

Chesty Bondi Vet

He's blonde, built and loves animals. Hurrah! Bondi Vet Dr Chris Brown tells us about his gay mates, gay animals and why he won't wear white singlets.

DNA: You've been a vet for many years. How did the whole Bondi Vet gig come about?

Chris Brown: I was doing *Talk To The Animals* on Channel Nine and filming a segment on dental care for pets, which can be a little dull. But we suddenly got a call to the clinic from a young girl whose dog was giving birth. So we dropped everything and rushed down with a camera crew to film the situation. In the middle of me struggling to get the puppy out, the girl whispered in my ear that she had video of the puppies being conceived. She basically had dog porn! So after the puppies were out, she decided to put the tape on and it was a bizarre situation. My boss loved the quirks of it all and asked if there were any other

moments like that at the clinic. Of course there were, so next thing we were shooting a pilot based around my work. *Bondi Vet* was born and bought by Channel Ten.

How have you found the transition from outback vet to Logie nominee?

Well, the variety of the job is one of the reasons I became a vet, but I didn't expect to get as much as I do. I can go from the Logies one night to being back at work the next day cleaning poo out of a cage. I go from some very glamorous heights to some very grounded lows, I can assure you!

Are you aware of the relationship between gay men and their cats?

Not really, but I do have a theory that people

choose pets that reflect who they are, and it's a personality thing as well. I find that people who are fit, like personal trainers, tend to own Staffies. Whereas people with a good sense of humour tend to like Boxers or pugs. And girls that are very princessy and refined have dogs like Chihuahuas or fluffy dogs that are elegant and dainty. It's really interesting.

Why do you think gay men and straight women are more into cats than dogs?

Gee, I've never really thought about that before. Perhaps it has something to do with independence?

Yes, maybe. All those cat food commercials tend to feature the single person coming home from work to their adoring hungry cat.

That's true! And the cat is always circling the can of food with an attitude that borders on selfishness, once the can of food is opened!

Do you have gay mates?

I've got a lot more than I used to have, thanks

to my girlfriend Zoe [Ventoura]. She works as an actor and through her I have quite a few gay friends that I catch up with regularly.

How did you and Zoe meet?

Funnily enough, it was through her cat. She brought her cat into the clinic one day, but we had crossed paths before in the television industry and have a few mutual friends.

A lot of gay men think you are hot. How do you feel about that?

I find it amusing. I don't really take myself too seriously, but I see it as a compliment and I'll gladly take it with both hands and run. In fact, about an hour ago I went to the post office and the guy behind the counter said, "Aren't you the Chesty Bonds man?" So I guess I'm the equivalent of a real-life cartoon character.

Yes, the Chesty Bonds comparison is definitely there.

My mates always look like some actor or a sportsman, but I'm always a cartoon character. I'm either Chesty Bonds, Mr Incredible or, on occasions, Roger Ramjet.

Do you wear the Chesty Bonds singlet?

Well, to be honest, I can actually see the comparison. I've walked past a store window with the Bonds display and thought, "Yeah, fair enough, that's me." I do wear singlets quite a bit, when I'm working outdoors or running, but I don't wear white ones now as I'm worried people will think the Chesty Bonds man has come to life and is walking down the street!

Have you ever been mistaken as gay?

Occasionally I get asked if I'm gay which

George Michael, Lady Gaga or Pink?

I saw Pink at the ARIAs and I thought she was awesome. She has a great energy and attitude. But she's also a great musician as well. She just gets out there and unleashes. Until the ARIAs I wasn't really a Pink fan, but when I saw her do *So What* it took me three minutes and 45 seconds to become a fan.

As a vet, have you ever experienced animals that are gay?

[Laughing] Yeah, I have! I find it a really interesting topic. Some people say it's society that makes people gay or the way you grow up, but my strong belief is that you are born gay. I really believe that. What I find interesting about animals is that there are specific examples of where animals are gay. You can't say that society made those animals gay. Those circumstances, to me, prove that it is genetic.

What have you seen to support that theory?

I've seen dogs that are only interested in sniffing or mounting other male dogs, and I've seen it with female dogs as well. There are even dogs that are meant to be breeding dogs but are very bad at breeding with females. The most interesting examples of gay animals are the gay penguins. Have you heard of that?

Yes, and I believe you had a pet penguin?

Yeah, I did! [Laughing] With the penguins in the New York Zoo, they were paired off for breeding, but two males paired up. They didn't show any interest in the females and only wanted to hang out with the males. They actually put an artificial egg in with them and



also over the weekends. But to get such a nice following is a massive buzz, and a relief. It's a rollercoaster watching the ratings. It's like getting your HSC results every week.

What about quirky situations at the clinic?

Well I had a dog that came in vomiting and the owner was really worried, as his wife loved the dog. We checked him over and found it had something in its stomach. So we operated and pulled it out. When the couple came to pick up the dog, we showed them the G-string we had found in the dog's stomach. The only problem was that the wife didn't wear G-strings!

We also did some silicone testicle implants on a dog. It was a bulldog that had a lot of testosterone in its system and was really out of control. The dog needed to be castrated to settle it down but the owner wouldn't have it done. His girlfriend told me it was because he liked the look of the dog's balls. So I told him about a vet in LA who had used silicone testicle implants on a dog and he said, "Yes, do it!" So I had two silicone dog testicles air-freighted and I implanted them.

Are you into jocks, boxers or freeballing?

I'm a jocks man. I've spent too much time running around on the go and you need a bit of support. I wear boardies on the beach for running and I've been using the new European swim trunks lately for swimming.

Speedos get such a bad rap these days because people like Tony Abbott wear them.

Yes, they need someone better to endorse them. **Like you – bringing us back to Chesty Bonds!** So you reckon the white singlet and the speedos? That would be a very brave look! I like that. Being the real-life Chesty Bonds guy could be the career I never had. ★

Bondi Vet returns later in the year on Network Ten.

“My strong belief is that you are born gay... There are specific examples where animals are gay and those circumstances prove that it is genetic.”

surprises my girlfriend because I act quite straight, but being compared to the fit, healthy and attractive stereotypical image of a gay guy is a pretty good compliment!

So if you were gay, who would you hit on?

[Laughing] Sir David Attenborough! But if the age gap proved too large, Bernard Fanning.

You surf a lot, but are you also a gym boy?

I'm one of those people who go to the gym once a month to buff myself up and then can't straighten my arms for a week. I don't like being confined indoors, so I'm more of an outdoors person. I do running, swimming and surfing with sit-ups and pull-ups... that sort of thing. And close to the beach here in Bondi there's a lot of opportunity to do that. I just got a stand-up paddleboard and I find it really good exercise.

What's the campest song on your iPod?

I'd say *Summer Rain* by Belinda Carlisle, but I'm not sure how I even got that on there.

Who would you rather see in concert –

the two males shared the nesting duties. But the zoo people weren't happy because they wanted them to breed, so they tried to find the hottest penguin they could and flew one in from a zoo in Sweden. But of course the two males stayed together.

It's the exact same as the 1950s when aversion therapy was used to try and cure gay men.

Yeah, it's interesting that these vets, scientists and zoo keepers are about fifty years behind in their thinking. Maybe one day they'll accept gay animals.

What's your porn name?

It's a good one. Penny Scenic!

That sounds more like a drag name!

[Laughing] With a name like Scenic, it certainly implies that the view is great!

What's been the highlight of your career?

It's hard to go past having your own TV show and for it to be a success. It's something I've had to pour my heart and soul into for many months, and I'm still on-call every night and