

# TRUE ROMANCE

SEX IS EASY, LOVE IS HARD. ANYBODY CAN FIND A MAN FOR A NIGHT, BUT IT'S NOT AS SIMPLE TO FIND ONE TO SHARE YOUR LIFE WITH. HELP IS AT HAND, REPORTS JESSE MATHESON.



While hook-up websites and iPhone apps have made it easy to find a quick tumble in the proverbial hay, they can leave one of your organs feeling a little neglected. We're talking about your heart, that little thump in your chest that not only keeps your blood flowing but is also front and centre when you fall in love.

It's no challenge to find another man for sex, but it can be difficult to find somebody to love, especially when you take into account the promiscuity of our community, where emphasis is placed on instant gratification rather than deeper encounters.

Bars, nightclubs and the internet are not the ideal place to find "the one", which is why it's great that in Australia there's now an alternative.

Inspired by their own story of true love and romance, partners Vinko and Andrea have opened the nation's first gay matchmaking agency, Beau Brummell Introductions. Operating discretely from their Potts Point apartment, the pair take a different approach to dating than the

or the like and are seeking a long-term relationship," Vinko says. "We both travel a lot and in New York and Europe the trendiest thing to have is a matchmaker."

One of their main goals is to personalise the matchmaking experience. "We sit down and talk to the clients, get to know them and their life. We see everyone face-to-face and then match people."

Unlike current dating agencies that require customers to specifically list what they want in a partner, focusing mainly on physical attraction, Vinko and Andrea emphasise mutual passion and romance when joining guys together.

"We made this service because we had a beautiful relationship and story and we wanted to give the same kind of romance to people who are a bit lost with the other services," Andrea says, while cradling his partner's hand in his own. "They are mostly about sex, taking photos for profiles and beautiful bodies, but we aren't about that."

Of course, not everybody is looking

people to have dinner with."

Vinko agrees. "People come in feeling they don't have anywhere else to go, that they don't have time to meet people, but that isn't saying that everyone on our books works seven days a week."

When matching two men to each other, Vinko and Andrea believe it's not about face value or preferences, but about that "deeper connection".

"We ring and say, 'We think you guys would really like each other,'" Vinko says. "It's about getting to know the person."

Ben is a successful businessman who was one of the first to sign up to the service, saying he couldn't find what he wanted on hook-up websites. "Initially they're a great novelty and some fun is had occasionally," he says. "At the end of the day, though, they are purely for lust. I want more than sex."

Simply putting himself out there on the scene has also failed to achieve the results Ben is looking for. "I have not really been able to find the style of guys I would like to spend time with, or find anyone that came close to the type of guy I would like to have as a boyfriend [in nightclubs]."

Ben regards Beau Brummell Introductions as an investment in his future, saying he thinks of Vinko and Andrea as "personal social coaches", helping him meet new people and, hopefully, find his Mr Right.

"I want someone I can look forward to going home to, dining out, walking along the beach, weekends away and travelling," said Ben. "Someone who will complement me and others would say, 'What a great couple.' I am after good old-fashioned love."

Of course, the legwork of building a relationship is still down to each partner. Ben says the agency simply helps him find the men who are looking for serious long-term relationships. "Andrea and Vinko will shoot me straight past that issue and I will be happy to meet the guy who is there for the same reason as me. It's also easy to start talking because we are on the same page."

As Vinko says, "Our service is totally the opposite of what other services offer. We're offering to look after people, set them up with others who are similar to them and help forge long-term relationships."

Having met on a holiday in Dubrovnik, along the Adriatic sea, Vinko and Andrea serendipitously caught the same return flight to Vienna, allowing the seeds for their relationship to be sown. While the rest of us may not have the same brush with fate as they did, Andrea believes a successful relationship comes down to more than just luck.

"You need to get to know somebody," he says. "When you have a relationship with somebody, you spend more time with each other. Then you are waiting for a telephone call and your heart is beating faster and faster... that is what a relationship is about."

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average gay man is used to, by bringing personal connections back into the equation.

"It hasn't been done here and we think there is a huge niche in the market of people who are busy professionals

for love and some just want to meet other people, as Andrea explains, "They are all professional, single men who are open and think, 'Even if it doesn't start a relationship, I could still meet interesting

Partners Vinko and Andrea aim to bring the joy of relationships to their clients at Beau Brummell Introductions.

