

mxFlirt



Hugh Grant and Drew Barrymore find instant chemistry in their latest flick *Music and Lyrics*.

LOVE IN A JIFFY

Can you really fall in love in just three days? **ALAINA VIER** asks date doctor Sam van Rood for his top romance tips.



Up the adrenalin hit with a rollercoaster ride.

PLAY HIDE AND SEEK

Be around them and then make yourself scarce. Studies show that repeated exposure to people makes you like them more, plus the law of scarcity makes people always want what they can't get.

STOCK UP ON CANDLES

If you are taking your hottie on a romantic dinner, make sure it's candlelit. Low lighting makes your pupils much bigger and gives you "bedroom eyes" for instant appeal. Scientists have found that if your pupils are large, the opposite sex will find you twice as attractive.

UNLEASH YOUR ADRENALIN JUNKIE

Get the adrenalin pumping – experiments have found that people are more likely to find each other attractive in dangerous or exciting situations. So if you want to boost your chances of falling in love, take your squeeze rock climbing, skydiving or for a ride on a rollercoaster.

BE NICE

Let your partner do things for you – it makes you and them feel good, although be aware that if you do too many nice things, it can be overwhelming or misinterpreted.

Light up your bedroom eyes.



USE THAT LOVING FEELING

Exploit your partner's love bias. According to mating intelligence psychologist Glenn Geher, men have a "she wants me" approach to flirting, and will presume women are more interested than they are.

THE EYES HAVE IT

Stare into your date's eyes and make them fall in love with you – literally! According to Harvard studies, people who are in love spend more than 75 per cent of their time staring into each other's eyes. By staring lovingly into their eyes, you will stimulate their brain to kick-start feelings of love by making the love drug PEA, the one that makes your tummy flip and your heart race.

HAPPY ENDINGS

Remember that once they fall in love with you, 95 per cent of people see their lover as above average in appearance, intelligence, warmth and sense of humour.

HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?

DR BELLA



"It makes one wonder how many bald Britneys and Anna Nicole Smiths returned from the afterlife will be out this year?"

I am a party girl. Numerologically a "3", invite me somewhere wild, and I'll be there. With bells on. (That said, event organisers have no excuses not to send me invites to VIP parties, such as Melbourne's imminent fashion week).

Really, the ancient Greeks and Romans had it right. They even had a God of Good Times: the very naughty Dionysus. He represented the intoxicating power of wine, music and sensuality. Also known as the patron deity of liberation, Dionysus helped free people from their normal selves, to eradicate their worries through the workings of ecstasy and alcohol. Gatherings held in his name celebrated passion and delightfully wicked pleasures.

Throughout the ages pagan festivals have been popular across the lands. Of this, western folklorist Robert Smith writes: "In accounts of savage and peasant festivities great account has been taken of their licentious aspects: fighting in the streets, drunkenness and debauchery." Oooh, such fun!

Today, we still have some pretty hot parties that even Dionysus would give his stamp of approval to – or rather, a case of Dom Perignon. The Jazz Festival in New Orleans. Oktoberfest in Munich. Carnival in Rio. Here in Oz, we have Melbourne Cup Day, the Big Day Out and, of course, the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade.

Yes, boys and girls, the time has come to strut your stuff along Oxford St. Mardi Gras is here. We're looking forward to the Dykes on Bikes and the Barbie Rainbow Float, the music, the bottoms, that feeling of being free in who you are and of dancing in the sun. Describing the event last year, the parade's creative

director Graeme Browning said: "It's like Christmas for the gay and lesbian community."

It's also a way of redefining and raising the visibility of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer communities. And saying "stick it" to the ultra conservatives, who still have a strong voice throughout the country – in our offices, our parliament, everywhere. Homophobia isn't dead. Far from it.

The Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade originated 29 years ago as a protest in Sydney against a ban on homosexuality in Australia. That night there were 53 arrests and reports of police brutality. It took until 1984 for homosexuality to be decriminalised in this country.

Sydney embraces the parade. And why wouldn't it when last year's Mardi Gras contributed about \$46 million to NSW's economy? It enticed about 6000 international visitors, most from Britain and the US.

But enough of social issues, politics and economics. Let's talk costumes.

The Sydney Mardi Gras has been plugged as one of the top 10 costume parties on Earth, according to Conde Nast. Costumes are often used to subvert popular culture. For example, last year at the parade there were numerous Kate Moss look-alikes snorting fake cocaine. It makes one wonder how many bald Britneys and Anna Nicole Smiths returned from the afterlife will be out this year? And if the unofficial theme of last year's Mardi Gras was *Brokeback Mountain*, which film will provide inspiration for 2007? *Snakes on a Plane*, *The Queen* or ... *Happy Feet*?

Best of luck in love.

BTW

Questions, thoughts, sexual tips?
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