

CONTRIBUTORS



CATHERINE O'MAHONY

Catherine O'Mahony is a journalist and editor who lives in Dublin with her partner and her nine year old daughter. She discusses the invisibility of the child-free woman in our Talking Point on page 22. "I love being a mother but think it's time the media – and everyone else – stopped implying there's anything wrong with not having children, particularly if that's your choice. Men are never judged on whether or not they have children. Why should women be?"



DAVID YOUNG

David Young is a freelance journalist and documentary maker, who runs his own media company, Post House Communications (posthouse.ie). After almost 10 years covering politics and all things cultural, both home and abroad, he had his work cut out for him this issue: exploring the male mind to find out what men really want when it comes to sex. "All I can say is: ladies, tread carefully as you make your way through my top ten lovemaking wish list. And gents, maybe just look away, and forgive the author for spilling the beans (well, some of them anyway)." Turn to page 90.



MICHAEL LEONG

Who best to create the season's hottest new hair styles? Michael Leong has been coiffuring for the best for years. "The looks were my take on all the trends that are coming through; vintage, textural, sculptural, with lots of volume and waves. I call it Glamazone! The focus is really on long hair this season; think of Prada and Versace couture, it's much more groomed, more polished. The whole thing is very sexy." Autumn sees brunettes take centre stage. "It's a move away from blond to the browns and brunettes and the jewel tones." His tip for next season? "Fringes are making a comeback, this time with a real gothic feel, swept over one eye." See his work on page 70.



SEARON MCGRATTAN

Our cover star Sinéad O'Connor was in the very capable hands of makeup artist Searon McGrattan. "I've worked with Sinéad before, so it was a chance for us to catch up." Searon kept the look fresh for this natural beauty. "Sinéad doesn't really like blush or lipstick and she has beautiful skin, so I just used the NARS Illuminator in Copacabana. And she has really long lovely lashes so I used lots of mascara." Searon was double jobbing this issue and also created the look for our editorial shoot where she spotted her winter must-have. "It was a McQ by Alexander McQueen wool cape. You could dress it up or down and I'd go everywhere and anywhere in it!"

ON THE COVER



SINÉAD O'CONNOR WEARS
Tailored black wool jacket (€885) by
Dolce & Gabbana @ Brown Thomas

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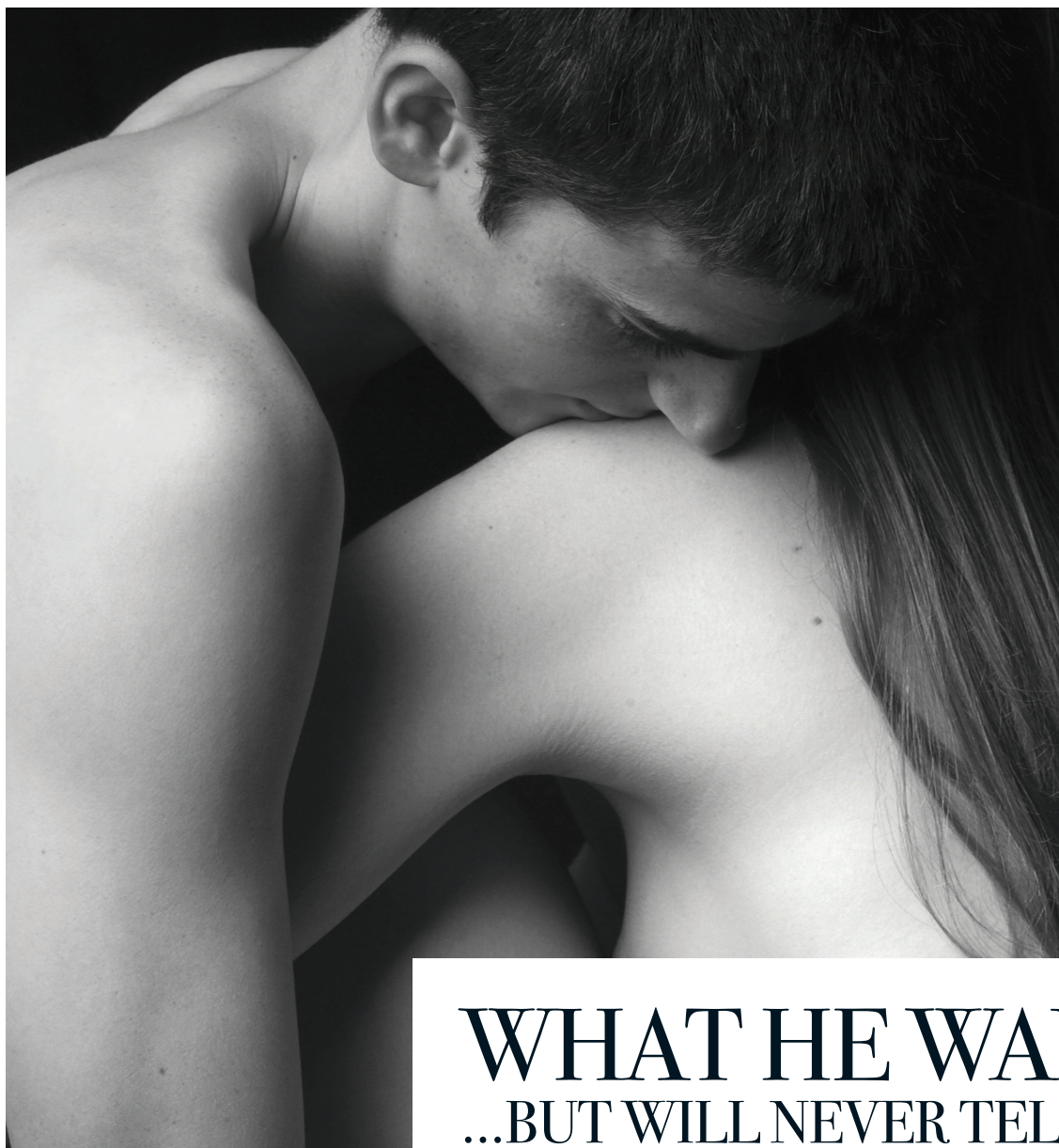
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WHAT HE WANTS ...BUT WILL NEVER TELL YOU

Call it shyness or the spectre of interminable mortification on their part, but gents are incredibly slow to make known some of the things that cross their minds...for fear you're going to think of them as, well, freaky. Or worse still, perverted. It's no surprise then that they're convinced you haven't twigged some of their low profile penchants.

"How could you possibly think I'd like to put a full-length mirror beside the bed? Sure, why would I want to see myself and yourself, you know...?" goes the female voice in a man's head. Hence, they keep such thoughts under lock and key.

According to Marie Daly, psychosexual therapist at Relationships Ireland, keeping the hatches firmly battened down on your sex life is no recipe for relationship success, inside or outside the bedroom.

"It's really about getting involved with your partner. Getting the playfulness back. And what any couple does in their bedroom is for them. There's nothing wrong or right. As long as they're both

happy with it," says Marie.

So, I picked the brains of a brave bunch of men, from different corners of the country, to provide you with an insight into male thinking. Here's a top ten for you to peruse, and possibly put into practice. (It'll mess with his world, no end.)

1. THE SLOW REVEAL

Getting an eyeful is probably the best place to start. Men are a visually-oriented bunch. What they see – much more so than what they smell or even taste – works best. Despite popular opinion suggesting that the full monty is what excites a man's

What do men really like? Or harbour as secret desires? Chances are they'll never tell us, unless we ply them with drink, or better yet, a truth serum, and even then it's hard not to feel like they're holding back. Instead, we got our man on the ground David Young to find out for us...

limbic system, it's quite the opposite.

"It's all about hints and suggestion," says Shane, a college lecturer in Galway. "It's not about getting straight down to your birthday suit. A little lingerie goes a long way. Even a simple camisole top. It's the idea of what's behind it that makes your head spin."

2. TAKING YOUR TIME

The quickie may be a pragmatic (and exhilarating) choice for the time-starved couple, but skipping foreplay isn't a winner every time. Men adore pre-sex playtime as much as the ladies. The myth of one, two, skip a few...99, 100 should be knocked on the head.

"Men aren't in an ever-ready state of mind. A quick squeeze and smooch isn't what we're looking for, at all. We like to take our time, and gaze at you. And take it all in. Slow-kissing and gentle massage – now that shouldn't be rushed," adds Shane.

3. GRABBING THE INITIATIVE

"When my girlfriend initiates love-making," says Bernard, an accountant from Dublin, "it catches me unawares. And I find it such a turn-on. For some reason, I just don't expect her to start things. A pleasant surprise? It's amazing. It makes me feel wanted."

Traditional sex roles still seem to prevail, with the weight of expectation bearing heavily on the shoulders of men to get the ball rolling. You making the first move will only ever end well.

4. HINTS

It's not always easy for men to read how their partners are feeling. In fact, it can be downright baffling. "Sometimes, I just don't have a clue if I'm doing the right thing when snuggling up to my partner," confesses Bernard.

"I'd give anything for a few signs. And even when we're making love...I'd love to hear her say what she really likes. I'm not talking 'commands', or lifting the roof. Just a little more volume. A little aural feedback would be magic. Even a whisper in my ear."

5. BE ADVENTUROUS

This is especially important to the long-standing couples – doing something a little different. You don't have to re-invent the wheel; maybe just spin it in the opposite direction, or a little more forcefully.

"My girlfriend," says Mark, a small business owner from Dundalk, "one night, out of the blue, decided to explore oral sex, like never before. I'd been agonising about how to broach the subject of, you know, lingering down there. And she must've read my mind. Let's just say she took her time. And we've never looked back."

6. TO BE SURPRISED

Try a little spontaneity. Out of nowhere, and when he's not even remotely contemplating sex, surprise him. A cheeky little under-the-table manoeuvre while sitting in a restaurant will certainly quicken the meal time, but add hours to the end of the day.

Mark remembers a special occasion: "My girlfriend grabbed my...attention during desert. We were out celebrating my 30th birthday, and once she started, I was hard-pressed to stay seated. As for getting home, we could hardly move fast enough."

7. NAUGHTY STUFF

The very idea of a usually demure partner not holding back gets the male pulse racing, without fail. Men would love their women to throw off the shackles, and do the things they themselves have been contemplating. But keeping under wraps.

"I was afraid to offend my then shy girlfriend, by asking her about her fantasies," admits James, mature PhD student, Cork. "I was convinced she'd think me downright weird. But once we got talking about what aroused her, it changed our bedroom dynamic for the better. Now, she doesn't hesitate to tell me when and how she wants to have sex. It's incredible."

8. TO BE IN CONTROL

Every man wants the woman in his life to see him as skilled in the art of love-

making. But things do go bump (and parp) in the night, as they say. And just so, real life sex isn't a smooth, seamless, perfectly-choreographed affair. When things do go wrong, any man wants to be equally adept at making his lady laugh.

"It can so easily kill the mood if my girlfriend and I get tangled up in a new position, and don't have a giggle about the clumsiness of it all," continues James. "A quick chuckle lets us get back to business before it all falls apart. It even makes us both more determined to try new things."

9. SPICY VARIETY

A step on from partners getting a little 'naughty', men dream of being sprung into action. That is, being told they want to be taken right there and then, be they in an elevator or on a picnic (!); and when in the throes of passion, they want this to be followed by their woman demanding proper manly behaviour. Of course, a lady turning the air blue can keep the momentum at full tilt.

"Arriving home to my girlfriend wanting to be ravaged," says Peter, soldier, Kildare. "Now that gets me fired up. Especially if she's mouthing like a sailor, and being intimate with herself while I'm tearing my clothes off."

10. SOFTLY, SOFTLY

"Being ordered to lie down for some special treatment," admits Peter. "That's a winner, every time. To be stroked and massaged all over. Starting at my forehead and working – slowly – all the way down to my toes, allowing her body press, astride, against mine. Now, that would reduce me to a quivering wreck."

Afterwards, ladies, any man will be putty in your hands. And all the happier to slip into a heavenly 'spooning' embrace. Men – simple really. ■

*"A lady turning the air
BLUE can keep the
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