can impact the communities in which they operate.

Successful employers rely on attracting and retaining talent to be competitive and increasingly, employers see providing inclusive workplaces where employees can be fully productive as a critical competitive advantage. When it comes to including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender employees, companies operating across a multitude of legal and cultural differences face challenges and opportunities that many multinational employers are only now beginning to address.

"Out & Equal is honored to convene this gathering of LGBT and business leaders from around the world to talk about ways to build greater workplace equality. Although the situations in each of our countries may be very different, we share a common determination that everyone has the right to be themselves at work," commented Selisse Berry, founding executive director of Out & Equal. "When people begin to share their best ideas and practices, we find that our experiences are often the same. I'm so excited thinking of the changes that will happen as a result of bringing this group together."

The conference expects to draw several hundred people from multiple countries in London on July 5-6 at the Park Plaza Westminster Bridge. The event will take place during World Pride.

More information about the LGBT Global Workplace Summit can be found at www.GlobalLGBTWorkplaceSummit.org.



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q cuisine: with NATHAN MILLER

Who would have thought that after 20 years working around Australia as a chef, that I would still go weak at the knees when meeting my idol/s. Recently I was fortunate to rock along to the launch of George Calombaris' new venture "Mamababa", here in Melbourne.



Over the years I have been fortunate, or unfortunate to be involved in a couple of restaurant openings, but arriving at this opening was more like a showcase of not just George's wares, but that of Melbourne. There were luxury cars on display, artists, the daunting red carpet, and amazing deserts by Burch & Purchase, and this was only the short walk to the front door.

At the entrance I was greeted by Mr. Calombaris himself, in what was the whitest chef jacket I have ever seen (surely he's been busy all day) and was escorted promptly into what used to be the 'Warehouse' nightclub. The area has been very well finished, with what I would describe as a funky warehouse conversion with exposed brick walls, a great waving bar and a well-designed open galley style kitchen. The fittings are industrial which again seems to be the trend, but still with a touch of class and intimacy.

This was no restaurant opening; this was a spectacular, with not just the who's who of Melbourne, but the 'in' crowd from all over the country. The glamorous hairdresser Joey Scandizzi was flown in from Sydney to create hairpieces from fresh handmade pasta, DJ Ruby Rose was flown in to DJ a set, and then there were the stars of the small screen, but then to my excitement one Mr. Adriano Zumbo arrived.

Now I would hate to sound like a screaming teenage girl waiting for a chance to spot 'Beiber', but that's exactly how I felt. This man is everything I wanted to be as a chef, passionate, talented, creative beyond imagination and quite the looker. What do you say when you meet your idol? Well that was my exact predicament, I was left there hanging, waiting to come up with something intelligent without looking like a lost groupie. I refer to the saying, 'you don't get a second chance to make a first impression', so I guess the next time we cross paths he will be running for the emergency exit/s.

I soon picked up my very damaged ego, and made my way around the floor mingling with the funny, intelligent and the glamorous. As I am not one who usually attends these types of functions, I learnt one very important thing, my idols are quite similar to me. They to enjoy their craft, are passionate about life, appreciate the small things, and are dedicated to creating new and different experiences.

'Mamababa' draws influence from both George's parents, ensuring the food is simple and uncomplicated with incredible flavours. Having met George's mother, I was fascinated to see that her influence was visible throughout the entire menu.

This establishment is going to be a staple in many Melbournians lives.

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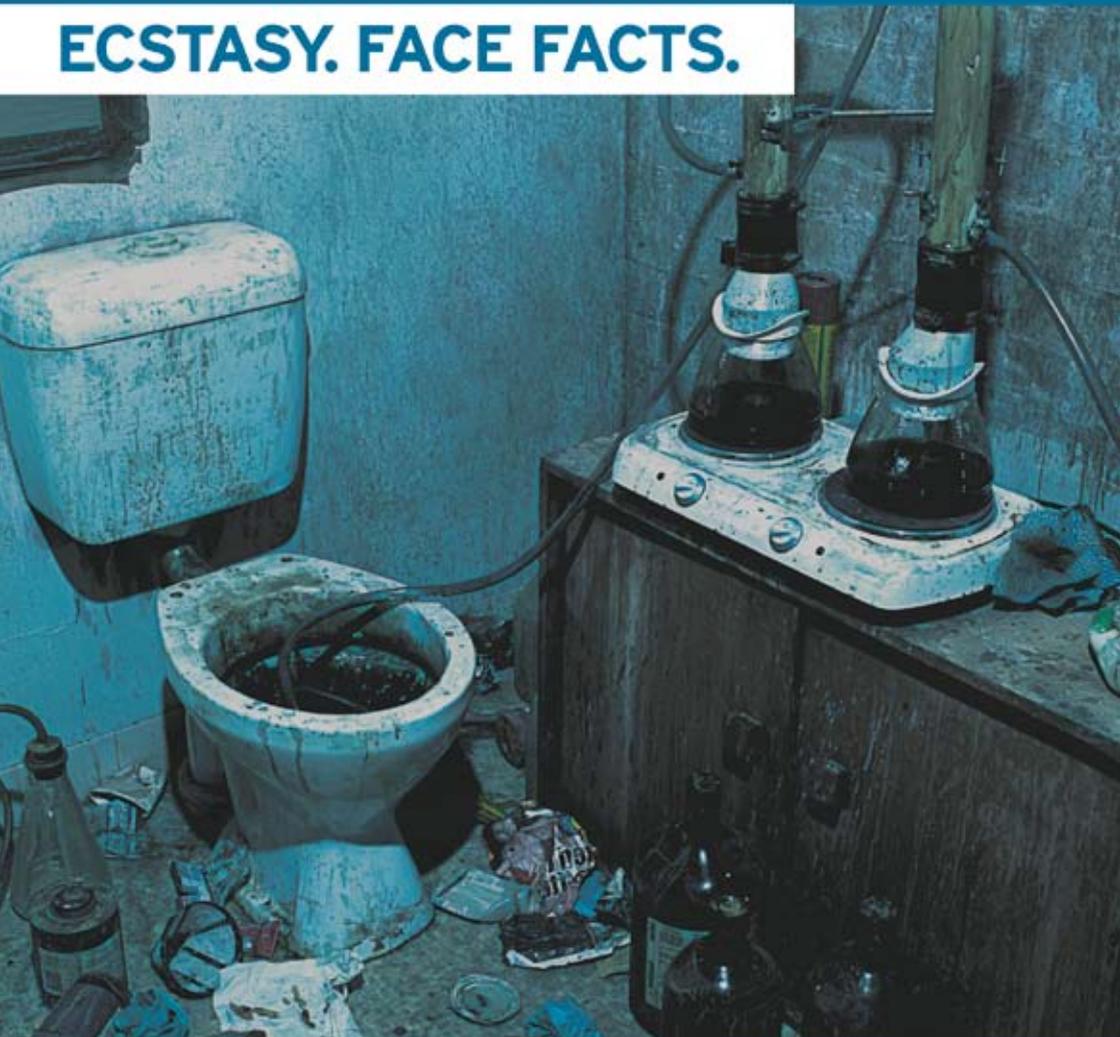
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q drama: **BIG BEN IN BETWEEN MEN**

by Randy Myers. For further information go to inbetweenmen.com

After a brief stint as a professional baseball player, Ben Pamies jumped at an opportunity to model in New York. At 22, he was signed to the Ford Agency and became one of the most recognized male models in Manhattan. His Adonis form sold underwear and swimwear for 2xist, Polo Ralph Lauren and Dolce & Gabbana. His agents encouraged Ben to take acting classes to broaden his marketability and make him eligible for commercials and soap operas.

Acting class became an addiction. Under the tutelage of famed drama coach Jennifer Gelfer, Ben found a therapeutic outlet for the anxiety he felt chasing his dreams in the big city. Class became a place Ben could lose himself and gain perspective on life by walking in another man's shoes and embodying a character. He was a natural and when Gelfer began casting the hunk for her new gay drama series, *In Between Men*, she turned to Pamies. He embodied so many of the characteristics as the show's lead, Ben Reed. Both Bens are sexy and flirty but also intelligent and successful.

At first glance, the show appears similar to *Queer as Folk*. However, where the characters in *Queer as Folk* lived in the gayborhood, *In Between Men* depicts gay men living out and proud in the real world. Through wild adventures and racy storylines set against the fabulous backdrop of New York City, the show depicts how most gay men live today.

Pamies says he identified most with his character's refusal to be defined by his looks and sexuality. Like the Ben on *In Between Men*, Pamies is a family guy whose career ambitions outshine even his looks.

Many of us live in a perpetual state of in-between: in between jobs, in between relationships, friends, family, lovers... what are you living in between?

With a somewhat recognizable face through modeling, but yet limited credit in acting, I'd say I'm living in between my modeling and acting careers. I just moved to Los Angeles and everything seems brand new.

Is acting your priority now?

Acting was an interest even through my modeling days. My hopes were always to use modeling as a platform to create a name and branch out towards an acting career.

How have your looks helped or hurt your acting career?

I'm a pretty easy going, laid back guy. It's been a struggle at times to own my look and meet the expectations that come with a strong presence.

Can you relate to the characters in IN BETWEEN MEN who are trying to make it big?

I certainly can. Like them, I feel like I'm about to turn a corner for the better.

Is there a shady side to Manhattan's modeling industry?

I think shady is relative. It's very competitive and a guy's ability to network socially can be a powerful attribute.

What's the craziest thing you've seen a guy do to land the job?

I'm not sure. Truthfully, I always felt like anything shady that goes on around me is none of my business. I focus on myself because sticking my nose in other guys' business only serves to distract me from my path toward my goals.

You play Benjamin Reed who is the iconic male figure; the guy gay men want to be and be with. Do you feel any pressure having to live up to the ideal?

I do feel a certain pressure to having to live up to an expectation that my looks invite. But it's a privilege to be able to embody that ideal and being able to test the limits within a character like Benjamin has been a blessing in helping me find my strengths and comfort in my own skin.

Benjamin Reed is oversexed and promiscuous... are you?

(Laughs) You can't ask for a better playing field then the limitless variety New York offers. I wouldn't call my past promiscuity an escapade but my experiences have each shaped me in becoming the man I am today. But because those days are behind me, and out of respect for my current relationship, I'm going to have to answer with a tasteful discretionary silence and leave room for mystery and imagination.



To be fair, Benjamin Reed is also a loving friend and successful businessman.

I can relate to having a close council of family and friends that have my unconditional love. As far as ambition, I aspire to be as much in command of my looks in serving me in my career.

Quincy Morris, the show's producer, said, "Benjamin Reed's looks are perfect on the outside but, like all of us, he is on his own road to completion." What do you think he meant by that?

I think that although Benjamin maintains an appearance of having it all and being in control, there is sadness in his loneliness. Perhaps he can find a sense of completion if he found a someone to be vulnerable with.

How will you know when you have completed your life's ambition?

My personal life ambition will be achieved when I'm supporting myself with what I love to do and in a position to really give back and raise awareness in a variety of humanitarian philanthropies.

How did you prepare for your nude scene in the show?

That was the first time naked on camera. Besides some push-ups and sit-ups, I really just tried to focus on getting comfortable in my surroundings and make the bedroom my own. Everyone on set was really professional so it was actually easy.

Of all the characters on the show, who are you most like?

The beauty of the show is there are pieces in all the characters that are easy to identify with.



If you could play another character on IN BETWEEN MEN, who would you choose to play?

Jacob Ross. The bisexual twist with the pull of past and present relationships offers a lot to play.

Of all the guys on the show, who is the most dateable?

Dalton. It seems as though he'd be pretty drama free.

Who is the most toxic?

My character is probably the most toxic because you'd never know where you really stand.

What advice would you give your character Ben?

Sometimes Superman needs to be saved. Once in a while you have to let yourself off the hook and let your guard down.

What was your favorite storyline in season one?

I think the most compelling storyline is Dalton struggle having a relationship with a closeted man.

For those who haven't tuned into the show yet, why should they?

It's unique to anything else out there right now.

What's in store for the second season of the show?

I can't spoil too much but there will be an important addition to the group.

What would you like fans to know about Ben Pamies?

As for me, there's not much to tell. At the moment, I'm grateful that life is busy and I look forward to what the future has in store.

www.rushpoppershop.com.au

q youth: with TASMAN ANDERSON

Earlier this month, I saw a good friend of mine battle with constant relationship turmoil and barely make it out alive. It seems that more and more people are falling on hard times with their partners and can't seem to make it back to what they once were.

I know it seems cliché when people say that "in order to have a strong relationship, you need to be strong within yourself" but I think it's 100% true.

Unfortunately for my good friend Jim, this hasn't been an easy lesson to learn. Over the past year he has been involved with a lady who on the surface appeared to be a loving and compassionate person. I always thought they were meant to be together and that whatever issues they had could be resolved. But when they broke up it became clear to me that perhaps all was not well in their world. Jim was absolutely devastated and often struggled over what his next move would be. By no surprise, after a few short weeks they ended up back together. However, this time it appeared that Jim had given up his own independence and out of fear, would seek her permission to see his friends and to invite people around. This continued for a few more months until the girl once again called it quits.



I know Jim's situation seems like a page from an angst ridden teen novel but it was far from it. Their relationship was toxic and unflattering. It made the world see the ugly side of both Jim and his girl. Even after all the control and pain that she threw at him, Jim continued to beg her for attention and often resorted to posting embarrassing facebook statuses pleading for her to return.

I know that love is a difficult thing and doesn't always run a smooth course but can you really call something love when all you ever do is wish things were better? I'm all for people falling in love and being eternally happy but how is this possible when you lose all self respect and dignity in the process?

It wasn't until my best friend Jess brought the topic up, that I realised that you need to be in a certain head space before you can pursue a relationship. I don't think it can be as easy as just falling for someone and settling down. Jim had the problem of jumping from one bad relationship to the next in a desperate plea to find love. In his mind, love was something you could find with each and every girl that you had a relationship with.

The reason Jim could never find real love is because he was missing a crucial step. How can you have an equal and loving relationship if you can't deal with being on your own? I always believed that once you broke up with someone, that a little time alone would be just what you needed.

If you simply jump straight back into another relationship, how are you going to deal with the scars left by the previous one? When you fall in love, you trust that special someone not to break your heart. So when they eventually do, you are left with a strong feeling of abandonment and hopelessness. Taking these feelings into a new relationship basically means that you are setting it up to fail.

I'm not saying that everyone is the same but what's wrong with being alone for a little while after a break up? Do you really think that finding someone new immediately after will help numb the pain? Be strong and take some time out for yourself. If you aren't emotionally stable enough to be alone than how are you able to begin a new romance?

If you can trust yourself to be alone even when your heart aches for someone's embrace, than you can be capable of taking on anything.

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q cabaret: FESTIVAL FUNDRAISER

What do an alien, purple puppet, and Brechtian punk cabaret gods have in common? ...they all support the 2012 Melbourne Cabaret Festival.



The Festival has launched its major fundraising campaign for the year via the crowdfunding site pozible.com.au, supported by performers such as Sammy J & Randy (purple puppet), Paul Capsis, Jane Badler (alien in cult series 'V'), the Dresden Dolls (international Brechtian punk cabaret gods) and the Jane Austen Argument.

The campaign also enables you to: **complete your bucket list**: host your own radio show, have a cocktail named after you, or perform burlesque; **turn your home into party central**: host the Moritz pop-up bar or surprise your guests with a glamorous drag queen, piano bar man, or flash mob; and **find a unique way of saying "I love you"**: download a video by Sammy J & Randy containing your special message, or a personalised bedtime story recorded by the nation's best voices including the voice of the Sydney Olympics, Robbie McGregor.

Politicians have also declared their support for the Festival, with 'High Afternoon Tea' or lunch at Parliament House featuring among the items on sale.

Executive Producer Neville Sice said the money raised would support the expansion of the Festival to ten days, from Thursday 12 to Saturday 21 July. "We're not asking you to donate ... we're asking you to buy something of real value that appeals to you," he said. "Thank you to the dozens of performers, venues and broader cabaret community for providing these creative 'money can't buy experiences' in support of the Festival."

The event is one of Victoria's fastest growing festivals, having achieved a 37% increase in sales last year. The not-for-profit Festival is currently funded entirely through fundraising campaigns, strategic sponsorships and ticket sales. The campaign closes: 14 March.

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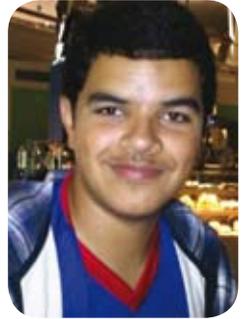
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q sport: with EDWARD DAVIES

For my debut article (yes, it is my debut!) I considered whether or not I should split it equally between all forms of sport, giving a little insight into each field and any issues that have recently arisen. But, then I thought 'to hell with it'.

[Editor] Welcome to the Q Writer's stable, Edward. I look forward to a long and fun relationship.

Number one rule with me; I am a massive football fan. Or, as you cruelly stereotyped Australians tag it, 'soccer'. Everyone who befriends me on Facebook will know this, as their news feeds are constantly ravaged by my updates on everything soccer. Now, I assure you, over the coming months you will hear all about rugby, tennis and maybe a little cricket – you name it. But expect soccer to be priority number one the majority of the time I write! So to all you soccer fans out there "you're welcome".



Recently, what has really been on my mind is the issue of racism in sport. As I am sure all of you will concur, racism has no place in any sport. It is a cruel, vile form of cultural discrimination which should not exist in any society or industry, let alone the sporting world. What has brought it to the forefront recently is the massive racism scandal in English football. What happened, I hear your intrigued minds murmur? Well, to sum it up, a player accused another player of racial abuse (on more than one occasion) and as a result the English game has been thrown into disarray.

Now, the normal process to tackle an issue like this is to deal with the complaint, launch an investigation, make a decision to charge a person or persons, hold a trial and finally to deliver a verdict. (Please excuse my awfully vague summary of the legal system). This is indeed what has happened. But what has really irked me is the manner in which the FA (Football Association) in Britain has dealt with it.

John Terry, captain of Chelsea FC and England, was charged with a racism offense when he was accused of racially abusing Anton Ferdinand of Queens Park Rangers, by Ferdinand himself. Although he was called to court earlier this month, the trial was adjourned until this coming July, a month after England is due to compete in the European Championships in Poland and Ukraine. So, let's make this clear – Terry was charged, but no verdict had been made or considered. Regardless, the FA decided to strip Terry of the England captaincy, and has made him one of the most hated sports personas in the country.

I cannot emphasise enough how ridiculous and pathetic this decision and the resulting consequences are. First and foremost, how on earth can you inflict a sanction on a player without knowing the full story or whether there is any truth in it at all?

Of course, I will happily sit down and admit that I was wrong if in July the court finds Terry guilty, and gives him the appropriate punishment.

But for a respectable sport's governing body such as the FA, to make such a massive choice regarding the national football team and the pride and joy of so many Englishmen, on the basis of hearsay and an accusation alone, is disgusting and shows just how badly the 'beautiful game' in England is being given a bad name globally due to the insecurities of the FA.

Having said that, regardless of the situation I will always oppose racism and any other form of discrimination within the sport industry. Nevertheless, it will always be rife in sport and every other aspect of our lives in some small shape or form if the governing bodies deal with it in such a manner as the FA has.

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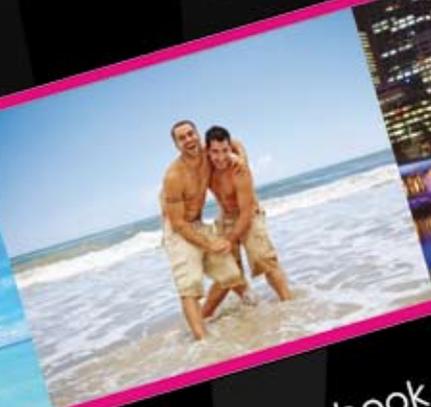
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q drag: AMANDA MONROE



Alan Mayberry has known Amanda Monroe since her first glamorous 'coming out' on the scene at a Fantasy Ball in 1999. He has seen her career blossom from the heady days at the Greyhound with fans sitting cross-kneed adoringly watching the Showbags perform. She has gone on to become an international promoter and performer. Her recent one woman show *ManGina* brings her incredible life force to the stage.

I grew up in East Bentleigh and went to Bentleigh High School. I received a scholarship there, and believe it or not was the local swimming and football champion, even training for the 1964 Olympic swimming squad – mercifully I was eliminated.

My family was typical of the 50s – dad, mum, me and little sister. My parents are long gone so the question of my being gay never arose at the time, but considering their social circle and a few other relatives I knew about, it wouldn't have been a problem.

I knew I was gay from when I was about 3 but it wasn't until 45 years later I was able to embrace just how different I was.

About 6 months after I came out, at the ripe old age of 48, I made my debut performance for Doug Lucas, and understudy to Terri Tinsel at the old Jocks

which became Trade Bar near the Peel. I was paid \$20 and after that didn't get paid for months until the Star Hotel gave me \$60 one night. It was a slow rise!

I opened at the Greyhound in September 2000 hosting *Mandy's Monthly*, which turned into *Showbags Saturday* in 2001 with Jessica James and Linda Lamont. That is when the Showbags rise started. I was told the Greyhound gay Saturday night was 3 weeks away from closing when I arrived, and once the Showbags phenomenon kicked in its gay future was assured and grew even stronger when Vivien St James joined us. I loved *Xanadu* and all of the nights down at the Greyhound – so much spirit in that room.

After that I moved to Pink, and our *Sound of Music* show was the best production we ever did I think, followed by our *Grease* production. Jessica James did the most amazing job on that show and it was fun to do from start to finish. We have had cast changes, it was great working with Bunny, Roxy Bullwinkle, Christina Andrews and now Kris Del Vayze.

My day job was always boring administration but then the Web was invented and I found a good job designing websites. In between was a bit of freelance writing until 'drag shows' became my paid hobby. Eventually the drag career overshadowed the day job and so I retired from the day job and took up full time showbiz. I'm still not sure if that was a good idea but it sure is fun.

When I think of career highlights, I still think back fondly on my first time on stage duetting with Miss Candee – we'd both learned different songs that night and even she couldn't keep up with my dancing style. And the absolute joy of working with Tracy Bartram's Rawhide show. But next to that, highlights were the awards nights when we won for our shows in Edinburgh, the sold out closing night to our off-Broadway season was amazing. You can see some of it on dragsaloud.com. Our New York reputation gave us the opening act for Joan Rivers in Melbourne. That night was very special, but as anyone there that night will remember how close it was to being cancelled. We were in costume waiting for the overture when Joan came over to us and apologised for stopping the show. We thought the gig was gone – but we went on eventually and it was such a celebration. Joan is probably the most amazing woman I've ever met, a true legend. But a good lesson: you're not on stage until you feel the heat of the lights!



I am extremely proud to be able to boast that Drags Aloud has had more performances on the international stage than any other drag troupe in Australia's history – exceeded only by Dame Edna Everage! Not bad for a homegrown Melbourne troupe.

I've come a long way since I went to Monash Uni in the 70s to train as a teacher. Then came the temptation of escaping to Asia and doing drugs. I reached absolute rock bottom, everything from LSD to injecting heroin and almost killing myself on a few occasions with bad drugs. Returning back home I was still stoned half the time and tried my hand being an organic farmer in the country.

But the city lights called, and I clawed my way back becoming a dreary office worker who hated my job drinking a bottle of whisky a day to keep my sanity. I worked at everything from cab driver to IT consultant.

For years I tried to blot out that I was transsexual. I'd spent 48 years as a tragically sad male, who avoided life by taking drugs. Now came the realisation that I wanted to spend the rest of my days being female. Terri Tinsel was my greatest help in taking my first steps down that yellow brick road of feminisation. Drag renewed my confidence in life, first on stage and then finally to walk the streets in daylight and even to go to my office job as a 'lady'. I realised I no longer need a mask to be the real me.

ManGina, which was staged at the Adelaide Fringe Festival, details that whole journey and I'm hoping it finds an audience that I can build upon. I've even started on *ManGina 2*.

My first income was from writing, when I was 14, and I'd like to return to that. Drags Aloud keeps me busy since there is so much going on with Festivals.

My stage future is pretty much in the hands of the audience, and it always has been, so I hope they keep wanting me there.



q psychology: by DR MARY CASEY

Now that the most romantic day of the year has passed, and relationship reality is setting in, you need to face crunch time and ask: is your relationship really as solid as you'd like to think? Do mutual trust, respect and admiration stand strong when challenges arise? Can you discuss anything with your partner? There are helpful questions to ask if you're looking for a continually successful relationship.

"Like building a house, our relationships need a strong foundation to weather day-to-day challenges," says Dr Mary Casey (Doctorate of Psychology), CEO of health and education centre Casey Centre. "When trust, respect and admiration are there, so is love – these make up the foundation. When these qualities wane, cracks can begin to appear – firstly in our communication with our partners, then in the way we feel around them."

Dr Casey has developed an 8-point checklist to help you identify any potential cracks in your relationship, along with easy solutions to fix them.

1. Do you know each other's needs? Dr Casey says if you don't know each other's needs, you can't meet them, which breeds resentment. The first step is that you each know your own needs, so you can communicate them. "We can often forget what we want and need. Make a list of them and express them lovingly – in writing if you find it too confronting. Let your partner know it is important their needs are met too."
2. What are your partner's likes and dislikes? Remaining aware of them keeps the passion alive. "When we love someone, this is one of the first things we want to know. As time passes, sometimes we become complacent and forget," Dr Casey says.
3. Are you often angry with each other? Angry outbursts don't nurture relationships. "Any anger we feel is solely our own 'stuff'. Identify what you really want to communicate which you may not be," Dr Casey says. "If your partner is having angry outbursts, there is something that he/she isn't being honest about. Have clear boundaries as to what you will and won't accept, and let them know bad behaviour comes with consequences."
4. Do you spend intimate, quality time together? "When we lack a deep understanding of each other, we can often avoid being intimate and instead always have other people involved in the relationship or physically present in our lives," Dr Casey says. "Living our true selves in our relationships deepens mutual understanding and negates the need for input or interference from others."
5. Is your sex life wonderful? If not, then what's missing? Don't shy away from discussing this together. It can bring you both closer, as it is an intimate subject which involves telling the truth.
6. Is there something you can't discuss with your partner? Dr Casey says you need to be able to discuss any topic without fear, anxiety or hesitation. It's also important you're able to speak up at any time. "If you can't, this may be your problem and something you need to learn to do, regardless of the response. If a certain subject angers or frustrates your partner, then they need to learn to discuss it," Dr Casey says.
7. Are you happy to listen to each other's opinions and agree to disagree? "If either of you get frustrated in getting your point across, learn new skills to grow your confidence and self-worth. Surprising as it is, it is these qualities that make it easy to allow others to have their own opinions," Dr Casey says.
8. Do you both contribute to all your finances and their related issues? Regardless of whether you are at home or working, if you both agree the workload is equal, all the finances and decisions should be done together. It is ignorant to allow just one person to do it all, as it leads to inequality and resentment in the long-term. The person not involved may also feel controlled and totally dependent on the other person." Dr Casey says.

She concludes that while denial is a defence mechanism that helps us cope, it can also create an ongoing struggle in our relationships which Mary believes can, at some point in the relationship, manifest as illness. Facing the truth can be painful, but in the long run it can bring us peace, happiness and relationship fulfilment.

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q law: with MATTHEW BAKER-JOHNSON

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Conveyancing 101. OK, so you've spent the last 60 days and nights diligently searching domain.com.au, been madly attending every auction in your area, and now you've finally found that "must have" unit near the Peel/Greyhound/Glasshouse. So what do you do now? [Editor] Welcome to the Q Writer's stable Matthew. I look forward to a long and fun relationship.

For most of us, unless you've got a very rich partner or access to a large amount of cash, you'll need to look at getting finance. In this regard, you'll need to speak with your local finance broker or banker to make sure you'll have enough to cover the purchase price, adjustments, and all stamping and registration costs.

Once you have your finance approval in place, ask the agent to provide you with a copy of the contract and the vendor's statement. The contract will set out the terms and conditions of the sale, and the vendor's statement will give you lots of useful information in relation to the title, any encumbrances or restrictions, the zoning, and rating information.

There's no legal requirement to seek advice before you sign a contract (actually, most agents prefer that you don't!), however, an experienced property lawyer will be able to give you important advice in relation to any unusual special conditions, title and planning information, and structuring the transaction to minimize your liability.

Once you sign the contract, you are generally bound by the terms and conditions and required to pay a 10% deposit. If you subsequently realise there's a drainage easement which prevents you from putting on that extension, or the garage has been constructed without a building permit, there's often little that you can do about it. If you decide not to proceed, you'll generally lose your deposit.

In the case of units, it's not unusual to see the principal unit transferred without the associated car park. This is often only discovered years later when it comes time to sell your property, and you suddenly realise that your unit is not as big as you thought it was! Hopefully, most of these issues are identified and resolved before it becomes a problem if you're getting good advice.

For foreign residents, there are special rules and restrictions which apply to the purchase of new and existing property. If you are being properly advised, your lawyer will be able to advise you on the relevant rules and, if necessary, negotiate any relevant Special Conditions.

Unfortunately, any property is only as good as the title it's founded on (that's not to suggest that the stumps aren't important either!). As such, it's critical to properly understand what you're buying, what issues may affect your use of the property, and the consequences if everything goes "pear shaped". And, yes, property purchases do go "pear shaped".

For most of us, the purchase of a property will often be the most significant financial investment we ever make. For that reason, it's important to understand a little of the process, and some of the pitfalls. As discussed, it's always recommended that you get good advice from the outset.

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q fitness: with CHRIS GREGORIOU

Are you on track with your Health & Fitness Goals?

Now is a great time to work on your health and fitness goals. A little bit of planning goes a long way, so think about what you want to achieve and get there faster by setting goals.



It has been proven that the most successful people set goals, not just in business, certainly for personal matters. So when it comes to fitness, I always ask for three goals before commencing any new health and fitness approach with clients. Goals are very powerful. If you're looking to introduce change to your lifestyle or routine, they are a great focus point. As they say - a little bit of planning goes a long way, so take the time to do some thinking about three goals you would like to achieve. When setting goals, they should always be very specific, realistic, measurable and time bound.

From experience I have found more than 60% of goals are based around losing weight or toning up, so here are a range of handy but very effective methods that you might find interesting and useful. Some of these suggestions are certainly not new and on their own might not have such a significant effect, however when combined in a structured approach can really work.

Here are some handy but effective tips:

(1) Eliminate Sugar.

Sugar contains no nutritional value and gives instant highs that cause you to put on weight. Much better to enjoy fresh fruit.

(2) Start walking.

It's the best exercise. It strengthens vital muscles and is great for cardiovascular health and weight loss.

(3) Cut back on processed carbohydrates.

White bread and pasta have little nutritional value and are low in fiber. Not ideal foods to consume if you want to tone up.

(4) Eat lots of fibre.

High fibre foods are nutrient dense, low in calories and will trim you down. Try raspberries, pears, artichokes, peas and apples.

(5) Do sprints.

Short intense bursts of cardio, such as sprinting, really kick your fat burning mechanism into high gear.

(6) Reduce salt.

Too much salt is bad for everything, including weight. Limit salt intake by resisting fast food and packaged foods.

(7) No grain.

Grains are full of insulin-spiking carbohydrates, which will fatten you up. Go for lean meats, fish and vegetables.

(8) Lean proteins.

All meals should have lots of lean protein. It will build muscles and control blood sugar. Go for fish, chicken and kangaroo.

(9) Hill walking.

A great way to reduce stored body fat. Walk for at least an hour and there's no need to get your heart rate up too high.

A favorite exercise: Burpees. An intense full body exercise that helps burn fat and tone muscles. Yes, one of my favorites, created in the 1930's by psychologist Royal H. Burpee, the burpee.

Here are 5 steps to perform a burpee:

- 1) Stand with feet shoulder width apart.
- 2) Drop to a squat with your hands on the ground.
- 3) Kick feet back while lowering into a push-up.
- 4) Return to squat position.
- 5) Jump up with arms overhead.

It's not easy but a great way you can exercise your whole body naturally (without any equipment).



Start by creating some fitness goals that are achievable and measurable. You might find it useful to enlist the help of a dietitian or personal trainer. Become more active and watch the food you eat.

For more information, go to www.metrobodyfitness.com.au

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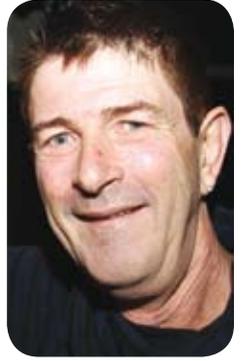
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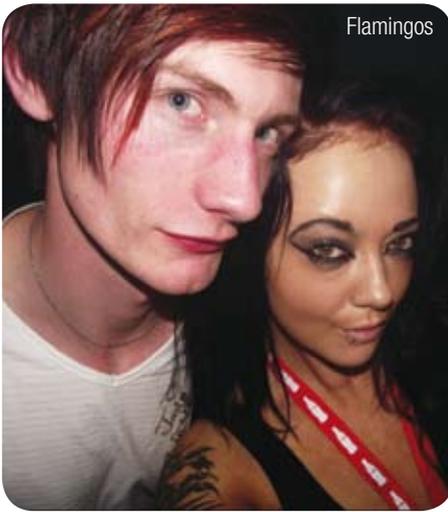


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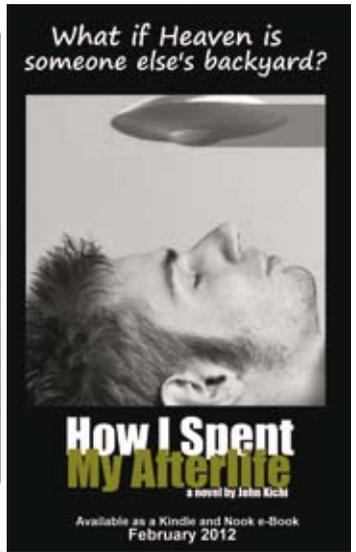




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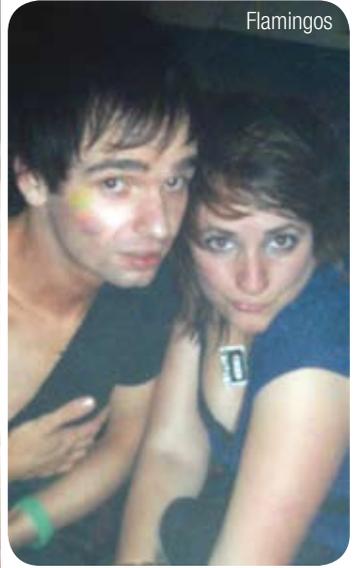
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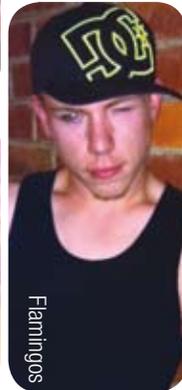
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q travel: with BARRIE MAHONEY

'Tweeters from the Atlantic'

Barrie Mahoney was a teacher, head teacher and school inspector in the UK, as well as a reporter in Spain, before moving to the Canary Islands as a newspaper editor. He is still enjoying life in the sun as a writer and author.



No doors or windows!

The World recession has claimed the hopes and dreams of many expats, as well as local people. Many expats who finally achieved their dreams of a new life and home in the sun have packed their bags and the few belongings that they have managed to salvage and returned to their home countries. Many cases that I know of have been little short of tragic, although there are some that have left me wondering whether the intending expat should ever have been allowed to leave their home country in the first place!

James and Charlotte moved into their new home full of the usual excitement and hopes for the future. Both had good jobs and hoped to shortly start a family. As with so many, they overstretched themselves and their mortgaged home required two incomes to pay the hefty mortgage bill, credit card bills and new car, as well as the usual day-to-day living expenses. The couple were already deeply in debt before the young woman lost her job followed by her partner a few weeks later. Unless you are very fortunate, most banks in Spain are not tolerant of mortgage arrears and, rather quicker than in the UK, owner occupiers are soon forced out of their homes and the

property is repossessed by the bank, and resold at a knock down price or, more likely in these difficult times, auctioned for a song.

The young couple were given notice to leave, but before they left, they decided it was 'pay back' time for the bank and they decided to take with them whatever they could salvage. They removed kitchen units, cupboards, and the bathroom suite and shower cubicle. This was followed by removal of the wooden staircase, all windows and doors and metal railings from the front of the house. One thing that did astound me was that they also took all the external patio tiles, as well as indoor floor tiles! Anyone who has tried to remove tiles will know that it is backbreaking work and it is, in my experience, almost impossible to remove tiles without breaking them. One can only imagine the heartache, bitterness and anger that lay behind these actions.

Another young couple, Grant and Bob, wrote to tell me of their difficult situation. Grant and Sue had lived in their new home for a couple of years, but when both lost their jobs they could not pay their mortgage. The bank was unsympathetic to their plight, and so they decided to rent out their property and move away from the area to live with friends until better times came, when they could move back into their home. Grant talked about their problem in a bar one night when he was drowning his sorrows, and soon found a Spanish couple that agreed to rent their home for six months or so. It seemed like an answer to his prayers, or was it?

Foolishly, Grant made the mistake of revealing that unless the rent was paid then they could not pay the mortgage and the bank would repossess the property. The Spanish couple moved into their home and, being well aware of the law, failed to pay any rent at all. The house was duly repossessed by the bank, the Spanish couple were allowed to remain in the property, as they were now sitting tenants and had a child attending the village school; a situation that provides tenants with additional rights. Grant and Bob's home was then sold to the sitting tenants for a very low price, and Grant and Bob were left with nothing. Indeed, they still owe a considerable sum of money to the bank, as not all the debt was repaid. Sadly, due to all the financial pressures and stress, Bob had a severe mental breakdown, which has added further stress to the couple's already strained relationship.

Renting is a strategy that many expats consider if they cannot sell their property and still have to pay the mortgage. However, my best advice is to avoid doing this at all costs unless you are absolutely clear about the law in your adopted country, and have a good lawyer and a well-established lettings agency to support you.

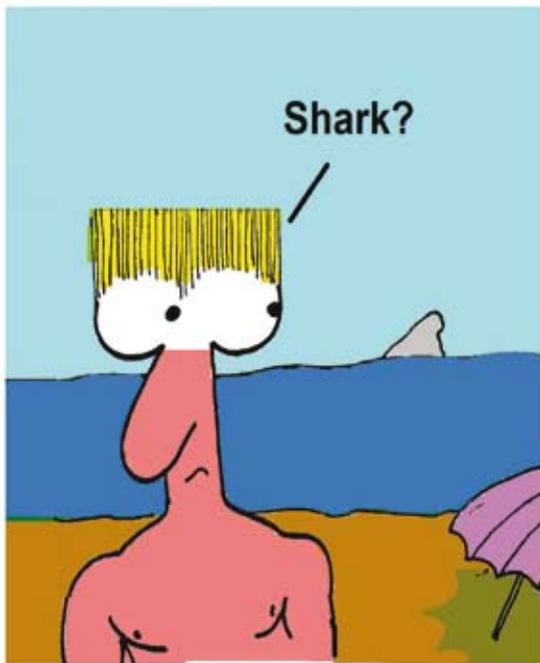


If you enjoyed this article, take a look at Barrie's websites: www.bariemahoney.com and www.thecanaryislander.com or read his latest book, 'Threads and Threats' (ISBN: 9781843866466)

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