

# PETE'S NUTS!

Australian game show *My Kitchen Rules* is back, along with its dashing host, Pete Evans. He tells Matt Myers about his recipe for success and his very public penchant for activating his nuts.



**DNA: Most of our Straight Mates have a close gay friend, but you've got a special family member.**

**Pete Evans:** My grandmother was a lesbian and she was a brave woman back in the day. She's not with us anymore, but she taught me everything there is to know about respecting one another and loving another person.

**Being gay back in that era would have been so hard.** Yeah, she obviously had a man in her early years, but I don't think that worked out too well. She found happiness with another lady and they lived together for around forty years.

**Have you ever been mistaken for gay?** I grew up on the Gold Coast, which at the time was pretty homophobic. I moved to Melbourne at 17 to start cooking and had an older girlfriend from England who would take me out to gay rave parties. I loved them! The message got back to my old mates that Pete's gay. He's going to gay dance parties! They all dropped me and didn't want to know me. How shallow is that?

**You've cooked for Princess Mary of Denmark and even U2.** Yeah, I cooked a barbecue for Bono and the band at their house in Sydney. I made steaks with chimichurri sauce and they loved it. They had Peter Garrett there, too. Can you imagine the conversation with Bono and Peter Garrett? I was asking how they wanted their steaks done and they were talking about fixing the world's problems!

**Is there anyone out there who you'd like to cook for?** The surfer Kelly Slater. Everyone has a man crush on him. He's a remarkable athlete and an ambassador for sportspeople globally. I'd love to cook him a meal with my family. I'd like to get some insight into his philosophy on life. I think he's got it pretty well sussed out.

**Now that you've said it in this interview, it could very well happen.** I'm a firm believer in putting things out into the universe and getting back what you're after, both positive and negative. I'm filming a healthy cooking show in America, *Pete Evans Healthy Everyday*. It's about my Paleo diet and looking after yourself with some great simple recipes, so maybe I can get Kelly on that.

**Going back to man crushes, who's yours?** I used to have a man crush on Johnny Depp, until he did *The Lone Ranger*! As far as style goes, Johnny Depp has always had it in spades. He's quite a charismatic and enigmatic figure.

**Gay marriage. Will we see it in our lifetime?** For sure, it has to happen. I can't believe it hasn't happened yet. All I know about human nature is that a lot of people don't like change and everything is governed by fear and love. I'd happily be an ambassador for you guys and gay marriage.

**Are you aware there are guys out there who think you're hot?** I'd say there's something wrong with them [laughs]. Mate, I'm just a kid from the Gold Coast who cooks. If people think I'm hot then wow, that's a great compliment!

**Your appetite for activated almonds made front-page news!** [Laughs] Are you going to use that as a headline, *Pete's Nuts*?

**Great idea! Tell us about your nuts, Pete.** My nuts have been well and truly activated by the Australian media, and I thank them for that.

“My grandmother was a lesbian and she taught me everything there is to know about respecting one another and loving another person.”

Some people spend their whole lives trying to get their nuts into the mainstream and I managed to do it in one go!

**Was that whole episode surreal?** I think it was a slow news day. I was asked to write down what I ate for a day and told the truth. I wasn't going to sugarcoat it to appease anyone else. I didn't think for a minute that it would create any controversy, but I'm glad it did because it raised the whole thing about health food and nutrition. My goal is to get people questioning what they put into their shopping trollies and mouths.

**Do you soak your nuts?** [Laughs] I soak them longer than others! Hopefully people realised that if you soak them overnight and rinse them it makes them easier to digest, and that's why they had a problem with nuts all their

life. I've found that if you can spark an interest about a topic it can have a domino effect. People will ask what else is on Pete's list? He drinks alkalised water, what is that? They might think it's a load of crap or they might try it for a month. Your body is the best barometer on whether something works for you.

**Apart from the restaurants and TV hosting, you've written seven cookbooks, developed a pizza oven for Breville, cookware for Baccarat and kitchen sinks for Clark sinks.**

**Where does the drive come from?** I think it was becoming a chef as a youngster. I started my apprenticeship at 17, worked two different jobs and opened a restaurant at 19. It was bloody hard work and now everything seems quite easy and simple compared to those long hours. Once you've pushed yourself to the limit, you can do anything.

**What makes *My Kitchen Rules* such compelling viewing?** A lot of ingredients go into making this particular recipe, and we've been fine-tuning them over the last five series. It's like anything in that when you start off with a recipe, you keep tweaking it. We try to keep making it more current, more modern and more appealing to people's tastes.

**You and Manu have to keep a poker face while judging – is that hard to hold?** We have become masters of the poker face! It's from all those years we spent training at NIDA [laughs]. But do we get emotionally involved? Yes, as we go on the journey with the contestants and see all the sacrifices they make. A lot of people leave their careers and families to be on the show. We definitely sympathise with them, but at the end of the day, we can only judge the food that's on the plate.

**What was the turning point from restaurateur to television host?** I wish I had a definitive answer. I started on TV reluctantly. I was the shiest kid you could imagine. I was offered an audition to do a television show on Foxtel 14 years ago and turned it down, as I couldn't think of anything worse. A week later I was offered another audition for the same show and I thought the universe obviously had something in store for me. I didn't want to have a 'what if' moment ten years later, so I did the audition and got the job. I've had a lot of counselling and saw a kinesiologist to help with clearing negative patterns. This helped me feel comfortable in front of the camera and a large group of people.

**So does Pete Evans wear jocks, fitted boxers or freeball?** I wear boxer briefs when I have to wear clothes, but normally I don't wear too much around the house.

**Is there a connection here between freeballing and activated nuts?** That would be correct!

*more: My Kitchen Rules airs on Channel Seven. For more on Pete Evans visit [www.peteevans.com.au](http://www.peteevans.com.au)*