



DANCING ON AIR



Australia's favourite TV host, Grant Denyer discusses his wild night at Stonewall, hanging with Bieber, nuding-up and *Dancing With The Stars*.

DNA: Congratulations on last year's Gold Logie win. Has that changed your life?

Grant Denyer: I'm now walking around with my pecs further out and peacocking the world! I don't live for the fame of television or accolades but, after 20 years in the game, to win an award in this industry is pretty special. They were genuine tears I had on stage.

You won *Dancing With The Stars* back in 2006. You're now the host. Do you still feel the urge to get up and dance?

Apart from a drunken night or two on the dance floor, I didn't really dance before. But the thing about being on *Dancing With The Stars* is that it's so beautiful, magical and glamorous. It was such a powerful period in my life because, let's face it, you start out shit, and then you're doing things you never thought you'd be comfortable with. That makes you feel incredible. It transforms you!

What gets you on the dance floor?

It doesn't take much! I'll dance to anything. It can be something daggy from Smash Mouth or Michael Jackson. If someone gives me that imaginary rope-pull onto the dance floor, mate, I'm there in a heartbeat. My karaoke go-to tune is Bonnie Tyler's *Total Eclipse Of The Heart*.

Who's your diva?

Dannii Minogue. I hosted *Australia's Got Talent* and she was a judge and she operated at a level I'm not familiar with. She's such a strong, confident and powerful woman and she's downright gorgeous. My first-born, Sailor, lived under the judges' desk. She was less than a year old, and during the ad breaks Dannii would play with her. She's also a knock-out singer. She has an aura.

You've been known to hit the clubs with your gay mates. Any stories?

Yeah, I've spent a few nights at Arq [club in Sydney], which is intimidating because they all have their shirts off! I've also found myself in Stonewall a few times. In fact, I was actually sent home from Stonewall. I had decided I'd had enough to drink but ended up giving my wallet away to people! The staff very kindly put me into a cab, looked after my wallet, and reunited us the next day.

A while back, there was a naked shot of you

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Grant loving motorsport!

paddle-boarding, but it, sadly, turned out to be fake news!

Yes, I put that out there because it was the fake news I wanted! I don't have a lot of body confidence, so I'd have to work up to the real thing. I was the fittest I've ever been last year but it was a busy time and I find when I'm tired I drink and eat. I'm getting back into shape. Everybody at work is getting ready for Mardi Gras and they look incredible.

Speaking of Mardi Gras, in 2010 you covered the Spencer Tunick nude art shoot at the Sydney Opera House and spontaneously joined in! That required some... balls!

It was insane! There was this utterly great event and I wanted to cover it live, and this chant started in the crowd. About five people started yelling, "Grant, Grant, Grant," and then there were ten, 50, 100 and then it became so loud it overpowered me. So my clothes came off and the producers shit themselves because it was live television. It was completely unplanned! It felt like a moment with a lot of love in it, and I wanted to be a part of that.

You were a long-time supporter of marriage equality. Thank you for that.

My pleasure. But it was a no-brainer. Who gives a shit what you look like or who you are? If you're in love then you're lucky because there's a hell of a lot of people who aren't. I understand

how uncomfortable it would've been [during the national debate] to be judged... with people having opinions on what your rights should be.

You've been voted Australia's Spunkiest Male TV Personality, Sexiest Presenter On TV and Most Dateable Male. Not bad titles to have!

How do you feel about those?

I've never thought of myself as a catch or considered myself super-attractive. The Spunkiest Male was the first award I'd ever won, and it blew me away because growing up I found it hard to find a partner. If I went to a club, no one would look at me.

You were involved in a pretty bad accident and seriously injured while V8 Supercar racing. Are those days behind you?

Hell, no! It's part of my DNA. I've been racing since I was 16. All I wanted to be was a racing car driver. I only got into television because I tried to find sponsors for motor racing.

Fab fact: you have five Guinness World Records to your name. Please explain!

Only one of them is awesome, the others are lame. They involve the world's largest underwater dance class and the most kisses on the face, pulling on the most amount of underwear and bursting the most balloons in 60 seconds. But the proper one was the world's longest tandem bungee jump, which I did out of a helicopter over Bondi Beach.

You do have balls, don't you?

Yeah, I do! It's weird because on television you can do things you don't do in everyday life. But half the reason I left *Sunrise* was because my addition to adrenalin was getting out of hand. I kept one-upping myself to a point where I thought, "I'm going to die on national television if I keep this up." Wrestling crocodiles and getting shot out of a cannon made me think I'd used eight of my nine lives.

Who has been your favourite person to interview or meet?

Justin Bieber and I really connected. I was covering his concert in Sydney and it was so bombarded with fans... I got lost in the wild crowd and was rescued by security. Then when I met Bieber, we calmed down the crowd together. That was pretty next level. I even ended up in his movie.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever received?

Find a reason to smile in everything you do, and everything that happens. I think that in every negative situation there's something funny, or something to be learned.

Family Feud had many comic moments. What was the most memorable?

My favourite was the lady who came from the town of Muff in Ireland. I asked if there was a sign outside the town saying, "You are now entering Muff," and she said there was! And because it's a coastal town, there's also the Muff Diving Club. They're now organising a sign when you leave that says, "Thanks for coming." *Family Feud* had crazy moments. Like the lady who put her hand down the back of my pants.

What?

She tried to put her finger in my bottom! I didn't quite know what to make of it. People seem to be very comfortable with me. They'll pick me up and throw me around, but that means we're all getting along well.

In all your time on air, have you ever had a wardrobe malfunction?

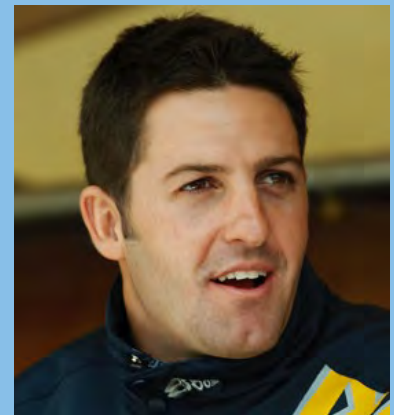
I wore a man-kini on television once and I remember being a little unkempt downstairs and the only thing we had were some nail scissors, so I spent about 15 minutes trying to trim the area for free-to-air TV! I've gone out a couple of times with my fly open and undies showing. On *Family Feud* I'd have five minutes to change for six shows a day, and changing at that pace is like being a stripper.

What's the story about you adjusting yourself behind the podium on Family Feud?

After a joke I have a reflex to grab myself, and I didn't know I did this. On *Family Feud* I used to get it out of the way behind the podium. But then I did a television commercial for 2Day FM, and when it went to air I was horrified to see I was re-adjusting the landing gear - doing a full package shuffle from the left to the right - in a national TV commercial!

That said, are you a briefs, boxers or free-balling man?

It's gotta be briefs. I like a lot of support. I don't like boxers because you have to be on one side or the other. I like to be symmetrical, middle, front and centre!



DNA: You once tweeted, "If I ever kissed a bloke, Craig Lowndes and Jamie Whincup would fight over who goes first. Not gay, love my cars." So, if you were gay, who would it be?

Grant: It would be Jamie (above) any day of the week. Jamie is the best in the business when it comes to motor sports, for which I have a passion.

MORE: Dancing With The Stars is on Network 10. Go to grantdenyer.com.au