

MILLIONAIRE MATCHMAKER

Trudy Gilbert runs match-making agency Elite Introductions. She reveals to *Penthouse* the art of pairing well-to-do singles

Interview: Meg White

How would you describe people's view of dating agencies

in Australia, as opposed to in the US or UK?

In the US or UK, agencies have been around for a little bit longer, so I think there's less of a stigma. And I can see that in the five years we've been operating the stigma is slowly starting to disappear. People are realising it's just an effective, efficient way to go about meeting somebody—our agency is not about the desperate and dateless by any means; you have to be highly eligible to join.

What constitutes "eligible"?

Basically, the requirements for joining the agency are the standards our current

members are looking for in others. We're just the voice of who they want.

What exactly is involved in the matching process?

We do it the old-fashioned way; by getting to know someone. We spend time with them, trying to get an understanding of their personality, their energy levels, their interests, their lifestyle, their life experience... a whole range of things. From that, we get a fair assessment of who they are. Then we create a partner profile, and that allows us to run a search to see how many people we have on our books who would be compatible with that person. We make a long list based on their phone consultation, and then after I've got to know them better, I go back to that list and cut it.

We understand your agency has outlasted many others. What do you think is the secret behind your success?

Basically, we have a really high calibre of applicants. They have so much compatibility with one

another. I think our branding and marketing really attracts the right client. Also, we are very selective with who we take on. We don't take just anybody and hope for the best, which I think is an approach that's got other agencies into trouble in the past.

What do you do if there aren't any potential matches?

We tell them we'll touch base in a month or two. Everybody is at a different point in the dating game. Some people are in relationships, some are waiting for a date, some have just gone on a date. So people who were not available become available, and new people join the service who could end up being compatible. It's constantly changing and evolving.

What's the key to a good first date?

The key to a good first date, I think, is doing something a little bit fun, a little bit different. Something casual that can be extended if desired, but something a little bit out of the ordinary. Everyone does dinner or the drinks. I recently had a couple who went out on the gentleman's speedboat on Sydney Harbour. And another couple had a 28-hour date. They met up for a drink, and then they drove down to the snow and went skiing for the day. I always tell my men that they should have the woman do most of the talking; they should be asking her a lot of questions and making her feel like the focus of the date.

Has the service led to any marriages?

"Our agency is not about the desperate and dateless... you have to be highly eligible"

Yes, we've had several marriages. The first one was a couple who had only been dating for five months. And we actually had our first baby born last August.

That's pretty special. What kind of women sign on for the service?

Our women are professional; some are business owners. We have a lot of very savvy entrepreneurs across a range of dynamic and vibrant industries. A lot of our women are looking for men who are truly their equal—someone who is confident, charismatic and good-humoured; a gentleman who has been raised with old-fashioned values. The women are financially secure, so they're not looking for somebody to support them by any means. They're fit, athletic, well-groomed, stylish and attractive. The women we represent get approached constantly by men who want to go out with them, but they are selective about who they want to be with, and that's why they join. ◯