

Life

Sunday

The Sunday Age Magazine



Wipeout!
The embarrassing
moments we'd most
like to forget...

Behind the scenes
of the Australian Open

How healthy is the
health-food aisle?

NOW & THEN

Now The total number of animals received
by the **RSPCA** Australia
is **146,821**

Then In 1996-97,
it was **158,109**



The couple
Doug Bull and Gleny Rae,
together for one year.

For better, for worse

Singer-songwriter Gleny Rae, 35, met double-bass player Doug Bull, 39, at the Tamworth Country Music Festival in 2004. Music brought them together but it also means that in between cross-country gigs, theirs is a long-distance relationship.

Gleny says "A mutual friend introduced me to Doug in [January] 2004 and in October, I asked him if he'd be interested in touring with the Toe Sucking Cowgirls for 10 days. Ten days on the road is a great way to get to know somebody. Not many people can handle travelling in a cramped bus across the NT so well. I found that attractive.

We caught up in December 2005 on the premise of forming a new band but, deep down, I think we both knew it was time to be together.

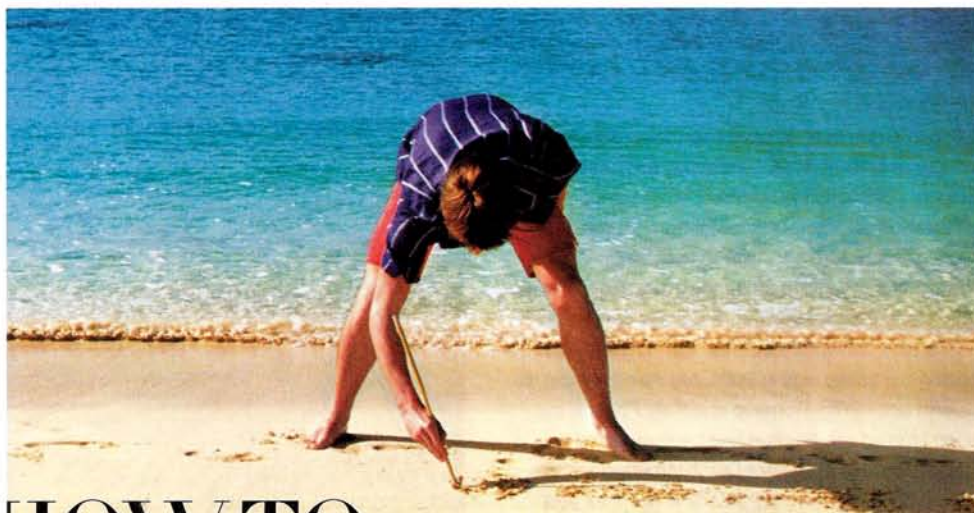
We live a split-level life; aside from touring, I live in Brunswick Heads [in northern NSW] for university and Doug lives in Newcastle with his nine-year-old daughter. It's a bit wearing on both of us but we always laugh about the benefits of celebrating a honeymoon every fortnight. We ran into a bit of trouble in the beginning when we weren't organised with phones and things but we've got it sorted now.

We have a complete trust in each other but sometimes you're feeling a bit lost or low and you just need reassurance. The best thing is our mutual understanding of the situation. Nobody's understood my passion for music like Doug. When you fall in love, you also fall in love with people's past and their passions."

Doug says "I developed a crush on Gleny the first time I met her. Imagine my joy when she asked me to tour with her band in the Territory. After 10 days of painfully platonic interaction on the road, I hatched a five-year plan to get together with her.

We've had a musical honeymoon but the challenges are there. When Gleny isn't performing somewhere, she lives 742 kilometres away from me in Newcastle. I don't want to count the number of flights I've taken this year. We've both had colourful pasts; we know what touring is like and it's hard sometimes to keep your demons in check. It's like a religion; you've just got to have faith.

I do find myself sulking occasionally before a long separation, which helps no one. Gleny is a lot more emotionally mature than me and her selfless style arms me for the battles with jealousy and doubt. For anyone in this industry to have a relationship on the road, trust is imperative, sacred and non-negotiable. The last one I've learned from Gleny, along with patience." *Louisa Deasey*



HOW TO...

write a thankyou note

The best thankyou notes are brief," says David Meagher, author of *It's Not Etiquette: A Guide To Modern Manners* (Random House). "All you need are two sentences. In the first, it's important that you use the words 'thank you' and state what you're grateful for, be it a gift, a dinner party or emotional support. In the next sentence, pick out the notable feature of whatever you are thanking the person for and say something positive about it.

For example, 'The colour of the vase goes beautifully in our home' or 'The food was fantastic' or 'I am learning to be more positive thanks to your encouragement' and so on."

Although traditional etiquette dictates that a thankyou note be offered in the same format as the invitation, Meagher believes such rules are becoming increasingly relaxed. "Don't get too hung up on format," he says. "The 'thank you' component is far more important than the note itself so whether it's via SMS, email or a handwritten card, it's the expression of your feelings that matters most."

Timing is as important as ever, though. "Send your message within a day or two of the event," says Meagher, "so the person quickly realises that you are grateful for their efforts." *David Smiedt*