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24TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL

2023 **Trusted Brands Supplement**

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Reader's Comments And Opinions

That's Awesome!

The article 'Find Awe In Everyday Life' (March) evokes how acts of kindness by both people close to us and strangers reinforces our belief in the 'awesomeness' of others. I recall an incident when, on a hot day, I had been waiting for what appeared to be an eternity for roadside assistance for my brokendown car. A stranger gave me an icy cold bottle of water and soothed my jaded nerves and frustration with her words of support. GREGORY JONES



'Find Awe In Everyday Life' made me think of something close to all of us: the human eye. It is awesome in its intricacy. Further, I'm awed by the skill and dedication of those who research, year after year, treatment of eye diseases. **EULALIE HOLMAN**

Seeking Out The Truth

I read 'Fighting Disinformation' (March) with great interest, as I believe that it is common today to accept what comes up in Google as being the gospel truth. Do we think and seek for ourselves, or just accept what the 'experts' tell us? In a war, truth is the first casualty and we are at war for the facts and truth in many ways.

We should all be truth-seeking sceptics, ferreting out the facts for ourselves, not accepting untested any claim, theory or so-called 'fact' by so-called 'experts'. **TERRY VEITCH**

Let us know if you are moved - or provoked - by any item in the magazine, share your thoughts. See page 7 for how to join the discussion.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Real Recognition

WHILE AUSTRALIA is well known as home to deadly snakes, spiders, sharks and crocs, few regard kangaroos as a threat. Yet as the urban sprawl continues to encroach onto the nation's bushland, seeing a frightened kangaroo hopping down your street isn't as rare as you'd think. Helen Signy investigates the causes behind the increase in attacks by this fondly regarded marsupial on page 38.

'Blending Into The Crowd' (page 100) offers help to anyone struggling to find likeminded peers. We chat with actor Hugh Jackman (page 26) and also investigate ways to protect our sense of smell (page 32).

Our Trusted Brands survey (page 139) celebrates excellence in brand messaging and performance across the Australian consumer market. The results of the 24th annual survey demonstrate that trust remains at the heart of the relationship between consumers and brands. Congratulations to all the trusted brands celebrating this hard-earned recognition for 2023.

We hope you enjoy the May issue.



LOUISE WATERSON Editor-in-Chief



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Putting Pen To Paper

I was impressed to read the winning letter from nine-year-old Lachlan Badowski (November, 2022). It is great to see such a young person who likes to write letters. We keep being told 'nobody writes letters any more' – but I do! And there are others out there. Everyone likes to receive something in the mail that is not a bill or junk mail. So, keep up the good work, Lachlan, and enjoy using your new fountain pen. PAMELA ROBB

Desert Beauty Queens

They don't wear make-up or lipstick but still know how to make an entrance. The camels of the Al Dhafra beauty pageant (April) are much loved by their owners and never complain about sand getting between their toes. MICHAEL WOUTERS

WIN A PILOT CAPLESS FOUNTAIN PEN

The best letter each month will win a Pilot Capless
Fountain Pen, valued at over
\$200. The Capless is the perfect combination of luxury and ingenious technology, featuring a one-of-a-kind retractable fountain pen nib, durable metal body, beautiful rhodium accents and a 14K gold nib. Congratulations to this month's winner, Gregory Jones.





MAKING A CONNECTION

We asked you to think up a funny caption for this photo.

Ah, the circuit of life!

Who wants to share some positive energy?

AMBER WOOD

If you guys don't start moving we are all gonna rust in peace.

CHRISTINA HATZIS

Square dancing.

GABRIELLA HOLLOWAY

United we stand, divided we malfunction.

ANGE HOGAN

Congratulations to this month's winner, Ange Hogan.



CAPTION CONTEST

Come up with the funniest caption for the above photo and you could win \$100. To enter, email editor@readersdigest.com.au or see details on page 7.



No. 1216 May 2023

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MY STORY

Postcards From The World

Thoughtful travellers reach out to bring hope

By Shannen Galavin

Thilst the sun washed over the grass of my grandmother's front garden, I sunk into the familiarity of one of her cane armchairs. Life, as I knew it, had changed. My beloved grandmother, my nanny, a stand-in parent in the absence of my father, had cancer. It was terminal.

As she watched *Getaway* on television, she remarked to me that she'd never left Australia and that now she never would. She was resigned to 'travel' via presenter Catriona Rowntree's Sunday afternoon items. I swallowed the sadness that came with knowing that chapters of her life were to be left unwritten.

At work, feeling helpless, I wiped



tables and took orders and thought. Hard. The Saturday afternoon lunch rush was not enough to lull me from my thoughts. Wracked with burgeoning grief, I pondered the power of Facebook and the collective strength of human empathy. I raced from the end of my shift to ask strangers on the internet for help.

My Nanny Del has cancer. It's terminal and she will never see the world. Please send her postcards so she can see the world from her armchair. I can offer nothing but gratitude.

I resolved not to breathe a word of this; should nothing come, I couldn't bear to carry her disappointment along with my own. Should something wander into our humble



little letterbox, I would consider it a blessing and embrace it like I did her little, shrinking frame.

Days turned to weeks and Nanny's health deteriorated rapidly in the early months of 2018. Life took me through the drudgery of full-time study, babysitting and waiting tables, along with the gut-wrenching responsibility of caring for a grandparent who was too sick to care for themself. As I helped Nanny in the early hours of those mornings, she would chat to me, sometimes

Shannen Galavin is a 27-year-old writer and postgraduate criminology student from Brisbane, Queensland. She enjoys travelling, reading and spending time with her beloved horse, Custer.

musings of a lifetime passed by, other times, it was medicationinduced delirium. Whatever she shared became precious.

One afternoon, about six weeks after my Facebook post, a dog-eared, travel-worn postcard from the United States arrived in our letterbox. There among the bills and advertising leaflets sat a single, glossy rectangle of cardboard that had travelled from Michigan to our sleepy little seaside town in Queensland. That simple postcard was to me a beacon of light in a bleak and lonely chapter. I held it in my hands, read and re-read the words scrawled across the back and felt something I hadn't felt in a while - hope.

Nanny Del,

Thinking of you in Michigan, USA, and thinking of you as we move around this beautiful State.

From that day, our letterbox became the destination for postcards from all over the world. Our letterbox became a hotel, accommodating travel-weary cards. It checked in guests from everywhere: India, Portugal, Italy, the Czech Republic, Taiwan and Japan.

Nanny Del,

I am walking hand in hand with you along the streets of Lisbon. The markets are just up ahead and we are about to stop for dinner.

My dreams of armchair travels became a reality; I had filled a box with love and mementos from all

READER'S DIGEST

corners of the globe and my nanny's grand adventure was about to begin. I sat next to her, presented her with the box and told her that something wonderful was going to happen; she had a private flight to board and was going to see the world. Tears of happiness mixed with grief fell onto those postcards.

In the months that followed, we travelled the world together. Her living room became a departure hall and our flights departed daily. Her hospital bed became an **OUR FLIGHTS** airport lounge, where we researched and planned DEPARTED DAILY. our next departure. HER HOSPITAL We visited Lisbon (a **BED WAS AN** favourite) and cruised

the Mediterranean AIRPORT LOUNGE before hopping over to Argentina. We travelled the entirety of the United States; Honolulu to the Adirondacks; Virginia to San Francisco; New

Orleans to Atlantic City, Boston and Montana.

Nanny hung out for every visit from the postman, eagerly awaiting news of her next departure. "I just can't believe strangers did this for a little old lady they've never met" became a sentiment she murmured many times. I reached out to the senders; reminding them that they'd impacted strangers in a way they'd perhaps never know.

Our travels took us far and wide. Cancer could not stop us.

Some days brought fatigue and Nanny could manage only one small flight before dozing off. When she would wake, she'd smile and suggest another trip.

Our very last flight departed on a warm morning in early August in 2018. Nanny had packed her bags for a final time, the departure hall quiet and the whir of the Boeing engine still. My dearest travel companion had bought a different ticket for this trip and journeyed on ahead with the

> promise to cross paths in another departure hall, in another time and place.

Among the scatter of finger sandwiches and hushed reminisces. the postcards, over 100 of them, made their

final journey to Nanny's farewell. There they adorned the tables full of mementos and photographs of an olive-skinned beauty with dark hair and soft eyes. Photos of a woman who feared she'd never see the world; but had done so tenfold.

I have emerged from great loss; knowing now that life consists of first greetings and final partings. Flights arrive and then depart. People are brought to us, and taken away.

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SMART ANIMALS

Animals can act to improve their circumstances



Speaking Without Words

BARB CLEWS

My German Shepherd, Simon, was ten weeks old when I brought him home and we bonded immediately. He was my constant companion. As he grew we took walks together and trained twice a day at our local oval. He could sit and drop by recognising hand signals 100 metres away.

One warm summer morning, after a lovely walk near where we lived, he seemed unable to settle and followed me around. At the time, I was preparing food as we had friends coming to dinner so I wasn't quite as attentive as I usually was. But he kept getting in my way until eventually I

stopped and looked him straight in the eyes ready to tell him to back off as I was busy.

I was mortified when I saw that his right eye was completely bloodshot and I hadn't noticed. I immediately telephoned the vet and left my husband to take over the food preparation. I collected Simon, put him in the car and hurried to the vet's surgery before it closed.

The vet said that I was lucky; a thin leaf from one of the plants had pierced his eye and if the injury had

You could earn cash by telling us about the antics of unique pets or wildlife. Turn to page 7 for details on how to contribute.

been left overnight, Simon would have lost sight in that eye.

I guess he knew something serious had happened and that's why he wouldn't leave me alone until I understood what he wanted me to. Although he couldn't speak, he certainly got his message across.



A Practical Possum

HELEN MANWARING

We once owned a home on Sydney's northern beaches. This was on a very large block of land with quite a forest of large angophora trees. Consequently, we also shared our home with a wide variety of wildlife such as possums, lizards, rainbow lorikeets, king parrots and cockatoos.

The cockatoos could be quite destructive – pruning trees that didn't need to be pruned, chewing the wooden deck and plucking the lemons before they'd had a chance to ripen!

One winter's evening, I noticed a leafy branch lying on the path which I had swept earlier. Blaming it on the cockatoos, of course, I picked it up and forgot about it.

The next evening, another branch, about the same size and very leafy appeared in the same spot. This had been dropped below a large angophora which had a cavity in its trunk about six metres from the ground.

The following morning, quite early, I stood by the bedroom window and waited. Sure enough, not a cockatoo but a possum scaled the tree clutching another leafy branch.

He followed a limb to the cavity and then proceeded to back into the hole and then carefully pulled the branch in after him so that it blocked the entrance completely.

To my knowledge, he repeated this exercise each morning during the winter months.

I was impressed, thinking that he'd figured out a way to stay safe, comfortable and warm while he slept in his 'nest' during the cold winter days before emerging to forage at night.



Did you know?

Cats will spend two thirds of their lives asleep.

Most cats sleep for an average of 12-16 hours a day, but some will snooze for up to 20 hours in a 24-hour period while young kittens average 18 hours.

Sleeping is a great way for cats to conserve energy and even though they may appear sound asleep, in fact, to a certain degree, cats remain alert.

This means they can always be at the ready to respond to different sounds and smells in their surroundings, whether this is to retreat from an unknown visitor or take advantage of a tasty treat.

Light-sleeping, or catnapping, makes up about three quarters of their sleeping time.



Cats are masters at the art of napping!
Only some kitties snore but all cats experience the same sleep stages as we do.
You might notice their eyes, paws and whiskers twitching when they are
in the REM stage which is a good indication cats dream just like us.



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How Your Problems Affect Your Pets

Could your personal difficulties be putting your pet at risk?

BY Sophie Taylor

ow obesity, disruptive home environments, smoking and depression could be damaging your pet, and how you can help them.

OBESITY Being obese has an obvious negative impact on pets. Due to shared lifestyles, it's common for an overweight owner to raise an overweight pet.

Excess weight carried by cats and dogs places too much demand on

vital organs. This can lead to disease and serious health risks including diabetes, joint and ligament damage, heart disease, difficulty breathing and decreased stamina.

Unfortunately, if the animal needs treatment for obesity-related complications, they will have increased surgical and anaesthetic risks, and may not be given the go ahead until they have lost weight.

It is therefore vital to make sure your pet is being fed the recommended daily nutritional allowance, and given enough exercise for their particular breed. A little research goes a long way.

DOMESTIC DISTURBANCES

If you know that there is to be a domestic upheaval or change coming up - such as moving house or a relationship break-up - take measures to keep things as calm and as nondisruptive as possible. Keep on top of your pet's usual routine, shower them with the same levels of affection and attention and perhaps invest in some calming plug-

in air fresheners that are designed to help keep stress levels low.

ANIMALS SMOKING Second-**AS WELL AS** hand smoke affects animals as well as HUMANS humans. Health risks range from respiratory problems to nasal and lung cancer in dogs and lymphoma in cats.

Their oral tissues become exposed to hazardous amounts of carcinogens that lie in the air and on our clothes, hair and furniture.

Birds' respiratory systems are also hypersensitive to air-born pollutants (think of those canaries once used in mines). They can develop pneumonia and lung cancer as well as developing eye, skin, heart and fertility problems from living in a smoker's home.

You can help minimise the negative effects by smoking outside, changing clothes and washing after smoking or before touching your pet, using a high-quality air purifier for excess toxins, and disposing cigarettes butts out of reach of pets.

DEPRESSION Firstly, it is important to point out that depression is not contagious, as some would have you believe, and our mental health issues do not have a negative effect on our pet's behaviour.

However, sometimes when we

are dealing with our own problems we may neglect the needs of our pet. Try to keep up with your pet's usual daily routines and needs and give them the same interaction as best you can in the

circumstances.

SECOND-HAND

SMOKE AFFECTS

For instance, if you have a dog and the thought of giving it its usual walk is causing you anxiety today, just attempt a short stroll or play fetch indoors for longer.

If your pet is exhibiting signs of stress or anxiety themselves, such as attention seeking or self-soothing behaviour (excessive paw licking, grooming, furniture chewing) take them to the vet to see if there are any underlying problems that need inspecting.

Countless long-time hearing aid wearers astonished to find new \$429 hearing aid outperforms their "thousands-of-dollars" devices. Delivered direct to you, with no appointments or hearing tests required, the Jaspa 3 is ready-to-use right away with the simple press of a button.

MOST RECENT REVIEWS

"Having trialled four different sets of hearing aids from two audiology centres without complete satisfaction, I ordered two Jaspa 3 hearing aids. I could hardly believe how much more natural sounding the Jaspa aids were in comparison to the very expensive aids I had trialled. I'm now wearing them each day as required and find them very good." – AARON, NSW

"I purchased my Jaspa hearing aids as a stand by, having over the years obtained 3 sets from a well known supplier, which seem to have a return for service every three to four months. I now use my Jaspa full time. Many thanks, Doug." – DOUGLAS, QLD

"I have been trying to get my husband to wear his hearing aids that we paid a lot of money for, however he never wore them after the first month stating that he didn't get enough benefit. Since I bought him the Jaspa 3 aids he has been wearing them at least every few days and for watching the news etc, and I have noticed a big difference in not having to repeat myself. Regards, Bess." – BESSIE, NSW

"I have no problems so far, and am enjoying better hearing in your mode 4 (boost high frequencies) than I had with my \$6,000 hearing aids." — COLIN, NSW

"I was not happy with the sound quality of 2 different hearing aids I had purchased from a well-known company. I intended to try a different company, when I read your advertisement, and the comments from users. I decided that the price was affordable so rang the next morning. I am happy with the sound and the operation of my hearing aid, the hearing aid is more comfortable than the others I'd used and my family will tell you I can hear better with this one! Thank you!" – MARY, NSW

"Simply put the JASPA3 gives me better hearing for TV and for conversations than my \$9000 dollar pair." – AL, NSW

"Hi-I have had my Jaspa 3 for a few months - It was reasonably priced, easy to maintain and clean and adjust. Fits snugly. You don't know that it is there. Can now hear the car blinker plus lots of other forgotten noises. Very satisfied. Great stuff!!!" – PAT, VIC

"I only have difficulty on occasions and although hearing aids were recommended by a specialist I haven't been able to justify them until now. These work very well to serve my needs and the clarity of TV is very good in particular (I can turn the volume down to 10 now)." – DORIS, WA

"These aids are so simple yet effective. In comparison to my government supplied aids, I cannot speak more highly of the comfort and sound quality of the Jaspa 3 hearing aids. The size is also very small in comparison to my other aids, and as a result I feel much more comfortable wearing them. Best of all I can hear very well!" – HENRY, QLD

"Very happy with the aids. 3 previous sets of aids at about 10 times the price of Jaspa did not perform despite expert advice and assistance. Had endless problems with feedback and fitting. Jaspa 3 are the only aids I have been able to wear daily without any feedback or discomfort." – BRUCE, WA

"Much better than ones I spent \$7000 on. Much easier to use and maintain and I can adjust them myself without having to see a technician, my wife is very grateful, the TV volume has gone down from 70 to 35 and she doesn't have to repeat things constantly. I have found them comfortable to wear and the quality of sound and available settings to achieve this very good. Excellent value, have already recommended them to my hard of hearing friends." – DANNY, QLD

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Those with eligible health fund extras cover often have no out-of-pocket costs when purchasing 2 x Jaspa 3 hearing aids, as health fund covers average between \$600 and \$1,200 rebate.*



Those who have previously spent thousands of dollars on hearing aids and have worn hearing aids for many years have been stunned to find the \$429 Jaspa 3 hearing aid is often outperforming their previous set of hearing aids. Many Jaspa 3 wearers are reporting better results for speech clarity, better speech understanding in noisy settings, and improved comfort in comparison to their set of expensive devices.

The Found Hearing representative said,

"We have now had many Jaspa 3 customers report significant improvement in their hearing in comparison to the benefit they received from their previous set of hearing aids. In many instances these customers have spent upwards of \$8,000 on hearing aids."

Designed as a broad-prescription hearing aid suitable to various levels of hearing loss, the Jaspa 3 is ready to use straight out-of-the-box, without a hearing test. Wearers are able to easily adjust the volume and program options via the on board push button.

The Jaspa 3 design and technology was originally developed not only as a direct-tocustomer hearing aid, but to overcome common difficulties audiology clientele experience with hearing aids, such as tinniness, echo and background noise. The Jaspa 3 hearing aid works off a fully digital microchip, and incorporates wide dynamic range compression to give volume to soft sounds while not increasing the volume of louder sounds in the environment. Additional features such as automatic noise reduction and automatic speech enhancement technology means the Jaspa 3 can be used in difficult listening environments such as in a restaurant and in noisier social settings.

The style is a discreet behind-the-ear 'open-fit' design. No blockage of the ear canal allows users to fully utilise the benefits of their natural hearing in addition to the benefits of the hearing aid. It takes a standard 312 hearing aid battery. Always read the label. Follow the instructions for use.

The Jaspa 3 hearing aid can be ordered online at www.foundhearing.com.au or over the phone on 1300 240 114.

The Jaspa 3 is \$429 per aid, and includes Free Delivery anywhere in Australia.

No hearing test or appointments are required and it comes with a 30-day money back guarantee.

Want to use your Private Health Fund Rebates with Jaspa 3? Step 1: Check your policy cover and conditions. Step 2: Email a copy of your hearing test results to



^{*}Check your own health fund cover to determine your eligibility and level of cover for hearing aids.

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Today's Pain Forecast?

The truth about rainy days and our wellbeing

By Melissa Greer

here's some truth to the age-old belief that achy joints are a sign that bad weather is on the way. It's not just anecdotal: research shows a relationship between pain levels and changes in weather, particularly for people who suffer from chronic conditions such as arthritis.

"Some people with arthritis say they can predict weather, or that the weather changes their level of pain," says Siân Bevan, chief science officer at Arthritis Society Canada.

The name of a 2019 UK study, 'Cloudy With a Chance of Pain', says it all. It analysed the daily pain logs of 13,000 people with arthritis, fibromyalgia, migraines and neuropathic pain. Using GPS data



from participants' smartphones, the researchers found correlations between pain and relative humidity, barometric pressure and wind speed. Participants were more likely to experience aches and pains on stormy, windy days and least likely to do so when conditions were dry and calm.

It's unclear why changes in weather may influence pain severity for some people and not for others. "Everyone experiences pain differently," says Bevan. "There are a lot of factors that could impact pain tolerance, including sleep, stress and depression."

One common theory is that the drop in barometric pressure that usually precedes a storm causes a change in pressure within the joints, contributing to pain. The belief is that as air pressure decreases, it allows our tissues to enlarge slightly, which irritates the joints.

It's a good idea to track your symptoms and how certain weather conditions may affect your pain levels, says Bevan. "From there you can manage expectations for what can be accomplished on days when symptoms are worse."

PERHAPS NOT

surprisingly, there's evidence that the weather may also impact your mood. A 2013 research paper published in the

Journal of Happiness Studies found that women are more sensitive to weather changes than men and that life satisfaction decreased among women on days with heavy rainfall.

A second study, published in a 2011 issue of the American Psychological Association journal Emotion, analysed Dutch teenagers and grouped them by 'weather personality' type. Roughly nine per cent were 'rain haters'; they felt angrier and less happy on days with a lot of precipitation.

There are multiple reasons for this correlation, according to Dr Max Pemberton, a UK-based psychiatrist. "Less sunlight affects your levels of melatonin, a hormone directly involved in mood regulation."

Biologically, this could explain why some people feel down when there is little sun, with the extreme version of this known as seasonal affective disorder. A sun lamp may

> help: exposure to this type of bright light has a positive impact on melatonin and serotonin (another moodregulating hormone).

There are also psychological and social reasons why some people feel sad or moody when it rains. For one thing, bad weather may contribute to social isolation and

loneliness because we can't go outside and do the things we enjoy with friends and family, explains Dr Pemberton.

Once you understand how the weather impacts you physically or mentally, there are strategies you can try. For example, if you're sensitive to cold, damp weather, a hot bath or just a warm compress could provide relief for achy joints. Regular exercise - even if it has to be indoors - is also known to improve mood and is an R important part of pain control.

RESEARCHERS **FOUND CORRELATIONS BETWEEN PAIN** AND RELATIVE HUMIDITY. BAROMETRIC PRESSURE AND

WIND SPEED



The Best **And Worst** DIETS **For Your** HEART

Heart-healthy eating means more than weight loss

BY Leslie Finlay

BEST: THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

The Mediterranean diet encourages people to eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, legumes and healthy fats. Cardiologist Dr Norman Lepor says incorporating more sources of monounsaturated fats (found in avocado, olive oil and seeds) and poly-unsaturated fats (in walnuts, flaxseeds and fish) is a good place to start.

He recommends using canola or high-quality olive oil. Fish and seafood are regulars in the Mediterranean diet, while other protein sources, like eggs, poultry and dairy, are eaten in moderation. Red meat is eaten sparingly.

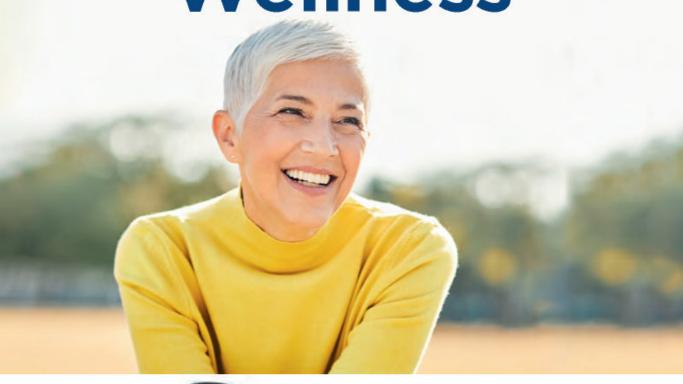


WORST: THE KETO DIET

Because consuming a higher amount of saturated fats increases your risk of developing cardiovascular disease, Dr Lepor does not recommend the keto diet, which is a high-fat eating plan. "People tend to say they can lose weight fast on the keto diet, and they eat foods that reduce their appetite, but they're really increasing their intake of saturated fats," he says.

Unfortunately, even people who aren't following the keto diet consume too many saturated fats and trans fats, as well as added sugars, sodium and overall kilojoules - all potential risk factors for heart disease. Dr Lepor says eating a diet that focuses on sources of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat - as well as lean proteins like chicken, seafood and plant-based options such as legumes - can benefit our hearts and our overall health over time.









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WORLD OF MEDICINE

COFFEE CAN LEAD TO IMPULSE SPENDING

When you're shopping, it's best to be careful of what you sip on. A study published in the *Journal of Marketing* reports that researchers gave away beverages outside multiple retail stores across different countries. They offered regular coffee to 150 shoppers and decaf coffee or water to 150 more.

On average, the shoppers who drank caffeine spent 50 per cent more money. They bought a comparable number of utilitarian products but splurged more on fun items, like scented candles.

The researchers suggest that caffeine often creates a state of 'energetic arousal' that enhances the appeal of non-essential goods.

UNDERESTIMATED VALUE OF 'JUST THINKING'

Imagine being alone with your thoughts, without distractions. Sound boring? You might like it more than you expect. Researchers at Kyoto University in Japan asked participants to sit and let their mind wander for 20 minutes.

On average, the activity was more enjoyable and

engaging than the participants had anticipated. Previous studies suggest this kind of activity can help people enhance their creativity and solve problems.

MORE LONG COVID-19 SYMPTOMS REVEALED

For roughly ten per cent of sufferers, COVID-19 causes symptoms that linger after 12 weeks. UK researchers looked at the medical records of about 486,000 people who'd had COVID-19 and compared them to control subjects who had similar demographic characteristics, lifestyles and medical histories, except they'd never contracted the virus.

Issues among the people who had been infected included fatigue, shortness of breath and an altered sense of smell. However, the study also revealed lesser-known symptoms, including hair loss, reduced libido and limb swelling.

The study validates the patients who claim that

long COVID-19 has effects that cannot be entirely explained away by lifestyle habits or other medical conditions.



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Hugh Jackman

ON MENTAL HEALTH, MUSICALS AND MARVEL

The affable Australian actor opens up about how his latest film, The Son, changed him and why people loving his films and characters means so much to him

BY James Mottram

READER'S DIGEST

he pink-walled Excelsior Hotel, on Venice's Lido, is used to famous film stars mingling on its terraces. Since the Italian city's cele-

TO SAY THE

FILM GOT

UNDER HIS

SKIN WOULD BE

AN UNDER-

STATEMENT

brated film festival began, it's played host to everyone from Greta Garbo to Clark Gable. Today it's the turn of Hugh Jackman. The genial Australian star is, depending on your tastes, famed for the razor-clawed superhero Wolverine in the *X-Men* films or barnstorming Broadway-sized performances in musical movies like 2017's The Greatest Showman. His role as a bread-stealing revolutionary

in 2012's Les Misérables received an Oscar nomination.

We're seated in the downstairs restaurant, overlooking the sun-dappled waters of the Adriatic Sea. Jackman, 54, sporting a navy suit and white

shirt, is trim and toned. We've met sporadically over the years, right back to 1999 when he starred in the little-seen film Paperback Hero playing a truck driver who writes romance novels. He'd just finished playing the leading role of Curly in Oklahoma! at London's West End. "Hollywood to me is not a Holy Grail," he told me at the time. But Wolverine

was waiting in the wings, the role that would turn him into a star.

Between showtunes and superheroes, Jackman has never managed to get a role like in his new film, The Son. It comes adapted from the 2018 play by Florian Zeller, who previously exploded onto the movie scene with another of his own stage dramas, The Father. While that dealt with Alzheimer's - something Jackman's own father lived with for years - this movie looks at another mental health issue. Jackman plays Peter, a workaholic divorcee whose world implodes when his adolescent son begins to suffer from debilitating bouts of depression.

"I think what was most interesting

to me about Peter was [that] it was important to him to feel that he is a strong and capable man," says Jackman. "And that made it harder for him to admit that maybe he's not equipped, maybe he didn't know what to do.

Some guilt about leaving the family home, that is unresolved, makes him even more determined to be the one who can fix things, save his son - be the father that his father was not."

To say the film got under Jackman's skin would be an understatement.

"I think it's still working its way through me, as we talk about it and relive it and understand it,"

he admits. "And when I watched it, I found myself very emotional. I'm not just talking about the story. I think it was a process that required a lot of, I guess, trust and revealing."

AT THE VENICE WORLD PREMIÈRE, where the audience gave the film a ten-minute standing ovation, Jackman was visibly

moved by the thunderous reception.

He admits the film changed his attitude to mental health.

"It gave me a lot of empathy," he says. "It made me understand." He started therapy during the filming - an interior clean-out that many in their middle-age years could probably do with. It also reframed his own relationships with his children. Married since 1996 to actress Deborra-Lee Furness, Jackman and his wife later adopted a son, Oscar (now 22) and daughter, Ava (17). "I'm different since doing this film," he says. "I'm more open about my vulnerability with them, with my kids."

While Jackman has worked for some of the world's biggest directors, including Christopher Nolan (The Prestige) and Darren Aronofsky (The Fountain), he's not always been recognised for his dramatic chops, and had to campaign to The Son's director, Florian Zeller, for the role. "I had to call him and say, 'Please have me!'



Jackman with Zen McGrath and Laura Dern in The Son

and email him and put my hand up for the part." Zeller remembers their communication, as the actor quietly requested ten minutes of his time to explain just why he felt he was right to play the part.

"I was really moved, I have to say, by his humility, his honesty, and his capacity to express his desire."

During the shoot in London, Jackman's raw emotions even took Zeller by surprise.

"He was not trying to hide himself behind the character. He was open to explore his own emotions in order to be as truthful as possible, which is very courageous for an actor."

It was a tremendously difficult time for Jackman; his father Chris, a former accountant whose health had been deteriorating for some time, died during production. The actor, who'd visited his father shortly before filming began, stayed on to complete the film, partly to help him through the grieving process.

READER'S DIGEST

TODAY, HE SPEAKS FONDLY of his father's quirks. Like how he'd tell him off as a youngster. "[He'd say] 'I'm very disappointed in you, young man!' I remember getting that one. But my dad was very English. He had a bunch of others like, 'Buck your ideas up!' Just really English." Jack-

man's parents were both British and had moved to Australia in 1967 as part of an immigration scheme. The youngest of five, Jackman was eight when his parents split; after that, his mother returned to

England along with his two sisters.

Jackman half-jokes that he "wanted to be a rock star" growing up, but the real seed for his career was planted elsewhere. A born-again Christian, Jackman's devout father had been converted by Billy Graham, the famous American evangelist, and he used to take his son to Christian

Jackman in The Greatest Showman, as an ambitious showman and entrepreneur



Revivals. It may not have entirely influenced his religious beliefs, but the young Jackman was entranced by the showmanship.

"I remember when I was 14 or 15, going to one of those and having a very strong feeling that I was going to be up on that stage at some point.

AS AN ACTOR,

HE PUSHES

HIMSELF EVERY

INCH OF

THE WAY

Calm but very certain."

While he starred in a production of *My Fair Lady* at school, it wasn't until Jackman took a drama class at university that he began to feel like he'd found his people. Fur-

ther theatre studies followed, then came a role as Gaston in a stage production of *Beauty and the Beast*. "It was a bit of a joke. They told me 'You're not the best singer around' but the guy had to be over six foot, and look a bit like me. In my contract, I had to have singing lessons every week. You do that, and you can

be tone deaf and you'll end up alright."

He ended up more than alright. He's twice been nominated for a Tony award, winning for *The Boy from Oz*. He hosted the Oscars in 2009 and has toured multiple one-man shows, singing Broadway hits to audiences. With all that razzamatazz, is it any wonder he was drawn to a film about circus

impresario P.T. Barnum called The Greatest Showman? He helped turn the musical into a US\$434-million-grossing phenomenon, one that saw thousands flock to repeat 'singalong' viewings. "I'm thrilled," he admits. "I know how much it touches people and it really means a lot to them."

As an actor, he pushes himself every inch of the way. "When a director compliments me, I want to say, 'Don't do that, man.' The next take's not going to be as good. I react more to giving myself a hard time - it's exhausting."

He's always full of angst before he begins every production. He remembers meeting tennis legend Roger Federer's wife once, who said, "Even after he would lose, he would come home and play table tennis with the kids. He was very philosophical about it all. I'm not quite at that Roger Federer level."

IF THERE'S BEEN A CONSTANT in his career, then it's been Wolverine. A role he's played across nine X-Men movies, Jackman's soulful turn helped turn comic book films into the blockbusting behemoths they've become. He said goodbye to the character - brilliantly - in 2017's Logan.

"It was a discussion I had with [comedian] Jerry Seinfeld which really



Jackman is scheduled to return as the mutant X-Man Wolverine in Deadpool 3

sparked off the ending to me. He gave me a surprising answer to why he finished his show; he just said 'I'm a firm believer that creatively if you leave at the right time you're propelled into whatever's next with energy and excitement. But if you stay a little too long, it can be Herculean to give it up.' And that really rang true to me."

Herculean indeed. Shortly after we met, it was announced that Jackman will return as Wolverine in 2024 in Deadpool 3, seven years on from his last screen appearance.

"A little part of me now thinks I'd be better at it," Jackman told Variety about returning to his most iconic role. "Is that arrogance of age or something? Wolverine's a tortured character - more tortured than me. But I always get the feeling of him being comfortable in his own skin. And I feel more comfortable in my own skin now, even though it's messier."

Why It's Important To Protect Your

Once thought of as trivial, we now know our sense of smell is super important

BY Helen Foster

ou probably get your eyes tested to protect your sight, maybe have a yearly hearing test to check your ears - but, protecting your nose... eh? However, as many of us have suffered or are suffering a disruption in our ability to smell thanks to COVID-19, we're starting to appreciate just how important this 'forgotten' sense is - and why we should all be doing more to keep it healthy.



READER'S DIGEST

Just three days after being diagnosed with COVID-19 in September 2022, Joanne Hort realised she'd lost her sense of smell when she couldn't taste some orange juice. "I panicked, and ran to the bathroom and started trying to smell my perfume, but there was nothing," says the academic from Palmerston North, New Zealand. Hort's experience is now quite a

common story, but what makes this tale different is that she doesn't have a very common job. She's a professor at New Zealand's Massey University working in the field of sensory perception, so her sense of smell is integral to her career. "The idea that it

might be gone or diminished was terrifying," she says. "I started smelling everything I could to try and kick-start its return, but it took over six months for it to come back properly."

Around 86 per cent of people who have had COVID-19 experience a change in their sense of smell. For most, it's short-lived but for one in every five, particularly the over-40s, the damage takes over six months to resolve. "And that's a lot of people given the millions that have been afflicted with COVID-19," says Professor Evan Reiter, medical director of the Smell and Taste Disorders Center at Virginia Commonwealth University in the US. This epidemic of smell

loss, a condition known in medical terms as anosmia, has focused attention back on the sense that biologist Charles Darwin once described as "of extremely slight service to mankind".

Almost 150 years after he said that, we now know that Darwin was wrong - very wrong. "Research has discovered more than 600 genes in the human body associated with the sense of

Humans

subconsciously

use smell to help

find mates

with different

immune systems

smell," explains sensory expert Professor Eugeni Roura from Australia's University of Queensland. "That's around three per cent of the whole genome associated with just one system. That's huge and shows that the sense of smell is actually immensely

important to the human body."

Let's start with the fact that smell can help keep us alive by alerting us to dangers such as food that might make us sick or the threat of fire; and it does this very quickly. Odour signals reach the brain within 100-150 milliseconds of inhalation - and recent research from Sweden found we process unpleasant or dangerous smells even faster than innocuous ones.

"But smell also helps create the flavour of food and plays a role in controlling the variety of our diet and the nutrients we consume," says Professor Hort. "It's linked to emotion and memory." It may even be why you picked your partner as we

subconsciously use smell to help find mates who have different immune systems to our own.

So how do we smell? It happens when odour molecules in the air hit nerves in the lining of the nose. These send signals to the olfactory organ, the part of the brain that interprets smell, which scours our memory to determine what the smell is - and if it's good, bad or indifferent.

The olfactory organ makes up around five per cent of the human brain. It's estimated that it can distinguish between a million different odours. Each of us has a unique sense of smell and the strength of our unique smell is related to the genes you inherit from your parents which determine which smell receptors (detectors) are expressed in the nose.

Other factors further determine how sensitive your sense of smell is. Women generally have a stronger sense of smell than men, while damage from air pollution means people who live in highly polluted cities have a less sensitive sense of smell than those in rural areas.

"We also know sense of smell declines with age," says Professor Hort. "And if you've damaged your nose through head injury, illness or inhaling something that causes irritation, your sense of smell can also be negatively affected."

WHY COVID-19 DAMAGES THE SENSE OF SMELL

reduction in the ability to smell is quite common with respiratory infections like cold, flu and COVID-19, as mucus produced during such illnesses physically blocks smell molecules from reaching the nerves that interpret them. However, COVID-19 doesn't just block the nerves. "It actually infects the neurons, leading to cell



death - and this can go all the way up the brain," says Professor Roura. "These cells then need to be renewed to restore the sense of smell – and that's why recovery can take so much longer than with colds or flu." Research into how to

tackle COVID-related smell loss is ongoing but one technique that is helping is smell training. Take four strong (but not harmful) scents – in studies they start with rose, clove, eucalyptus and lemon – and sniff them. This is done twice a day and can stimulate the regrowth of the smell neurons in around three months. Ask your GP on the exact protocol if you're affected.

READER'S DIGEST

Protecting your nose from such damage is therefore the first step in keeping your sense of smell thriving. Avoid inhaling strong scents like bleach or other chemicals. If you have a long-term condition like rhinitis, speak to your GP about nasal sprays that might help dampen down the inflammation.

Then, keep your nose busy. "The

sense of smell is a bit like a muscle, you can train it to become stronger by exercising it," says Professor Roura.

Here's how to give yours a workout.

MAKE SMELL A PRIMA-**RY SENSE** During the

day we tend to focus more on our other senses like taste or sight, but start using smell, too. Sniff vegetables and fruit as part of determining ripeness before you buy them, focus on the different notes in the perfume you wear or identify different flowers in your garden by scent alone.

SEEK OUT NEW SCENTS The more different smells you expose your nose to, the better. "When I work with smell experts they literally smell everything they find interesting," says Professor Roura, laughing. "Travelling with them is a bit of a nightmare, as it takes ages to get anywhere as they keep sniffing things."

FEED YOUR NOSE Just like the rest of your body, your olfactory system

> needs a good mix of nutrients to perform optimally - deficiencies in vitamin D, vitamin B12 and zinc have all been linked to a reduced sense of smell. But, also watch your fat intake. Research from Florida State

University found that mice eating a high fat diet had a reduced sense of smell - and fewer olfactory neurons - than those eating a less fatty diet.

STAY HYDRATED "To smell effectively the mucosa of the nose needs to be in a good physiological state - and hydration plays a part in this. You don't smell as well if your nose is dehydrated," says Professor Roura.



"The sense of

smell is a bit like

a muscle, you can

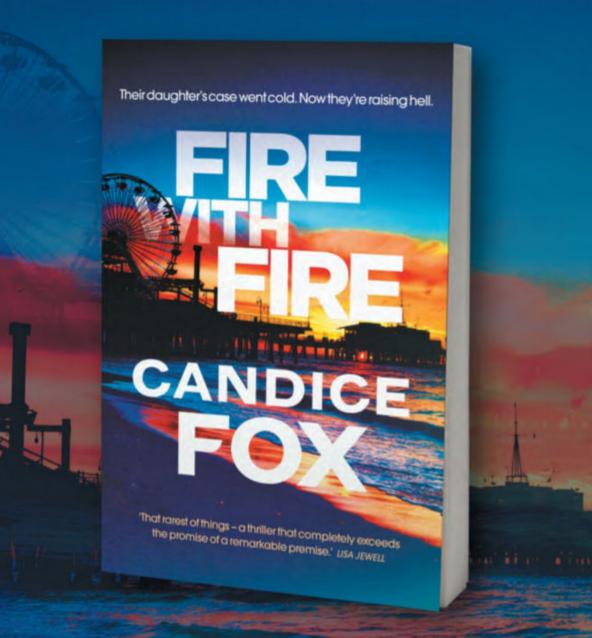
train it to become

stronger"

Egg Mania

A man broke into an industrial park in the UK in February and stole almost 200,000 Easter eggs. The 32 year old used a stolen truck to tow away his chocolate haul, but the wannabe 'Easter Bunny' was caught and arrested shortly afterwards. AP NEWS

'If you love great thrillers, you'll love Candice Fox!' LEE CHILD



Their daughter's case went cold. Now they're raising hell.



Books worth sharing

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t was a pleasant spring Sunday morning when Pam Baldwin loaded her three-year-old rottweiler, Bundy, into her car and drove him to the top of Nail Can Hill for his daily walk.

Pam, 71, had lived in Albury all her life. She had been visiting Nail Can Hill regularly for more than 20 years, taking her dogs or riding her horse through the Australian native bush she loved. Just west of Albury in Victoria, the spot is popular with locals for its undulating bushland, spectacular views and network of walking trails.

That particular day in October last year, Pam decided to drive to the top of the hill and walk back down. She let Bundy out of the car and set off down the track.

They passed through a gate and into a fenced paddock. As she had done hundreds of times before, she let Bundy off the leash and watched his joy as he darted in and out of the trees, exploring the undergrowth.

Suddenly, she stopped. She had the overwhelming feeling that someone was behind her.

She turned around and there he was. A massive male kangaroo, about 1.8 metres tall, stood towering over her 1.58-metre frame.

"I heard nothing, but when I turned around he was right in my face; we

were probably 15 centimetres apart," Pam says. "He was huge. All I could see was his nose and his eyes looking at me."

Before she had time to think, the kangaroo's powerful hind legs flew out. One hit her in the stomach, the other ripped through her arm. She fell back onto the track, and, for a second, the world went black.

As she opened her eyes, Bundy leapt from the undergrowth, right over her as she lay, and launched himself at the kangaroo.

AUSTRALIA IS WELL KNOWN for its deadly snakes, spiders, sharks and crocodiles - but kangaroos?

These seemingly gentle herbivores are commonplace, usually seen nibbling on grass or lying on their sides basking in the sun.

But in recent months, a spate of kangaroo attacks has been reported at different locations around the country.

In March last year, a three-yearold girl suffered serious lacerations to her head, back and arm after a kangaroo attacked her on the back

porch of a property in New South Wales. Weeks earlier, a 14-year-old girl had been seriously injured on a farm in western Victoria when a kangaroo sprung from the trees and into the front wheel of her dirt bike.

And, in September, a 77-yearold man tragically died in Western Australia after his pet kangaroo attacked him. It is thought to be only the second recorded fatality from a kangaroo, the previous one having occurred in 1936.

What's going on? Kangaroos are not known for their aggression, says Associate Professor Bill Bateman, a behavioural ecologist

and conservation biologist at Curtin University.

"Kangaroos do very well around urban areas and, as our cities spread, more people encounter kangaroos. I live in a suburban area on the edge of Perth, and I've had kangaroos walking up my driveway," he says.

"I believe it's similar to the rising number of shark attacks in Australia – there are more people going into the water, so it's more likely people are going to get attacked."

While we don't have records of kangaroo populations before European settlement, and some species are currently in decline, there's no doubt



Kangaroos can claw, kick and wrestle each other when males are competing for a female's attention

READER'S DIGEST

that the number of kangaroos can explode at certain times in Australia's arid 'boom or bust' natural cycles, Associate Professor Bateman says.

Some species of large kangaroo the Red Kangaroo, the Eastern Grey Kangaroo and the Western Grey Kangaroo - have all benefited from grazing areas and water sources created by humans when they started to farm, so altering the Australian landscape.

"But, generally, kangaroos are a peaceful animal," he says. "This is why people are surprised when these attacks happen."

Pam Baldwin, however, was not surprised. She had grown up around kangaroos and knew that they could sometimes be aggressive - especially when dogs are involved.

It's something the first European colonists learned when

kangaroos drowned their hunting dogs. To protect themselves from wild dingoes, kangaroos will sometimes head to water and hold their attacker underneath with their upper body strength.

PAM STAGGERED TO HER FEET and watched as Bundy chased the massive kangaroo up the hill and held it at bay, barking.

She made it to the fence to get

out of the paddock, and noticed her sleeve was torn. It was blood-red.

"Help me!" she cried to a nearby runner who was passing with her son. "I think I need an ambulance, I've been attacked by a kangaroo."

The passer-by sent her son for a towel while she rang for an ambulance. As the minutes ticked by, Pam could hear Bundy barking. While he was barking, she knew he was fine.

The ambulance arrived. Pam called her friends, Murray, Judy and Mal, to collect her dog. All the while, Bundy faithfully fought the kangaroo.

Forty-five minutes had gone past

when the barking stopped. Pam started to cry and turned in anguish to the paramedic who was bandaging a wide gash in her arm.

"That kangaroo has got my dog in a dam," Pam said.

VERTICAL STANCE AS A THREAT, SO MAY LASH OUT IN SELF-DEFENCE"

"A KANGAROO

MIGHT SEE OUR

KANGAROOS can be

incredibly muscular and strong. Males in their prime can grow to more than two metres tall and weigh at least 80 kilograms.

They are known for their powerful shoulders and arms. Their massive hind legs have razor-sharp claws that they use as weapons to defend themselves against predators such as wedge-tailed eagles and dingoes.

As they grow, males develop large muscles in their chests and forearms so they can pull a rival towards themselves and grip onto it while they kick them with their back legs.

They most commonly do this in a 'play' fight, though they can attack each other for real when males are competing for a female's attention. Their thick skins and solid muscles usually enable them to withstand a pummelling from a rival kangaroo without serious harm.

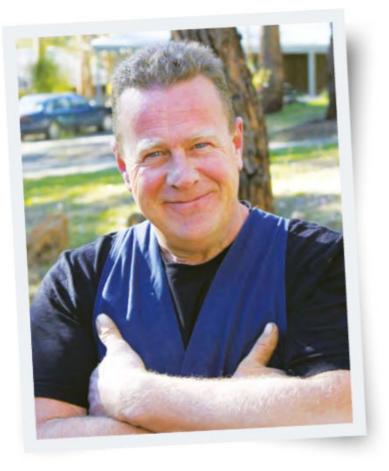
But humans don't have these defences. Kangaroo attacks can cause serious injuries including cuts, severe bruising and internal bleeding.

Kangaroo expert Associate Professor Graeme Coulson, honorary principal fellow at The University of

Melbourne, says a kangaroo's first response when it sees a human is usually to flee. But the species will attack if it feels cornered or if it sees a human as a sparring partner.

"We might find kangaroos endearing because they stand upright like us humans, but the message received by a kangaroo is quite different. A kangaroo probably sees our vertical stance as a threat, so it may lash out in self-defence if we approach," he says.

This could be what happened to



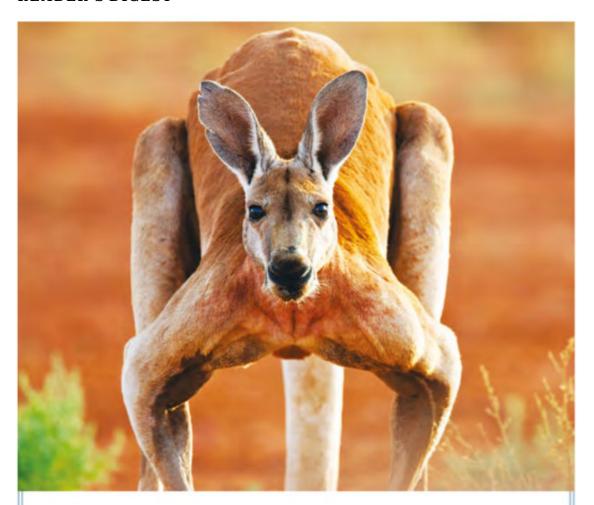
"Just give them their space," says Cliff Des, who was injured by a kangaroo last year

Cliff Des, 60, who was attacked in his front yard in Heathcote, Victoria, in May last year.

Cliff wrestled the kangaroo on the ground for more than six minutes after it chased him when he ran outside to protect his dogs. He slipped onto his back and the kangaroo jumped on top of him.

"I grabbed a stick where I fell and tried to keep him at bay, but the stick just snapped," Cliff says.

"I tried to get the kangaroo off balance and got on top of him, and



WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE THREATENED BY A KANGAROO

xperts say the best advice is to keep your distance from kangaroos. Since attacks are most often caused when kangaroos perceive dogs as predators, it's important to keep your dogs on a leash.

Associate Professor Bill Bateman says the

best strategy if you're attacked is to shout and throw stones and rocks.

Kangaroos are not very agile, so going behind a tree or a car is also often enough to make them move away, he says.

Associate Professor Graeme Coulson agrees. He says you should keep an eye on the kangaroo and get away as quickly as possible in a low crouch, as this will make the kangaroo less likely to chase you.

"If the attack persists and you can't escape, drop down low, curl into a ball, protect your head with your arms and call for help," he says.

When Kangaroos Attack

that's when he put his back claw through the back of my leg and gouged my arm."

Cliff finally made his escape and ran behind a car, but the kangaroo continued to chase him until he managed to get to safety inside. If it wasn't for Cliff's background in boxing and martial arts, he might not have been so lucky.

"They're a beautiful creature, an Australian icon," Cliff says. "What I can take from the attack is [to] not go near them. We don't know how they think, and they don't know how we think. Just give them their space."

BUNDY HAD STOPPED BARKING because the kangaroo had lured him into a dam about 800 metres from the original attack.

Pam's friends Murray and Mal rushed to the bank, where they could just see the creature's nose and ears above the water. He had his strong forearms on the dog's shoulders and was pushing him under. But Bundy would not give up. He would catch a

breath and then the kangaroo would push him down again.

The men grabbed sticks and started to beat the water until, finally, the kangaroo took off and an exhausted Bundy swam to the shore.

"Murray said he had seconds left," says Pam.

"He would have given his life for me. He's such a loyal dog, there was no way he was going to let the kangaroo get away."

Hero Bundy was unhurt by his ordeal, but Pam spent several hours in hospital. She had a puncture wound in her belly and the gash on her arm required stitches.

Pam doesn't hold any hard feelings towards the kangaroo. Albury is their home too, she says - it's not their fault that humans are continuously encroaching on their environment.

Still, it's always best to keep a distance.

"People think they are cute, furry animals, but they are wild animals and they are dangerous," she says.

"Just stay away from them."



iPhone Sells For Over 100 Times Its Original Price

When Karen Green got a new job in 2007, some of her friends pitched in to buy her a brand-new iPhone. Green kept the firstgeneration, eight-gigabyte phone sealed in the box, believing as the years went on that a collector might come to find it valuable. She was right. Green's iPhone recently sold for A\$94,853 - over 100 times more than its original cost, and more than any vintage iPhone before it. REUTERS

LIFE'S LIKE THAT

Seeing The Funny Side



Quite A Lively Afternoon

My husband and I are both in our 70s but are quite fit and are in reasonable health. I do have some food intolerances, so I have to watch what I eat. I had just had a particularly difficult afternoon with this problem, but was beginning to improve, when our daughter messaged to see how we were.

I started to say we were fine, but felt I should maybe admit that I had been unwell. I didn't want it to sound too alarming, so I decided to try and sound upbeat about it.

So, in my reply I said that we were OK, but that I had had a very lively afternoon with my old gut. I also said that things were now calming down, and for good measure added a "Phew!" at the end.

Unfortunately, I only noticed after I had sent the message that the corrective text on my phone had changed my word 'gut' to 'guy'!

SUBMITTED BY MORAG HAY

Tough Nut

I love eating pistachios because not only do you get a snack, but you also get a reminder of how weak your fingernails are. @JANINEANNETT

The Big Sleep

As my husband read his post-op instructions, one directive stood out:

'You must sleep without pillows for 48 hours.'

He was appalled, protesting, "I'm not sleeping that long!" SUBMITTED BY NELLIE STROWBRIDGE

Familiar Face

I was in the nail salon when a woman in her 40s walked in and smiled at me. I couldn't place her, but she did look familiar. I'm active socially so I thought maybe I knew her from one of the groups I've joined. It was eating at me, so I caught her eye and said, "I think I know you. Maybe from an organisation we both belong to?"

Smiling, she leaned over and whispered, "I'm the mayor."

SUBMITTED BY MARGARET WEBSTER

Brotherly Love

After our special Mother's Day breakfast, I heard my three year old say to his sister, "Have you heard of Brother's Day? It's where you make your brother a really special breakfast to show him how much you love him."

SUBMITTED BY TAMMY TSANG



THE GREAT TWEET OFF: I USED TO THINK... EDITION

Twitter users share the funny things they used to think were true.

... that the sign in stores 'Shoplifters will be prosecuted' meant they would be executed. I never thought of stealing after that. @COSTCO SCOLI

... that the audience laughter you hear on sitcoms was actually people in their homes laughing and I could hear them through the TV. So I would laugh at random times during the show to stand out. @LUV2HIKE_YY

... adulthood was one crisis after another. I was wrong. Multiple crises. Concurrently. All at once. All the time. Forever. @SOMTO_IHEZUE

... that in pictures of KFC's Colonel Sanders, the bow tie was his arms and leas.

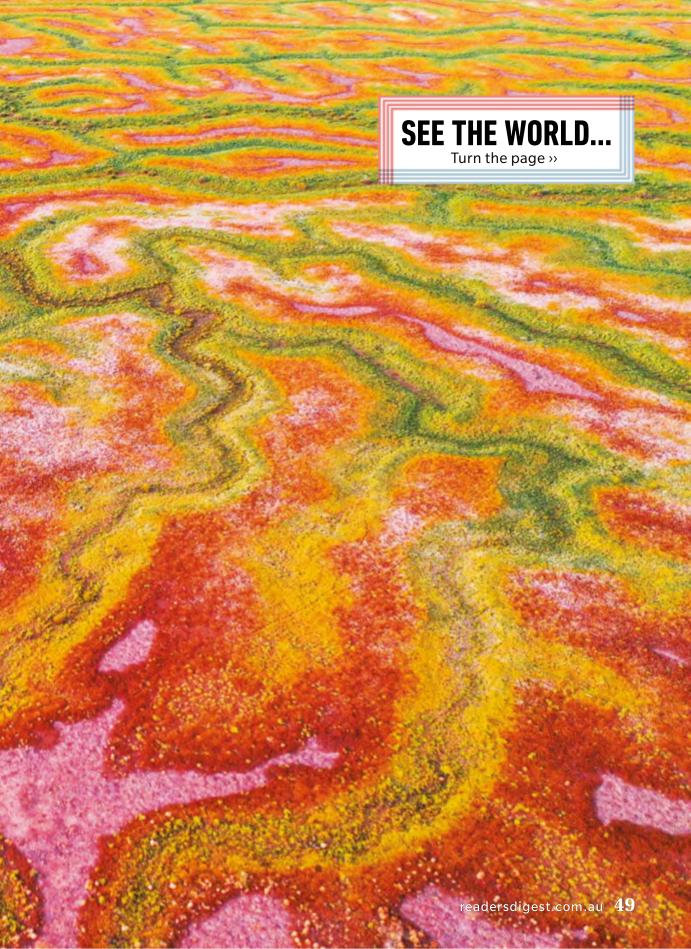
@FVSFAN

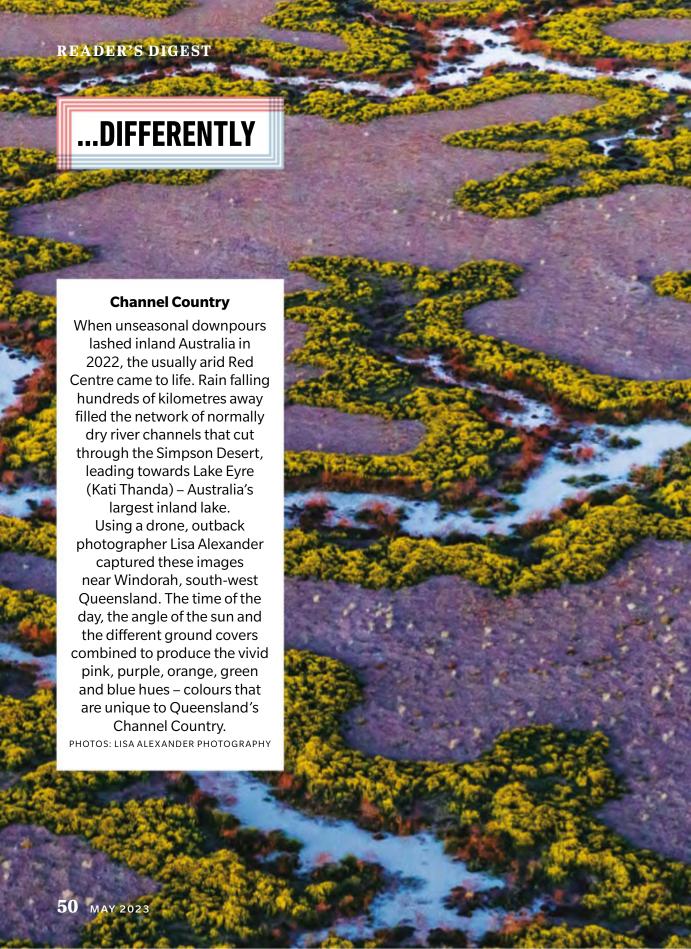
My daughter, as a toddler, used to think that prayers ended with an emphatic "Oh man!" instead of Amen.

@TAMMYOFSANIK













Tipping Points

BY Patricia Pearson

recently attended a wedding in the countryside, and guests were provided with a car and driver for the 90-minute journey into the hills. That was exciting: a private car, I could pretend I was rich. Since I'm not, though, I had no idea how much this trip actually cost. As a result, when our driver picked us back up at midnight, I secretly fretted all the way home

about tipping him. I fished around nervously in my purse and realised that all I had was a \$100 note, which I was keeping for an emergency. I had nothing smaller.

I couldn't not tip him, and I had nothing else to offer but two chocolates from the wedding. So, I could tip high - or spectacularly low. I defaulted to high and surrendered the money as my two kids and I

clambered out. I was, I confess, too tipsy to think through the idea of asking for change.

In my defence, I wouldn't have known the maths, anyway. The whole matter of tipping has long been a source of awkward interactions - and, for some travellers, mild anxiety - throughout the world. Tipping customs vary wildly from country to country. A friend in Rome tells me that Italians get offended by excessive gratuities. "Leaving a big tip is considered vulgar," she insists. "I've had Italian friends make me take money back."

When people take with them their own expectations about tipping as

they roam the world, it generates no small amount of confusion. Norwegians, who come from a culture where wages are high and tips are low, could burn through Las Ve-

gas leaving a trail of outrage with their tiny offerings.

Meanwhile, notoriously high-tipping Americans might insult everyone in Tokyo because good service in Japan is a matter of honour, as in: "How dare you suggest I be rewarded for handing you a plate of sashimi without dropping it in your lap?"

We're all in an embarrassed mess because there's no consistent logic to any of this. None!

Tipping began, as far as we know,

in Tudor England, with aristocrats swanning about one another's country homes, paying the servants extra for helping them put on their ruffs. Hundreds of years later, the tradition has become totally arbitrary. A 2016 study from Cornell University, published in the Journal of Economic Psychology, found that people are twice as likely to tip a supermarket delivery person than a supermarket store worker, and roughly twice as likely to tip a waiter than a fast-food restaurant worker.

Why is that? A paid job is a paid job, right? The supermarket deliverer is paid to deliver and the supermarket store worker is paid for in-

> store work. So tipping one and not the other only makes sense in terms of what has become customary.

More examples from the study: party clowns get tipped

more often than dental hygienists, even though the latter bravely confront the malodorous insides of our mouths. Limousine drivers get rewarded more often than fishing guides. And nobody can work out the reasons for these differences; don't fishing guides go the extra mile, too?

All this is compounded by a phenomenon called 'tip creep', which coincides with the proliferation of portable pay machines that feature

automatic tip prompts. They have moved beyond restaurant settings to places like car-repair shops, causing people to feel guilty if they hit the 'no tip' option. I recently went to a card-only bakery and their debit machine had tip prompts - for selling me a doughnut. I tipped 15 per cent.

Good luck with any consistency if you're tipping in Europe. Research across seven European countries in 2020 found that Germans and Swedes are more likely to tip in restaurants than the Spanish or Swiss, while only 40 per cent of French consumers

offer a gratuity. Norwegians are the least likely to tip: fewer than 15 per cent leave a little extra on the table. As for the size of the tip, it's lowest in France and Norway (less than two per cent of the bill), and highest in Germany (7.5 per cent) and Sweden (nine per cent).

"From a service worker's viewpoint," lead study author Stefan Gössling of Sweden's Lund University notes, "the most desirable tipping culture is probably in Germany, where minimum wages are high, tipping is a norm and tip percentages are high and mostly paid in cash." In Spain, by contrast, "the situation for service workers is

the least favourable; the minimum wage is low, as are tip percentages."

Compare that to the US, where restaurant tips of up to 25 per cent are now expected for very good service; in Canada, it's 15 to 20 per cent. Why? Because the restaurants pass along wage standards to consumers. It's the diners' job to make sure the

No one expects a tip in much of Southeast Asia (for example, Thailand or Vietnam) or Australia or New Zealand, beyond being told "keep the change". In Taiwan and Hong Kong, a ten per cent gratuity is added at

waitstaff can pay their rent.

most restaurants.

IN THE US,

RESTAURANT

TIPS UP TO

25 PER CENT

ARE NOW

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VERY GOOD

SERVICE

Sometimes, that too can feel nerve-racking. "Even when the server tells you about it up front, it's awkward." one friend who encountered this custom said. "Do you tip more if they were really good? What if they weren't good?"

It's enough to make your head hurt, and that's just fretting about cash percentages. I don't understand the notion of cryptocurrency, much less how to use tipping apps. Maybe that's how people used to feel about money itself, back when they traded goods and services with shells and weapons. Back when there was no tipping. R

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This year marks a decade since Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Argentina became leader of the Catholic Church. What are his achievements — and failures — so far?

BY Alex Cyr

n 2013, when Benedict XVI became the first pope in nearly 600 years to resign as leader of the Catholic Church, the College of Cardinals faced a daunting task. They needed to elect a new leader who could not only uphold the image of the Church, which has 1.3 billion believers worldwide, but who could restore and improve it. Public trust in the Church had eroded due to the sexual abuse and corruption scandals that have emerged across the globe since the 1950s.

The College of Cardinals handed the pontificate to Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Buenos Aires, making the Argentinian the first non-European pope since Gregory III of Syria - who ruled some 1300 years ago. Bergoglio took the name Pope Francis, after Saint Francis of Assisi, a Catholic friar and a patron saint of Italy known for his guardianship of animals and ecology.

The eldest of five children born to an accountant and a homemaker, Bergoglio studied chemistry and worked as a caretaker, bouncer and schoolteacher before being ordained in 1969 at the age of 32.

He was given the nickname 'Progressive Pope' due to his unrehearsed speeches, engagement with social issues and willingness to challenge traditional Church doctrine. By refusing to ride in a bulletproof car (the 'Popemobile') and forgoing the

cushy Apostolic Palace to live in the Santa Marta guest house, he shatters the preconception that leading one of the biggest religious groups in the world means separating from reality.

But ten years on, has he helped the Church begin to regain its standing as an institution of holiness and faith? Austen Ivereigh, a journalist and fellow in contemporary church history at Oxford University, has written two biographies on Pope Francis and believes the pontiff has done just that.

"He has made a huge difference in the way the Church and papacy are regarded by followers as having a new credibility," says Ivereigh. "They no longer see a stern, authoritarian institution."

Perhaps the pope's greatest act, says Ivereigh, has been to reform the Synod of Bishops, an assembly of leaders meant to identify the areas in which the Catholic Church can improve. These consultations had long been run internally by the Vatican, and gained a reputation for effecting little change.

In October 2021, however, in what Ivereigh says was "likely the largest consultation in human history", the Church carried them out publicly, as millions assembled in parishes and dioceses around the world to share their points of view and raise their concerns.

The talking points from those groundbreaking sessions will be summarised into national and



Pope Francis in 2022 at one of his weekly general audiences in St Peter's Square, Vatican City

continental reports and then presented at the Synod of Bishops in October 2023 and October 2024.

A few more positives include:

- OPPOSING THE FAR RIGHT. The pope's diplomacy has moved the Catholic Church further away from authoritarian politics than his predecessors did. Pope Francis has been a more vocal opponent of nationalism and populism, divorcing the Church from political movements like the American far right, says Ivereigh.
- STRENGTHENING BONDS WITH ISLAM. His missionary work, particularly a visit to Morocco in 2019 to speak with imams, has helped the Church form stronger ties with the Muslim world.
- RESTORING INTERNATIONAL RELA-**TIONSHIPS.** Pope Francis played a key role in repairing diplomacy between

Cuba and the US by hosting meetings with Barack Obama and Raúl Castro in 2015. It was the first time in 50 years that the heads of these countries met.

- INTERVENING IN THE RUSSIAN WAR. In September 2022, the pope helped broker a prisoner exchange that resulted in the release of more than 200 Ukrainian prisoners held by Russia.
- ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE CRISIS. He made the protection of the natural environment a priority of his pontificate, writing the encyclical letter Laudato Si', which calls on his followers to care for "our common home".
- APOLOGISING FOR PAST WRONGS. In July 2022, Pope Francis went to Canada to apologise for the "deplorable evil" of Church staff who worked at Canadian residential schools. Some Indigenous leaders said it was

READER'S DIGEST

the first step towards reconciliation; others said it didn't go far enough in taking responsibility for institutional wrongs that lasted generations.

For many, Pope Francis's reforms have been too few and too slow. While he has advocated for acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community as members of the Church, he has also maintained its rejection of same-sex marriage and abortion. Progressive Catholics wished to see some rules loosened - for example, clerical

celibacy - but those remain largely unchanged.

"Pope Francis has been progressive to a point," says Massimo Faggioli, professor of theology and religious studies at Villanova University and

author of Pope Francis: Tradition in Transition.

"But he has barely formally addressed the issue of ordination of women in the Church, and has not taken many steps to deliver on that issue." He says that this pope has been dubbed progressive largely because he's being compared to more conservative predecessors.

Others take issue with Pope Francis maintaining relations with Cardinal Maradiaga, a chief adviser accused of financial mismanagement in 2017, and his 2015 appointment and subsequent defence of Chilean bishop Juan

Barros, who was accused of turning a blind eye to sexual abuse in the 1980s. The pope later admitted to "grave errors" in judgement, accused Chilean leadership of a "culture of cover-up" and secured the resignations of their bishops, Barros included.

And yet the Catholic Church has 1.3 billion followers - an increase of 100 million during Pope Francis's pontificate - largely buoyed by popularisation of the faith in Africa and Asia.

Pope Francis is now 86 years old,

POPE FRANCIS IS

86 YEARS OLD,

AND RUMOURS

OF HIS

RESIGNATION

HAVE SURFACED

and rumours of his resignation have surfaced. (Two years after he became pope, he predicted a brief tenure for himself.) According to Ivereigh, there were rumours last year that he may resign, when a torn knee ligament had

him using a wheelchair in mid-2022. But his health has since improved. Says Ivereigh: "I don't think resignation is imminent."

Nonetheless, such rumours lead to speculations on his legacy, and whether or not he has made a difference. A long-held belief among Catholics has been that the Holy Spirit always gives the world the pope that is needed at that time.

"Pope Francis has proved in some ways that he is the pope this current world needed," says Ivereigh.

We can all draw our own conclusions.

Ten Years Of Pope Francis

Q&A A Conversation Pope Francis

FROM THE PODCAST MARCÓ, TU SEMANA

"I've been privileged to have had a relationship with the pope for many years," says Guillermo Marcó, a priest in Buenos Aires and the pontiff's spokesperson when he was an archbishop. The two sat down together in the pope's Vatican residence last June and discussed everything from what the Pope prays about to what it's like to grow old. "After we talked, people asked me, 'Has he changed?' And my answer was no. I found him to be very happy; he has always been a joker. He still laughs a lot."

GUILLERMO MARCÓ For many years, you were a priest and a bishop in Buenos Aires, doing outreach work on the streets and taking public transport. Now, as pope, everything you say and do reaches the whole world. How does that feel?

POPE FRANCIS You can measure distance by metres or kilometres. But in the heart, time and distance are all the same. They are far away and they are close, aren't they? Sometimes I remember an episode with a specific person back in Buenos Aires, and when something similar appears here, I feel that I live everywhere.

MARCÓ What does a pope include in his prayers? Are your prayers different now from before?

POPE FRANCIS To put it in evangelical terms, the bishop's prayer is to take care of the flock. And, well, the pope is a bishop, so the same thing applies: I look, ask, intercede and give thanks for all the good that gets done.

MARCÓ Do you still rise early for prayers?

POPE FRANCIS Yes, yes! Because if you don't pray in the morning, you don't pray at all; it's harder to find quiet time.

MARCÓ I once visited Catamarca [a province in Argentina], where I knew a nun who was a hermit. I asked her about the best way to pray, and she told me, "Look, Father, I get up very early, before the light comes out. Because when the little birds start, I get distracted." And at the time I thought that was a crazy idea for someone like me, who lives in a big city! [Both men laugh lightly.] Do you miss something from your freer life?

POPE FRANCIS Yes: wandering around. In Buenos Aires, I was either walking or riding the bus. Here, the few times that I have left the Vatican alone, I was caught red-handed.



The pope with Guillermo Marcó

MARCÓ Right, a little while ago you were spotted in a record store, and another time you went to the optician.

POPE FRANCIS When I went to the optician, it was 7pm in winter, and it was dark out. And yet, on my way, a lady shouted from a balcony, "The papa!" And then it was all over. [Both laugh.]

The other time, I blessed a record store owned by friends who had rebuilt it. They asked me to come, so I went. Again, it was dark out. Such bad luck, though, because I came out of the record store and there was a journalist at a nearby taxi stand. He recognised me.

MARCÓ There is a popular myth that you often escape from the Vatican and walk down the street.

POPE FRANCIS It's not true. The one who managed to do that is Saint John Paul the Second. He loved to ski; there is skiing less than 100 kilometres from here. He would wear a hat that covered his face, and no one would recognise him.

MARCÓ As pope, why don't you live in the Apostolic Palace?

POPE FRANCIS On the day after I was named pope, I had to take possession of the Apostolic Palace. It's amazing how spacious it is. It's not that fancy, but it's huge, and there are 100 people working there. You lose your independence.

So I asked the Lord, "Give me a way out." The next day I passed an open door, and there were ladies inside cleaning. I asked, "What is this place?" They told me, "It's the Santa Marta guest apartment. We are cleaning it for someone coming for your inauguration."

I looked around and thought, How about this place? There's the bedroom, there's the bathroom, there's the study. And I concluded, it's like a sweet potato for the parrot! [Both laugh loudly; this Latin American expression roughly translates as 'like candy to a child'.] And that was it. God put the solution in my hands. Once, when I was asked in an interview why I didn't stay in the Apostolic Palace, I said, "for psychiatric reasons". I wouldn't have endured.

MARCÓ You like being among people. You have lunch with the employees here every Sunday.

POPE FRANCIS Yes, yes. They have lunch at 12.20pm and I join them. It's a way of having a family lunch that

Ten Years Of Pope Francis

is different from the one I have every day with the priests and the bishops.

MARCÓ What are you reading? POPE FRANCIS I'm reading a book about the last interview Cardinal Martini gave [before he died in 2012], in which he said that the Church is 200 years behind the times.* It's excellent. It is helping me, too. What you read widens your perspective, right?

MARCÓ And what do you envision for the Church from reading that, and based on your own experiences as pope?

POPE FRANCIS That with the Holy Spirit, there is no need to be afraid of anything. Selfishness seeks to transform a crisis into conflict, which harms us all. Crises are what make us grow. One of the things I have learned here is that we don't know how to handle crises. When you transform a crisis into a conflict, you have lost. Conflict reduces you. Unity is greater than conflict.

MARCÓ What do you feel is different about being old, about the passage of time?

POPE FRANCIS Look, I don't feel old. I do now and then, when I start to think of my age. It seems unreal. I think: Me, I'm this age? Me? And I laugh at myself, and I move on.

MARCÓ You have often said that the elderly are discarded.

POPE FRANCIS This is a discarding society, eh? What doesn't work is discarded. What is going to bring you a problem is discarded. And the old people? We are discarded, despite being the ones who carry wisdom forward. The elderly can pour out their wisdom, and children can learn things from them that they cannot learn from their parents. Dialogue should therefore be encouraged between the young and the elderly. A poem I know by Argentine Francisco Luis Bernárdez] talks about how a tree's flowers come from what is underground. The elderly are like a tree's roots.

MARCÓ As pope, what do you keep most in your heart?

POPE FRANCIS My heart is a reservoir that I must expand every so often; I don't want to lose anything of the beauty that people give me, their words, their deeds. The priest is there to teach, but I think we learn a lot from people. I keep that inside my heart.

MARCÓ What do you feel about the immense responsibility you have? **POPE FRANCIS** The Holy Spirit gives many fruits. Alone, I just wouldn't manage.

CHARLANDO CON FRANCISCO, JULY 3, 2022, © 2022 BY MARCÓ, TU SEMANA

^{*} CARDINAL CARLO MARTINI WAS CONSIDERED TO BE A POSSIBLE SUCCESSOR TO POPE JOHN PAUL II; HE IS REPUTED TO HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE CHURCH'S MOST INFLUENTIAL PROGRESSIVE THINKERS.



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Two giant windmills are standing in a field. One asks the other, "What kind of music do you like?" "Well, I'm a huge metal fan," the other replies. REDDIT.COM

Little Numbers

Become a primary school maths teacher and make the little things count. **OLAF FALAFEL, COMEDIAN**

The Longest Day

A man giving a long-winded speech finally says, "I'm sorry that I talked

for so long. I left my watch at home." A voice from the crowd replies, "There's a calendar behind you."

GCFL.NET

Punny Stuff

What do a tick and the Eiffel Tower have in common? They are both Paris sites. REDDIT.COM

In The Jungle

A proud lion spots a chimp and roars, "Who is the king of the jungle?"

"You are, mighty lion!" says the trembling chimp. Next, the lion

stops a zebra: "Who is the king of the jungle?"

"Y-y-you are!" stammers the zebra. Feeling cocky, the lion swaggers up to an elephant and demands, "Who is the king of the jungle?"

The unfazed elephant snatches up the lion with its trunk, slams him against a tree, then stomps off.

The dazed lion shouts, "Just because you don't know the answer doesn't mean you have to get nasty about it." SUBMITTED BY IOE SEBASTIAN



A carpenter who is working on a construction site is rushed to the emergency department with concussion and a skull fracture.

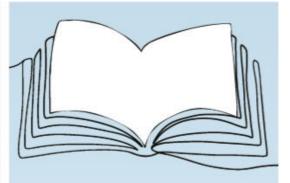
His wife comes to see him in the hospital.

"What happened?" she asks. "Well. I asked John to throw *me the hammer,"* the carpenter replies.

"And then what? You didn't catch it?"

"As a matter of fact, I did," he replies. "But then I remembered we have three guys named John working on our building site."

JOKOJOKES.COM



ONE FOR THE BOOKS

What do you call a bookworm who can't stop reading about strong female characters? A heroine addict.

Doctor: You've broken your fingers but we'll be able to sort them out. Patient: Will I be able to write a book once they're fixed? **Doctor:** Absolutely. Patient: Excellent, because I couldn't manage it before.

What do you get if you cross a writer with a deadline? A really clean house.

Did you know that Aristophanes once wrote a drama all about puns? It was a play on words.

I've just begun a speed-reading course. Last night I read Infinite lest in 15 seconds.

> I know it's only two words, but I'm still a beginner.

EXTRACTED FROM THE BOOK LOVER'S JOKE BOOK
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So You've Had It Rough? GOD

How we approach hardship could tell us how long we'll live

BY Markham Heid

FROM ELEMENTAL.MEDIUM.COM



DURING WORLD WAR II,

THE WAY A

TO HARDSHIP

FACTOR IN

LONGEVITY

an American woman named Shelley Smith Mydans reported on the conflict for Life magazine. Along with her husband, the photographer Carl Mydans, Shelley documented battles in both Europe and the Pacific.

Midway through the war, the couple was captured in the Philippines. The Japanese held them in camps in Manila and Shanghai. But despite spending two years as prisoners of war, the husband and wife survived and went on to live long and productive lives. Shelley lived to 86, while Carl made it to 97.

Many who survived the war were not so fortunate. A soldier, for example, named Philip was also in the Pacific during World War II. Even before the war, Philip was prone to anxiety and 'catastrophising' -

always predicting the worst. After he returned home, these traits intensified. Philip drank heavily and separated from his wife. Frustrated and resentful about his time overseas, blaming it for his failed marriage, Philip escalated his drinking. He tended not to exercise and was occasionally depressed. He died at age 64 of a heart attack.

The Mydanses and Philip's very

different stories were recounted in The Longevity Project, a book that summarises an 80-year study based on interviews and health data collected from approximately 1500 people - each followed from youth until death. Its authors came to an unlikely conclusion: "We found that many people who lived through hard times went on to live long lives," says co-author Leslie Martin, a professor of psychology at California's La Sierra University.

Unlike Philip, for whom World War II seemed to push life onto a

> self-destructive path, Martin says that the

PERSON REACTS Mydanses appeared to turn their wartime experience into a **IS AN IMPORTANT** source of motivation. "They didn't see their stress as meaningless, it seemed to fuel them," she says. "And

this ability to think about the hard things we go through as ultimately beneficial seems to be important."

EAT RIGHT, EXERCISE, AVOID STRESS... These vague directives are often framed as the necessary ingredients for a long and healthy life. There is definitely truth to each of them. But those who have studied longevity say these are



oversimplifications that tend to prioritise action over attitude. While day-to-day habits and behaviours matter, a person's approach to life including, and maybe especially, the way he or she reacts to hardship - is arguably the more important factor in longevity.

Confronted by difficult times, a lot of people start drinking, smoking, abandoning exercise, cutting ties with friends or making other unhealthy choices. These new habits can be hard to kick once the problematic period has passed. However, certain qualities seem to safeguard some people from such pitfalls, and experts say one quality consistently tops the list. In terms of personality characteristics, conscientiousness

was the strongest predictor of a long life, according to Martin.

Conscientiousness refers to someone who is organised, prudent and persistent in their pursuits. "Conscientious people are planful and responsible, not impulsive," she says. "When they take on a task, they don't give up easily."

This may come as a surprise to those who assume carefree, take-iteasy types are best insulated against life's many injuries and injustices. "We actually found the most cheerful and optimistic people lived shorter lives," Martin says. "Being worried or anxious all the time is a problem, but a little worrying - when you're thinking ahead and working through scenarios - can help you to be better

READER'S DIGEST

prepared." Conscientious worriers tend to put their fretting to good use: they make choices or changes in response to their concerns. Their worrying is productive, not pointless.

While conscientious people are not totally risk-averse, they're judicious about the risks they're willing to take. They tend to wear their seat belts, eschew heavy drinking or drugs, and avoid other sources of undue risk. Conscientious people also tend to adopt and stick with healthy habits, and their awareness and diligence tend to lead them into healthy relationships and jobs. All these tendencies promote a long and healthy life.

Peter Martin, a professor of

gerontology at Iowa State University, makes it clear that "anyone who has lived to 100 has faced many difficult situations." He echoes many of the above sentiments and mentions a few other characteristics that the long-lived seem to share.

"They're not uptight or neurotic," he says. While not blasé about life's challenges, people who live a long time usually don't catastrophise that is, they don't assume the worst, which is a habit that can lead a person to make choices that get him or her into trouble, such as prematurely abandoning a healthy routine or a promising enterprise.

Additionally, he says, those who

HOW TO LIVE A CONSCIENTIOUS LIFE

Experts share transformative tip

Hard times can set off all sorts of bad choices: drinking, smoking, cutting ties with loved ones. These decisions and their consequences often far outlive the trials that spawned them - a drinking habit escalates or lost friends are never replaced. But there's good news: "It is certainly possible to change your personality, and it happens pretty quickly," says Gary Small, former director of the University of California, Los Angeles, Longevity Center. Here are four things that conscientious people do automatically but others can teach themselves to do.

Look for a Mentor

"Spend time with people who are diligent and other admirable

organised and who have qualities," says psychology professor Leslie Martin. "Being with people who demonstrate these behaviours can make habit-forming easier, as their tendencies influence us."

So You've Had It Rough? Good!

live a long time also tend not to engage in 'upward comparisons'. They don't spend a lot of time comparing themselves or their circumstances to those who are more fortunate. In-

stead, they think about people who have it worse or about past situations they endured that were even more difficult.

Another underappreciated element of longevity is something Professor

Martin refers to as gerotranscendence, which, roughly, is a preference for a cosmic or spiritual worldview rather than a materialistic or strictly rational one. He says many long-lived

individuals seem to lean towards the spiritual as they age. "You see a pronounced reliance on religious beliefs - on putting faith in a higher power's hands," he says.

> Adopting a more spiritual attitude may allow people to better work through the aspects of life that they find inscrutable or disconcerting. "When you're able to hand things over to a higher be-

ing, that's a way of letting go," he says. At a certain point, letting go can reduce anger, frustration and other emotions that push people towards unhealthy thoughts or actions.

Find a Purpose

Increasing one's maturity over the years is essential to maintaining good health, says Howard Friedman, co-author of The Longevity Project. By this he means engaging in "meaningful work, and doing good things for family, friends, society."

Form Deep Relationships

Don't worry if you don't have a lot of friends: when it comes to bonding with others, it's quality over quantity.

"A LITTLE

WORRYING

CAN HELP YOU

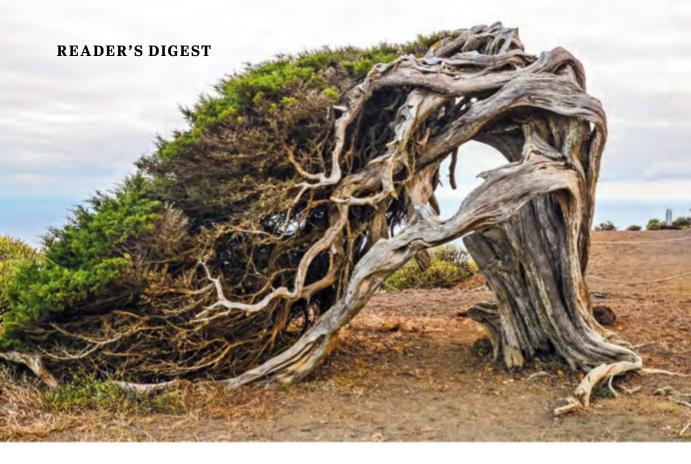
TO BE BETTER

PREPARED"

"If you are an introvert with a few close relationships with supportive, healthy ties, that can be as good as being an extrovert with many more ties," says Friedman.

Stick to It

Trying all these tips is easy; staying with it, not so much. This is why Small says the core element of conscientiousness is sticking with a healthy change or ambition once you've started it. The more people push themselves to follow through on their goals, the more they can build up their 'tenacity' muscles.



VALTER LONGO IS DIRECTOR of the Longevity Institute at the University of Southern California. In 2019, Longo travelled around Italy to speak with centenarians in an effort to uncover patterns that might explain their enviable longevity.

He says that two themes emerged. One was genetic good fortune. "They'd say, 'My sister made it to 94, my brother to 98.' So genes played a big part in it," he says. "The other story was the person who did not have any long-lived siblings or parents but was in a concentration camp during World War II."

In other words, something about living through incredible hardship seemed to bestow longevity on certain survivors.

Longo has a couple of theories about what that something could be. His first is based in nutrition science. Much of his work - in mice and in people - has found that periods of fasting or caloric restriction can help clear away dead or dysfunctional cells in ways that may discourage the development of disease and also promote longevity.

"If we give mice low levels of protein or kilojoules for a while, then we feed them normally, they live longer than the mice we fed normally the whole time," he says.

While malnourishment is an extreme and inhumane example of forced deprivation, Longo points out that many places in the world where people tend to live into very old age

So You've Had It Rough? Good!

are also places where people eat a vegetable-centric and meat-restricted diet. Along with clearing away dead or diseased cells, "eating this way could cause epigenetic changes that affect life span," he says, referring to diet-induced alterations in the way some genes are expressed.

His second theory is more of an observation. "One thing all these centenarians had in common is that they all wanted to live - they wanted to go on," he says. "They didn't say, 'I'm ready to die' or 'I don't care anymore.' They were still interested in life and paying attention to everything." While most people are passionate and engaged when they're young, a great many lose these attributes as life wears on. And this loss seems to matter.

Returning to the story of Philip, the heavy-drinking World War II veteran who died young of a heart attack, Leslie Martin's book says that he found his job merely 'tolerable' and that he was looking forward to retirement though he didn't know how he would fill his time or whether he would enjoy himself. Even in his early 60s, he wasn't involved in activities that gave his life passion or purpose.

Though some, like Philip, regard tough times as a sign that life is unfair or unpleasant, others emerge from a struggle with a greater sense of gratitude and a new-found resolve to commit their time and efforts to things that matter - to close friendships, to family bonds or to hobbies or work for which they are passionate. Despite their two years in captivity, Carl and Shelley Mydans gladly returned to Japan when Carl was tasked with leading Time-Life's Tokyo bureau, and the two continued to be engaged, writing and photographing until the end.

While everyone is entitled to a period of adjustment during difficult times, those who endure will not let those difficulties knock their lives or attitudes off course for good.

"If you dwell on the negative, you're not going to do well," warns Gary Small, former director of the University of California, Los Angeles, Longevity Center.

"But if you can see a challenge as something to rise to, it can be very gratifying to get to the other side." R

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Skip To It

Filipino athlete Ryan Alonzo has set a second Guinness World Record for skipping. Nicknamed 'Skipman', the 35 year old completed 3731 consecutive crossovers, in which he quickly shifts his arms from side to side during each jump. The previous record was 2405. REUTERS



The Magic Of

It touches our hearts in different ways

BY Michael Kallinger

The love of his life B.B. King in perfect harmony with his 'Lucille', a special edition Gibson ES-355 guitar. The blues musician, who died in 2015, was one of the most influential electric guitarists of the 20th century, and his vibrato stood out from thousands.







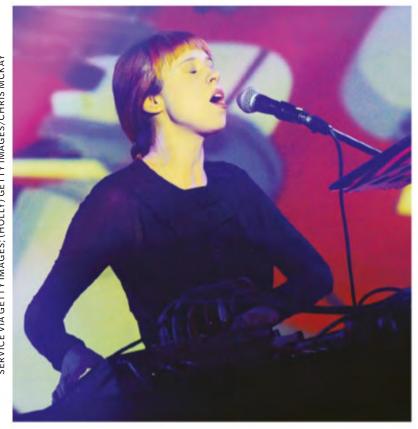
- ▶ On the Indonesian island of Bali you can experience ensembles known as gamelan, which make traditional music primarily with gongs and metallophones, but also with flutes, singing or as here with stringed instruments.
- Mariachi is the name given to the typical folk music groups from the Mexican state of Jalisco. Their music has been recognised by UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List since 2011.
- ▼Versatile The voice is the most original human instrument. In a choir it can become a powerful body of sound. The boys in this photo will experience first-hand that their voice changes over the course of their lives, especially when their voices break.
- **◄ Argentine musician**

Sol Gabetta, who currently lives and works in Switzerland, is now closer to the birthplace of her instrument. The cello originated in northern Italy in the 16th century. Unlike the violin and viola, it is held upright between the legs, which is why it is also called a standing violin.







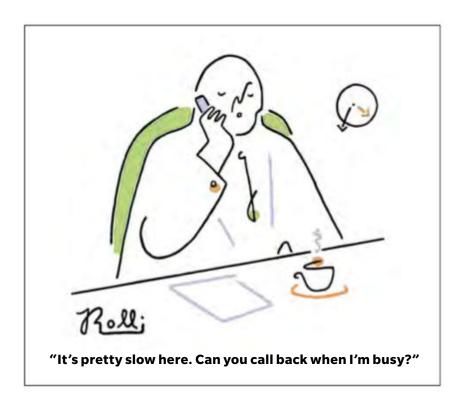


▲ Bagpipes are not only popular in Scotland. Here, at the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, a Chinese pipe band perform before the curling event.

◀ Holly Herndon may sing, but her main instrument is a computer. The American, who lives in Berlin, Germany, used it to program an artificial intelligence (AI) that sings – which can be heard on the album R Proto (2019).

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

Humour On The Job



Strange Hobby

I interviewed a man for a job and asked him if he had any hobbies.

"Yes," he replied quite enthusiastically. "Women."

I looked him in the eye for a few seconds and there was a very uncomfortable silence until I moved on to another question.

Later, I found out that he had actually said, "Swimming."

SUBMITTED BY ANDREW BERRY

Trying It On

I walked into a shop in search of a warm fleece jacket. On entry, I grabbed the first one I saw and inspected the thickness with my hand.

"Do you mind?" came a voice out of nowhere. I looked up and found myself staring into the red face of a male shop assistant.

"So sorry," I said. "I thought you were a mannequin."

SUBMITTED BY LORRAINE SMITH



Elaine's was a fabled New York bar/restaurant whose clientele included luminaries such as Woody Allen, Michael Caine and Frank Sinatra. Woody Allen featured the restaurant in his film Manhattan.

But the real star was its legendary bartender, Thomas Carney. As The New York Times tells it, Carney once got into an altercation with a customer, a famous talent agent who refused to pay his bill.

> "Do you know who I am?" demanded the agent.

Carney climbed up on the bar, clanged a spoon against a bottle to get everyone's attention, and announced.

"This man does not know who he is. Does anybody know who he is? We need help."

THE NEW YORK TIMES

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

A customer comes to the customer service desk, looking distraught. I am with my manager.

Customer: "I demand that you fire your security guard immediately!"

Me: "What happened?"

Customer: "Your security guard is a bigot! He wouldn't let me bring my child into the shop! I had to leave her outside with my husband!"

Me: "I'm sure that's not what happened. We don't discriminate against anyone shopping with us."

Customer: "That's what happened! You need to fire him!"

My manager steps in, knowing this is not the kind of thing you can resolve at the customer service desk.

Manager: "Excuse me, let's go and speak to the guard and see if we can figure out what's going on."

Customer: "You'd better! My child will be traumatised for years because of this!"

They both head off towards the entrance and I continue my duties. A few minutes later, the manager comes back, shaking his head.

Manager: "She neglected to mention that her child is a cat."

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READER'S DIGEST





Do Pets

New evidence reveals that animals may grieve for a 'loved one' similar to how humans do

By The Editors

mudge the cocker spaniel was devastated when her companion, a King Charles spaniel called Charlie, died suddenly last year from a viral infection. The little dog's head hung low and her droopy ears flopped on either side of her sorrowful eyes. "It seemed obvious to me that she was grieving," says her owner Margaret Keane, a 51-year-old telecommunications manager.

But until recently, the idea that a dog would be devastated by the loss of a 'loved one' would have been regarded as, at best, sentimental and, at worst, deluded. Experts agreed that animals had only basic or primal feelings, such as fear or anger.

Now, though, with increasingly sophisticated



scans revealing that humans form emotions in the parts of the brain we share with all mammals - and use the same neurotransmitter chemicals - vets and other experts are arguing that animal emotions must be similar to our own. And more and more behavioural studies seem to be backing them up.

Do pets have human-like feelings?

So do pets like Smudge really feel human-like sorrow at the death of a friend? Marian Dawkins, professor of animal behaviour at the University of Oxford, is cautious. "It's quite obvious

that animals undergo physiological and behavioural changes after losing a social companion, offspring or parent, but are these accompanied by conscious experiences of suffering?" she asks. "In humans, there is conscious worry about the future, how someone is going to cope, whether they will be socially ostracised and other issues."

But Dr Karen Overall, a Pennsylvania animal behaviourist and editor-in-chief of the Journal of Veterinary Behavior, seems more sure. She believes that while the depth and exact nature of animal grief may as yet be poorly defined, there are 'so many daily examples' of pets appearing





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READ BY Zoë Meunier



IS ONLY CHILD SYNDROME REAL?

Are only children really more likely to be selfish, self-obsessed and socially awkward? An only child examines the reality behind this long-held stereotype.



GUERRESCHI AND THE BLUEBOTTLE FLY

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LETTERS TO ANNE FRANK'S FATHER

After his beloved daughter's death, Otto Frank inspired a new generation, replying to countless letters from young people.



TO LISTEN GO TO:

READER'S DIGEST

deeply affected by the death of a companion that it's very difficult to claim they don't have the capacity to feel loss as keenly as we do.

Marc Bekoff, professor emeritus of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Colorado, has witnessed several examples of what he is certain was animal grief, including sea-lion mothers wailing pitifully as they watch their babies being eaten by killer whales, and Kenyan elephants that 'seemed lost', wandering around with their tails and trunks hanging limp, after the matriarch of the herd had died. He has

also seen a female red fox bury her mate after it had been killed by a cougar. She carefully covered his body with pine needles and dirt and then stood silently over his grave, before moving on.

GO THROUGH" In fact, many experts now believe that not only should you take animal grief seriously, but you should also help your pet get over its loss, just as you would a family member or friend.

Coping with Pet Grief

Sometimes the solution may be simple. "You might just need to get a dog to take up new hobbies," suggests Dr Overall. "It could enjoy taking walks in fresh locations or meeting new companions."

"After a week of watching Smudge mope around, I took in a pup called Milly from a local animal rescue centre," says Margaret Keane. "Smudge was hesitant at first, but after a few days she began to engage. Her sad expression lifted, her ears pricked up, and she began to play again."

Profound Grief

"GRIEF IS A

PROCESS THAT

ANIMALS -

LIKE HUMANS -

OFTEN NEED TO

Animal grief can be especially profound after the death of an owner with whom the pet has enjoyed a close relationship. Spot the collie went everywhere with Jake Anderson* - a farmer

> - sitting with him in his tractor. When Jake died of a heart attack in 2011, Spot spent the first week looking all over the farm for him. The collie was even seen standing at the farm gate, looking up and down the road, as if searching.

"Six months later," says Jake's son Mike*, "I drove my dad's tractor home from the mechanic, where it had been for some time. When I opened the tractor door, Spot was right beside the step looking up yearning, seemingly hoping that my father was the driver."

But here, too, new companionship can eventually bring consolation. Mike - who has three children under 12 - has consistently encouraged Spot to carry on a normal life with his family. More than a year later, Spot



still seems lost occasionally. But he has clearly found contentment with his new best friends.

Sometimes, though, an animal's grief can cause just the sort of physical decline you see in humans. "For instance, when one cat in a household dies, the remaining cat can start to show problem behaviour," says veterinarian Sarah Heath. "They may stop eating and grooming, or start seeking out their owner all the time."

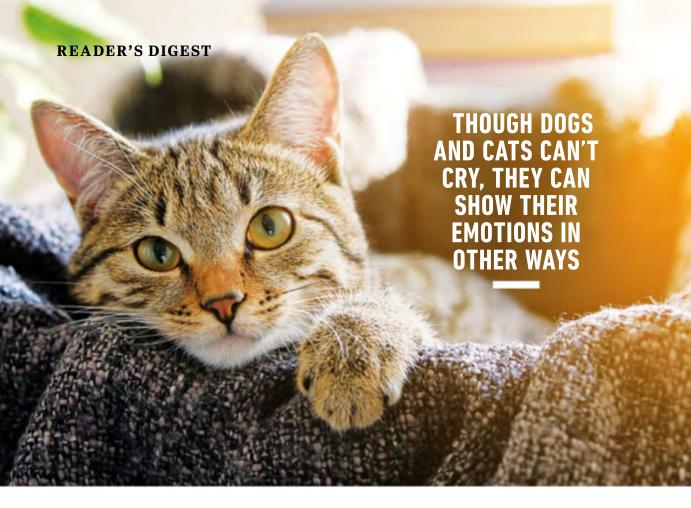
Routine and Distraction

One way for owners to help here is to try to keep a pet's home routine as consistent as possible. "Distraction with new, interesting toys can

be useful, too, but grief is a complex process and there are no simple trick solutions. Cats have a very different social system from dogs, so getting another cat isn't recommended."

Heath says that pheromone diffusers can bring comfort to cats and dogs. "They're odourless artificial versions of soothing chemicals produced by the animals themselves and can be placed beside a pet's bed. You can also get a collar impregnated with pheromones that are slowly released over a month."

Dr Overall adds that grief can sometimes be 'unremitting' - and if symptoms such as social withdrawal, loss of appetite or energy, or decrease in activity last more than



a few weeks, then owners might like to consider asking a vet for animal antidepressants.

But even if your pet seems upset for a long time, there may be no need to worry. "Grief is a process that animals - like humans - often need to go through," says Heath.

Giving your pet time and space

Gail Parker's cat Rocky was very close to her Irish setter, Renny. A day or so after Renny died of cancer in 2000, Gail put his collar around a life-sized model of an Irish setter.

"Rocky walked over to the statue,

gently reached his paw up and patted the collar twice," says the 67 year old. "He then turned and walked slowly away with his head down."

Rocky also used to sit on a table near a photo of Renny, reaching over with his paw to adjust it, so that it was facing him. "Even now, nearly 13 years later, I find Rocky sitting in the dining room, looking at the wooden cabinet where I keep Renny's ashes, as if he's meditating."

But Rocky has never shown any other ill effects of his bereavement, and Gail sees his grief as normal. "He didn't need treatment," she says. "Just space and time to grieve for his friend."

Witnessing the death of another animal

The most common experience of death for pets is euthanasia. There's a strict rule that animals should never witness the slaughter of another in an abattoir, but what about when death is peaceful and bloodless, by injection? Many owners now feel that allowing a pet to witness a companion being put to sleep, or even just to view the body afterwards, may help with acceptance of the death, preventing the remaining animal pining because it doesn't know why a housemate has disappeared.

Vets witnessing the behaviour of pets around euthanasia are often bemused at what happens. "They don't behave the way that humans would in similar circumstances," says Heath. "They remain interested in their companion until the moment of death, but after that, they may appear unconcerned, acting as if the body is as inanimate as furniture.

This lack of reaction can seem at odds with the idea of feeling grief, but perhaps it's just a reflection of a different attitude to life and death."

Of course, pets don't always grieve

Some behave as if nothing has happened or even become more animated - as if relieved. "Animals may just be more honest about expressing their emotions," says Dr Overall. "Sometimes, for whatever reason, they may not feel sad and, unlike humans, they don't fake grief."

But it's clear that, though dogs and cats can't cry, they can show their emotions in other ways, and if you think your pet is grieving, your intuition is probably correct. Give them space and time and, like most humans, they'll eventually recover. Life may not ever be quite the same again, but the new 'normal' will still be a life R worth living.

* Names changed to protect privacy.



Doctors Swallow Lego For Science

As an emergency doctor at Western Health in Melbourne, Dr Andy Tagg sees a lot of anxious parents of kids who have swallowed Lego pieces – something he also did as a child. To reassure parents that the plastic toy would indeed be excreted, six doctors devised an experiment where they each swallowed a Lego head. The doctors gauged how long it took for the plastic toy to be passed, with each being given a Found and Retrieved Time (FART) score, which averaged 1.7 days. NPR.ORG

QUOTABLE QUOTES

When you reach for your phone first thing in the morning, it's like having 100 people in your bedroom screaming at you.

> ROBIN ROBERTS. **NEWS ANCHOR**

If you build castles, everyone that approaches is an enemy. But if you're among the people, everybody's an ally. **IONATHAN MAJORS, ACTOR**



Every body is worthy of love and respect. There are so many different types of people who look different and have different bodies, and it is these differences that make our world an exciting place to be.

TARYN BRUMFITT, **BODY IMAGE ACTIVIST AND** AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

FUNDAMENTALLY, I'M INTERESTED IN **BEING A GOOD** PERSON WITH AS MINIMAL **INCONVENIENCE** AS POSSIBLE.

ALICE SNEDDEN. NEW ZEALAND STAND-UP COMEDIAN



If you are happy, you are wealthy. If rich humans could buy happiness, they would.

NAOMI OSAKA, TENNIS PLAYER



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Earn Your Poetic Licence

By Sarah Chassé



While spring might be the prime time for enjoying poetry, and not just because writers have long been inspired by April's sweet showers or the darling buds of May, you can celebrate poetry in any season. The largest poetry event in the world, the International Poetry Festival, is held in June. Rotterdam will host this year's festival from June 9-11.

Poetry is an ancient art form
– in fact, it predates prose and
literacy itself. Even before we
could read or write, people were reciting and singing verses to preserve
and pass down history, genealogy
and law. Early agricultural societies
also likely chanted spells or prayers
for bountiful harvests.

The world's oldest surviving printed poem is 'The Epic of Gilgamesh', composed 4000 years ago in what is now Iraq and Syria. Scratched onto clay tablets in wedge-shaped characters called cuneiform, the mythic tale of the warrior king Gilgamesh describes a

huge flood similar to the one in the Bible, even including a Noah-like character and an ark.

In 15th-century Scotland, one way to battle it out with your arch-enemy was called *flyting*, a verbal showdown in verse - in essence, a medieval rap battle full of insults and boasting. While flyting went out of fashion after the Middle Ages, players of the 2020 video game Assassin's Creed: Valhalla can still fling taunting rhymes at virtual foes such as Fergal the Faceless and Chadwick, Monger of Gossip.

A 2018 study in the US found that poetry readership has increased in recent years, especially among those under age 35. Still, many people find poetry unapproachable or worry if they don't immediately 'get' a poem's meaning. Edward Hirsch, author of How to Read a Poem: And Fall in Love with Poetry, advises reading a poem out loud a few times, discussing it with a friend and, most importantly, getting comfortable with a little ambiguity.

Because there are so many types of poems, from funny nursery rhymes to sombre elegies, rhyming villanelles to freewheeling free verse, it can be hard to pin down what poetry actually is. Many have tried: William

Wordsworth thought poetry was "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." Kahlil Gibran said, "Poetry is a deal of joy and pain and wonder, with a dash of the dictionary." And Emily Dickinson wrote, "If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry." More precisely (and perhaps less poetically), poetry can be defined as writing that uses meter, metaphor and/or rhyme to elicit an emotional response.

Did Edgar Allan Poe almost write 'The Raven' about ... a parrot? That was his original concept for the 1845 poem's talking bird, but he later settled on the more ominous raven. Poe was almost certainly inspired by Grip, the beloved pet raven of fellow author Charles Dickens.

In January 1961, Robert Frost became the first poet to speak 🜙 at an American president's inauguration. He arrived at the podium planning to read 'Dedication', written specifically to honour the man of the hour, John F. Kennedy. But the bright winter sunshine reflecting off the recent snowfall made the typed poem illegible, even after Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson tried blocking the sunlight with his hat. The 86-year-old Frost instead launched into his poem 'The Gift Outright' from memory.

READER'S DIGEST

Sixty years later, Amanda Gorman became the youngest inaugural poet at just 22, reading 'The Hill We Climb' at US President Joe Biden's 2021 ceremony. She's not the only up-and-coming poet who has crossed over into pop culture: 30-year-old Rupi Kaur is a breakout 'Instapoet' - that is, a poet popular on Instagram - with 4.5 million followers hanging on her every word.

Shel Silverstein's 1981 illustrated poetry book, A Light in the Attic, was the first children's book to land on the New York Times bestseller list, where it appeared for 182 weeks, breaking the previous record for hardcovers. Before he started writing for the younger set, Silverstein wrote the Johnny Cash song 'A Boy Named Sue,' winning a 1970 Grammy for Best Country Song.

Not all poems are classics, but few are such stinkers that they inspire an entire competition devoted to wretched writing. Fairly or not, Joyce Kilmer's 'Trees' (which begins "I think that I shall never see / A poem lovely as a tree") spawned

Columbia University's annual Alfred Joyce Kilmer Memorial Bad Poetry Contest, in which students recite the most hackneyed verses they can come up with. The event ends with a group recitation of 'Trees'.

Here's one way to clap back at the haters: After E.E. Cummings's collection 70 Poems was firmly rejected by 14 publishing houses, he self-published it under the snarky title No Thanks and he dedicated the book to those very same companies, arranging their names in the shape of a funeral urn.

"There once was a man from Nantucket ..." That's the first line of many a popular limerick, a five-line rhyming poem that is usually humorous (and sometimes crude). The name limerick most likely came from a popular 18th-century drinking song about the Irish city of Limerick that people often added cheeky improvised verses to, or possibly from the term Learic, referring to the surname of the form's most famous practitioner, Victorian writer Edward Lear. R



What Time Is It On The Moon?

With many more moon missions likely, space organisations around the world are discussing establishing a 'common lunar reference time', according to the European Space Agency. Currently, a moon mission runs on the time of the country operating the spacecraft. AP



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MY LUCKY

If the plant could thrive, maybe I could too, even with cancer

> BY David Meyers FROM THE WASHINGTON POST

y wife, Hannah, and I don't usually keep house plants. Anything in pots gets either over watered or underwatered. But after my diagnosis with glioblastoma, a terminal brain cancer, with a prognosis of little more than a year to live, I loved the idea of having something new and green around.

My friend Mitch gave me what he said was a lucky bamboo plant in a deep-green pottery bowl with three pencil-size stalks braided together. We placed the plant in the living room window across from the couch where I spent





much of the day. I smiled when I looked at it over the rim of the mug of coffee Hannah brought me each morning.

I told Hannah I wanted to care for the plant myself. When it didn't immediately turn yellow or brown or lose all its leaves, I was pleasantly surprised.

Tending to the plant gave me a sense of accomplishment at a time

when I sometimes felt useless. Glioblastoma limited my ability to walk, and the treatment left me fatigued, making it hard for me to accomplish everyday tasks. As a family doctor, I was used to being the one who provided care, not the one who received it.

Since my diagnosis in August 2018, far too often, it seemed, I had to rely on help from other people. The enormous change left me feeling adrift and unsettled. Watering the plant, as small an act as it was, connected me to a core part of my old identity and taught me I could still be a caregiver. Plants and people could still depend on me.

Over the next few months, I recovered from surgery and completed radiation and the first round of chemotherapy. Even after I returned to work, I continued to care for the plant. Soon, it had nearly doubled in height and its leaves were shiny and lush. Both the tree and I were thriving.

Then, mysteriously, it began to show signs of stress. I increased my watering, then decreased it. I nestled coffee grounds into the soil (a common fertilisation method). I fed it commercial plant food. No matter what I did, the leaves kept browning and dropping to the floor. I grew more and more frustrated and uneasy.

"I can't even care for a simple plant!" I yelled. "I'm failing!"

Hannah reminded me that we'd seen house plants die before. She asked me why I was getting so worked up about this particular one.

"If my lucky bamboo dies," I blurted out, "I might die too!"

I couldn't shake the feeling that the plant had become a symbol of care for my ailing plant. Following the instructions, I transplanted the tree to a larger pot, untangling its roots to give it room to grow. When it was back in the sunny window, we both began to thrive again.

When my tumour inevitably returned, it would not be because of any



WATERING TAUGHT ME THAT PEOPLE AND PLANTS COULD STILL DEPEND ON ME

my own precarious health. Identifying with the green and growing plant had offered me solace. Now that the tree was struggling, I felt increasingly fearful. Its shrivelling leaves, I worried, might signal the recurrence of my brain tumour.

I realised I had wrongly connected my careful nurturing of the plant something over which I had at least some control - with my own survival - something over which I had no control.

As my anxiety lessened, I began to pore over online tutorials to help me failure on my part - not because I ate sugar occasionally and certainly not because I failed to keep this plant alive.

Whenever I look at the tree with its braided stalks in its new pot, I make a point to think of Mitch and the other people who have cared for and supported me.

If the plant outlives me, I hope it will comfort Hannah and remind her that our large community will continue to nurture her after I am R gone.

FROM THE WASHINGTON POST (SEPTEMBER 11, 2022) ©2022 BY DAVID MEYERS



Barbie Doll Celebrates Inclusion

In the hope of diversifying its doll range, Mattel has revealed its latest creation - a doll with scoliosis. The new line for Barbie's little sister, Chelsea, will feature dolls with curvature of the spine and a removable back brace. The company said it was intended to encourage children to celebrate inclusion. SKY NEWS





Social masking behaviour could be sabotaging your self-esteem. Here's how to spot the signs

BY Victoria Stokes

READER'S DIGEST



"I've done such a good job of pretending to be an outgoing person that friends and family are shocked when I tell them I'm not." Amanda* is talking about her experience of social masking. She says it's something she's always done.

Ever since she was a teen, Amanda, now 37, became an expert at working the room. She would seamlessly adopt the mannerisms of the people around her in a bid to fit in, while concealing her true personality.

At times, this would extend to the clothes she wore, the people she dated, and the jokes she would tell. And by her own admission, sometimes it was hard to tell who was actually the real Amanda and who was the fake.

This is 'social masking', the process of suppressing or concealing your natural way of interacting with others so you can feel accepted. Social maskers aren't trying to deceive anyone; rather, they are hoping to blend in with everybody else.

"Social masking is a learned set of conscious pattern-matching behaviours, movements and actions where you mimic 'normality' to fit in rather than stand out," explains psychotherapist Dipti Tait. "It's generally adopted by people who are unable to naturally act in a way that is considered socially acceptable."

Social masking behaviour is often used by people on the autism spectrum, but according to psychologist Dr Tara Quinn-Cirillo, it's something that we all engage in to a certain extent.

She says social masking can manifest as copying what others do, such as body language, facial expressions and behaviour or practising what you may want to say.

While it can look different for everyone, social masking typically involves suppressing your natural urges (for example, forcing yourself to sit still or smile), offering rehearsed responses, and changing your personal interests to fit the crowd.

FITTING IN

In a world that often tells us to just be ourselves, you might wonder why many of us are reliant on these social masking behaviours.

"Social masking happens because we as a species want to be included," says Tait. "It's a tribal thing of being together rather than being on our own; a primitive part of our evolution to blend in, rather than stand out, to socialise, rather than be anti-social, to fit in rather than be a misfit."

The mask is usually simply protection against our self-doubt. "We all have certain masks to protect ourselves from ridicule, exposure, difference and imposter syndrome," says Tait. These masks enable us to get through some tricky life situations with confidence, she says.

To an extent, social masking is also built-in at a physical level. Tait says we are creatures of pattern-matching. "We have something in our brain called mirror neurones. These are pattern-matching neurotransmitters that give us indications of how to behave and blend in to essentially stay safe and not stick out."

Adding to that, Quinn-Cirillo says social media may have made it even harder for us to be ourselves. She notes that social media gives us set images and videos that may make us

believe this is how we should be.

You might be wondering how social masking differs from being a slightly different version of yourself around different groups of people. For example, you might find you're the life and soul of the party around your closest friends, but more subdued when you're with work colleagues.

Our personalities are largely fluid. They naturally change shape depending on the company we keep, and Tait says there is a huge difference between being in natural rapport with someone and consciously social masking.

"When we are in natural rapport with someone, we unconsciously get into sync with that person. Our breathing patterns begin to match the other person, our pace and tone change, and our body language adapts," she explains.

"These are subconscious clues that we are 'on the same page' as the person we are speaking to and interacting with. It happens naturally, and there is very little effort involved." Social masking on the other hand involves a conscious effort to mould your personality to suit your surroundings.

CONFIDENCE CRISIS

In some scenarios, this can be beneficial. For example, it may curry favour with your boss and help you net a promotion or allow you to forge



new connections with people outside of your social circle.

However, for Tait, social masking moves into dangerous territory when you try to be someone you are not. She references the popular adage 'Fake it 'til you make it.'

"If the 'fake it 'til you make it' system is used to improve a quality in one's self for self-development purposes, then this is a very good way of training the brain and the body to adapt and create better thoughts, feelings, habits and beliefs," she says.

"But if it is being used to patch over self-doubt and boost one's self-belief, self-worth or self-value, then this is where the system can be damaging."

Social masking can compound the belief that you are not enough as you are and chip away at your confidence and self-esteem over time. The more Amanda masked her true self, the more she says she lost faith in herself.

"I couldn't see the positive qualities I had to share with others and the more my confidence dipped, the more I felt I had to rely on social masking behaviours," she says.

Confidence issues aside, social masking can also be incredibly draining. "Continually stepping outside of who you are can impact your self-esteem and self-worth and you may feel that you are 'stuck' in a cycle of having to present a different self to the outside world," Quinn-Cirillo points out.

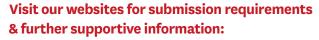
BEING YOURSELF

So, how can you break the cycle? Getting rid of the mask involves working to improve your self-worth, self-belief and self-esteem.

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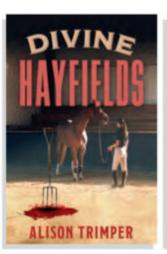
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RECENT TITLES...









READER'S DIGEST

The goal, says Tait, is to feel safe enough to remove the mask; to feel comfortable in your own skin and to be able to use your voice clearly.

It's by no means a quick fix. The next time a thought of self-doubt pops into your head, Tait encourages you to ask yourself what you'd say if a friend was experiencing that very same negative thought. "This answer is often much kinder. You need to work out how you can use this kinder approach on yourself."

Next, learn how to interrupt those damaging thoughts that all too often tell you it's not OK to be yourself. Tait says to be on the lookout for phrases like "I am not good at that", "I can't do that", or "I am not worthy".

Then, once you hear these thoughts, take action and stop the damaging dialogue. Tait advises asking yourself, "What if that self-limiting belief was not true? What would change? What small thing would I do differently?"

Doing this repeatedly over a long period of time gives those

self-defeating thoughts less power and improves your self-belief, meaning the urge to social mask won't be quite so powerful.

On the practical side of things, Quinn-Cirillo suggests finding someone you can easily and authentically connect with when you first arrive at an event and deciding how long you want to stay before you get there.

For Amanda, the key has been testing the waters with close friends and family. "I've started showing the real me to the people I most trust, and it's given me the confidence to be a little more myself. It's a reminder that the right people will love you for you," she says.

Her advice is to start showing others your personality in small ways: tell that joke you think is funny or say what you want to say instead of just what you think people want to hear.

Lastly, be kind to yourself. Quinn-Cirillo says social situations can be tough to navigate for all of us.

*Name has been changed.



Prickly Voyager

A New Zealand airport runway wasn't the sharpest of landing spots for a hedgehog. The bizarre incident occurred on Dunedin Airport's tarmac recently, when the captain of flight NZ675, which had just landed from Auckland, spotted something strange on the runway. Firefighters were called to remove the interloper from the runway, and the plane was later able to proceed to the terminal. STUFF.CO.NZ

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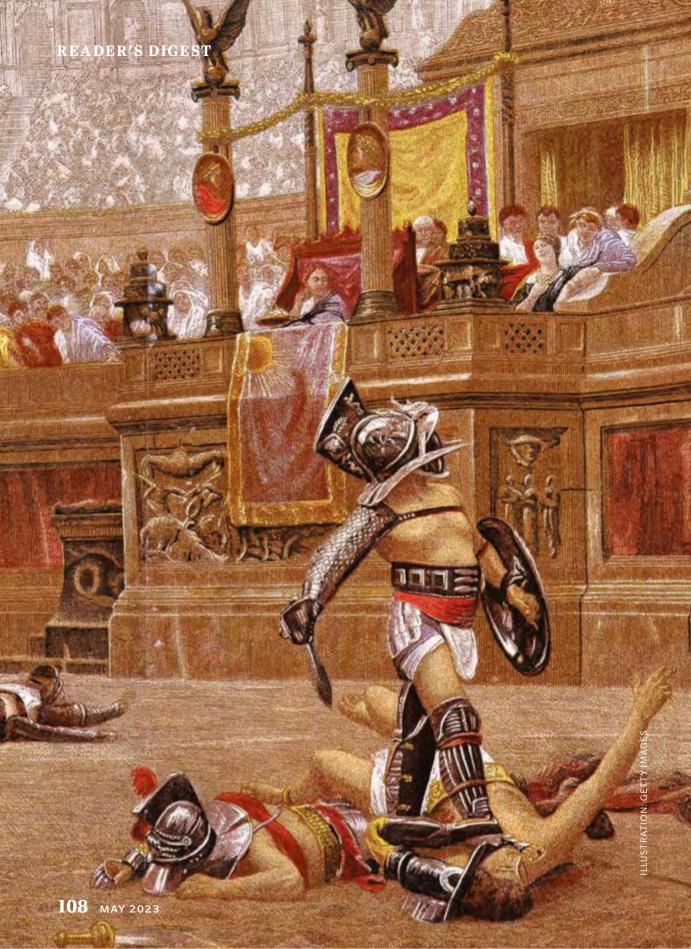


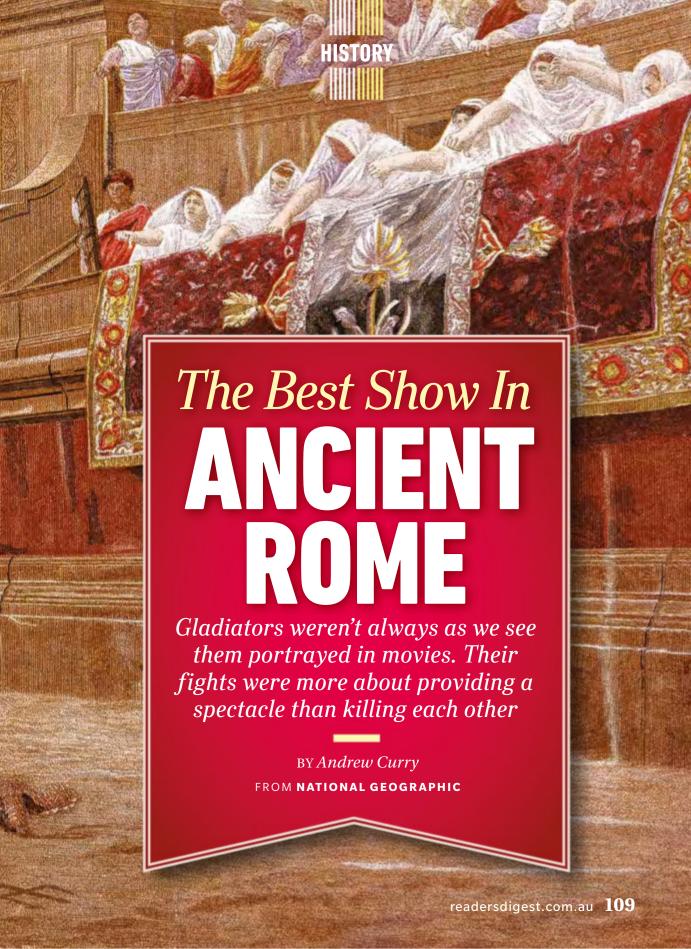
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ARLES, FRANCE

The tunnel under the Roman amphitheatre in Arles, France, is dark and cool. The shade is a welcome relief from the blazing Mediterranean sun beating down on the amphitheatre's sand-strewn arena and stone bleachers.

The gladiator helmet I've just put on, though, is stifling. A replica of the head protection worn by a Roman gladiator almost 2000 years ago, the dented, scratched helmet weighs nearly six kilograms – almost four times as heavy as a motorcycle helmet – and is uncomfortable.

Through the bronze grate covering my eyes, I can make out a pair of men in loincloths warming up for a fight. Metal armguards jingle as one bounces on the balls of his

feet, his stubby, hooked sword clutched in a leather-gloved hand. As I shift uncomfortably, his partner lifts his sword and offers to hit me in the head.

I shrug. Anything for a story, right? Then their trainer, a deeply tanned, wiry Frenchman named Brice Lopez, intervenes. "He's not trained for it," Lopez says sharply. "He doesn't have the muscles. You'd snap his neck."

A former French police officer and combat trainer with a black belt in jujitsu, Lopez knows what a real fight looks like. Twenty-seven years ago he took a detour into ancient fighting styles. After commissioning working replicas of gladiator weapons and armour, he spent years thinking about how they'd be used in a fight to the death like the ones portrayed in countless movies and books about gladiators.

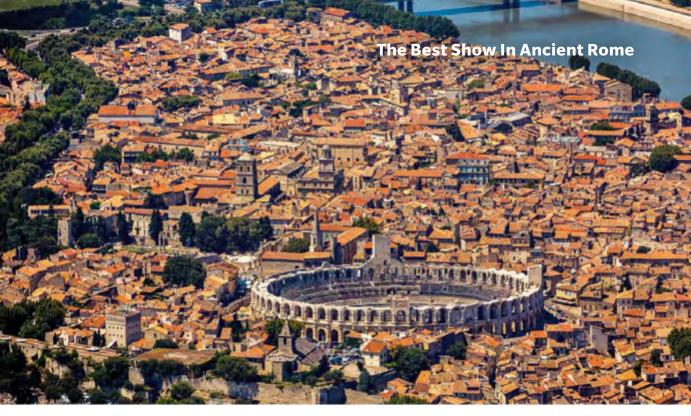
Loaded down with shields, metal leg guards and armguards, and hefty, full-coverage bronze helmets, many gladiators carried almost as much protective gear into the arena as Roman soldiers wore into battle. Yet their swords were typically about 30-centimetres long, barely bigger than a chef's knife. "Why," Lopez asks, "would you bring 20 kilos of protective gear to a knife fight?"

Over the past two decades, re-

searchers have unearthed evidence that backs up some of Lopez's take on gladiator combat and challenges the popular perception of these ancient spectacles. A few gladiators were criminals or prisoners of war condemned to punishment by combat, but most were professional fighters the boxers or martial arts fighters of their day. Most surprising, the majority of fights did not end in death. For every ten gladiators who



THEIR SWORDS
WERE BARELY
BIGGER
THAN A
CHEF'S KNIFE



The Roman amphitheatre in Arles still bears witness to past show fights

entered the ring, nine probably lived to fight another day.

POMPEII, ITALY

For nearly 600 years, Romans thrilled to gladiatorial fights. Nearly every sizable city and town had an arena of its own, with about 300 documented from Britain to the deserts of Jordan.

Like many things about Ancient Rome, some of the best preserved evidence for gladiators comes from Pompeii, south of modern-day Naples, Italy. Once a thriving city, Pompeii was buried suddenly by a volcanic eruption in 79 CE.

Walking the city's eerily well preserved streets today, visitors see reminders of gladiator games everywhere. There's the 22,000-seat

amphitheatre on the east side of town, the brooding bulk of Mount Vesuvius visible from the upper rows of seats. Faded advertisements in the city centre plug upcoming fights. Mosaics and frescoes capture highlights of past matches.

Other artwork from around the Roman world suggests that a colourful cast of helpers and hangers-on waited in the wings, or even shared the arena floor. Musicians warmed up the crowd as the gladiators took their places, and perhaps added dramatic flourishes during the fights. Helmets and weapons were carried into the ring during a prefight parade led by the sponsor of the games.

Key figures were the referees, who were responsible for enforcing a strict sense of fair play. In one depiction, captured on a small pot found in the Netherlands, a referee holds up his staff to halt a fight as an assistant runs in with a replacement sword.

Inscriptions promising "fights without reprieve" – in other words, to the death – and "fights with sharp weapons" suggest life-threatening clashes were unusual enough to be worthy of special mention.

Even as they were adored by many fans, gladiators ranked at the bottom of ancient Rome's rigidly hierarchical society, along with prostitutes, pimps and actors. By law, gladiators were considered property, not people. They could be killed at the whim of whoever was paying for their fight. "That's fundamental to understanding how the Romans could sit in the stands and watch this happening," says Harvard University classicist Kathleen Coleman.

Still, slavery meant something different in Rome than it did centuries later in the American South. For one, it had nothing to do with race, and some experts believe gladiators were rarely chained or shackled.

And despite their lowly status in society, successful fighters could earn a lot of money. Some may even have moonlighted as bodyguards for rich patrons. Criminals sentenced to serve as gladiators – a lighter punishment than execution – had a chance of being set free someday. "Do your time," says French historian Méryl

Ducros, "and when it's over, you can take your money and your wife and your kids and go back to your life."

Tombstones suggest that many gladiators were family men. "Pompeius the retiarius, winner of nine crowns, born in Vienna, 25 years of age," reads one such monument excavated in France. "His wife put this up with her own money for her wonderful spouse."

Such memorials also are evidence that gladiators were proud of their work. Grave markers often included their records in the ring and depictions of weapons and armour, the tools of their trade. "It's just the same as being a baker or shoemaker – you say what you did," Coleman says. "Gladiators saw themselves as professionals."

CARNUNTUM, AUSTRIA

Professional fighters needed professional training. A discovery made a few years ago at an ancient Roman site in Austria known as Carnuntum shows where they got it.

Eduard Pollhammer, the scientific director of Carnuntum, leads me into the middle of a freshly sown farm field on the banks of the Danube River, 40 kilometres east of Vienna.

Even here, on what was the edge of the empire, the Roman appetite for gladiator spectacles was such that Carnuntum boasted two amphitheatres: one for its thousands of active-duty soldiers, and another to entertain civilians from the bustling town next door.

Around 200 CE, the rolling hills here were home to one of the Roman frontier's biggest military bases, Pollhammer explains. More than 7000 soldiers stationed here patrolled the empire's northern reaches.

Twenty years ago, concerned that intensive ploughing would destroy undiscovered parts of the site, archaeologists turned to ground-penetrating radar to try to

map the buried remains of buildings. Between the town walls and the municipal amphitheatre's earthen foundations, researchers found the outlines of a whole neighbourhood built to serve fans, including taverns, souvenir shops, even a bakery where spectators could grab a bite before taking their seats.

In 2010, archaeologists reported something special: a gladiator school, or ludus, a short walk from the crumbling ruins of Carnuntum's amphitheatre. From Roman accounts, Pollhammer says, we know there must have been dozens like it across the empire. They were bankrolled by emperors and local dignitaries and often run by trainers called lanistae, some of whom were former gladiators.

BY LAW, **GLADIATORS WERE CONSIDERED** PROPERTY, NOT **PEOPLE**



Without lifting a shovel, researchers identified a large room with a raised floor that could be heated with warm air from below. It may have been used as a training gym in the cold Austrian winters. Along the edge of an open yard is an L-shaped section of the building with rooms or cells. Thick walls are a sign that parts of the facility had two stories. There were even baths, with water pipes, basins and hot and cold pools.

At the centre of it all was a circular training arena, 19 metres across. "We think about 70 or 75 gladiators lived here," Pollhammer says. "There's a whole infrastructure for big spectacles."

ROME, ITALY

What drove the Romans to devote such resources to gladiators? What kept fans coming back, year after year, for nearly six centuries? Recent excavations at the Colosseum in Rome offer clues. Under the floor of the arena, there's a huge space extending about six metres below ground level.

During a major restoration effort, German Archaeological Institute researcher Heinz Beste spent four years documenting the stonework under



Today, man-to-man fighting still fascinates amateur gladiators and spectators alike

the arena. He revealed traces of an ingenious system of platforms, elevators, winches and ramps, manned by hundreds of stage technicians and animal handlers.

Through dozens of trapdoors in the arena floor, handlers could release wild animals such as lions or panthers directly into the ring for staged hunts, called *venationes*, that typically served as the appetiser for gladiator fights. Elaborate painted sets would lift straight out of the arena floor, and lifts might have popped gladiators directly into the ring.

"Spectators didn't know what would open when, or where," Beste says.

To ensure exciting contests,

fighting styles were carefully balanced. A nimble, near-naked fighter armed with only a net, trident and small knife might face off against a lumbering warrior wearing 20 kilograms of protective gear. Experienced gladiators were matched against other veterans, leaving new recruits to fight each other. The longer your career, the better your chances of survival, as each experienced gladiator represented years of investment.

"There are hours and man-years going through all the fencing moves, building up the musculature, training for speed, strength and endurance," says Jon Coulston, an archaeologist at the University

The Best Show In Ancient Rome

of St Andrews. "It was a hugely capital-intensive enterprise."

As amphitheatres proliferated across the empire and political hopefuls spent lavishly on spectacles, the costs of gladiatorial games spiralled out of control. By the second century CE, the pressure to put on ever more impressive events made the games prohibitively expensive, threatening their existence.

A massive bronze tablet discovered more than a century ago in the ruins of Italica, a Roman town on the outskirts of modern-day Seville, Spain, reveals how Romans tried to get things back under control. It is inscribed with a decree issued in 177 CE that limited what sponsors could spend on games. It even includes a detailed table of fees.

A gladiator "of the highest and best-looking grade" could earn up to 15,000 sesterces, about six times the annual wages of a Roman soldier. Up to a quarter of that sum went to the gladiator - and was payable in advance.

One Roman writer describes a particularly expensive show thrown by a young noble who had recently inherited a fortune. A staggering 400,000 sesterces bought him "the best steel, no running away, with the butchery done in the middle so the whole amphitheatre can see."

It's easy to dismiss such sentiments as a thing of the distant past. After all, athletes who engage in violent sports - from football to boxing to mixed martial arts - are idolised as exemplars of discipline, toughness, and grit even today. Their bouts attract millions of spectators, even as the long-lasting damage to athletes has become widely known.

"Life isn't Candy Land and puppies. Life is hard. We need to yell, to cry, to scream about something," Ducros says.

"We need to see a little bit of violence to externalise the violence we feel inside. We can't judge the Romans for organising that." R

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC (JUNE 2021); © ANDREW CURRY



Toadzilla

A cane toad the size of a football – and six times larger than average - was found recently near Airlie Beach, Queensland. Weighing 2.7kg, 'Toadzilla' is thought to be the largest cane toad ever recorded. So is the size of this evasive pest a sign of what's to come? Cold-blooded animals, like cane toads, don't have a limit to their body size, like mammals and birds, and can keep growing their entire lives, AUSTRALIAN GEOGRAPHIC

"THERE'S

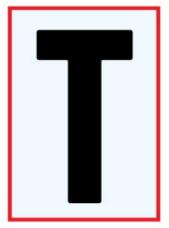
SOMETHING

DOWN THERE!"



Spotting the tiny boat on the Canary Islands migrant route was a miracle. But it would take a dedicated team of rescuers to save anyone still alive

BY Yolanda Del Valle WITH ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY Stéphanie Verge



he three people still alive on the flimsy wooden dugout boat had lost count of the days that had passed since their departure from Mauritania, north-

west Africa, in early April in 2021. They registered only the dizzying rocking of their *cayuco* on the vast emptiness of the Atlantic Ocean.

The trio of once-hopeful migrants were now at the end of their strength. Twenty-two adults and two children lay dead around them, having long since stopped begging for water. Before that, another 32 people had lost their lives from cold, hunger, infection and thirst, but they were no longer on board. Their fellow passengers had thrown some bodies into the water; others, driven mad with hallucinations, had jumped overboard.

Two of those still alive were young men from Mali, the third was a young woman named Aicha Koné, aged 23. She was from Boundiali, a cotton-growing community in northern Ivory Coast, not far from the Mali border. The town of 60,000 people sits at the foot of two mountains near the Bagoue River, where hippos are commonly seen.

On October 26, 2020, like so many others who dream of a brighter future in Europe, she left home, telling only her sister of her plan, and crossed into Mali. She then travelled by bus, motorcycle and taxi to the border with Mauritania.

But the border was closed due to the pandemic, and the next several months passed slowly – some nights Aicha would sleep in train stations; some days she'd clean houses to pay for the journey she hoped to take.

Finally, she was able to arrange passage aboard a cayuco after promising to give the captain the equivalent of roughly €500 (A\$775) when she arrived at her destination: the Canary Islands, a Spanish archipelago.

Now, she was plagued by images of the trauma they had faced since arriving at a beach in Mauritania one early morning and boarding this boat along with 58 other people who, like her, were terrified.

Scenes straight out of a horror film flashed through her mind, such as the day one of the cayuco's engines stopped working and they decided to use it as an anchor to prevent being swept by the current and the wind into the middle of the ocean. The day they ran out of food and water. The splash of corpses being thrown overboard after brief prayers. The relentless sun over their heads during the day. The cold at night. The day they realised no one was coming to save them.

After roughly two weeks at sea, they were far from the shipping routes, drifting away from the Canary Islands into endless empty waters.

"There's Something Down There!"

AT HIS HOME IN THE TOWN of Telde on Grand Canary Island, Juan Carlos Serrano turned off his alarm clock. It was 6am on April 26, 2021. He could smell the freshly brewed coffee that Lidia, his wife, was making in the kitchen. His daughters, Maider and Nahia, aged 17 and 19 respectively, were arguing in the corridor over who would be first in the bathroom.

Tall, broad-shouldered Juan Carlos, a 52-year-old lance corporal with the Spanish Air Force, had his phone nearby in case he was called out on a rescue mission. He headed to the kitchen, where Lidia had the family breakfast on the table.

"I'm on duty today," he told Lidia, looking up from the sandwich he had just bitten into. "Can you take the girls to language school this afternoon? I don't know what time I'll be home."

"Sure, no problem," replied Lidia, who worked as a school secretary. "I'll pick them up, too." Not long after, Juan Carlos kissed his wife and daughters goodbye and drove to the Spanish Air Force's Gando Air Base. If no refugee boats were detected by maritime traffic control aircraft that patrolled the sea, his day would consist of intense physical workouts.

In fact, every six months, Juan Carlos and his unit colleagues must pass 12 demanding physical exams to ensure that they are prepared, both physically and psychologically, to perform rescue operations at any time. He had

participated in at least 20 since joining the Spanish Armed Forces' Air Search and Rescue Service (SAR) at the age of 39. Before that, Juan Carlos had been a paratrooper and taken part in several international conflicts, including in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the early 1990s and Afghanistan in 2012. He had also done volunteer first-aid work with the Red Cross.

Juan Carlos had always had a strong desire to help others, to feel useful, and he had joined the SAR team because he felt particularly driven to help refugees. In the 1940s, after the Spanish Civil War, his own parents had moved from their small village in northwestern Spain to Bilbao, on the country's north coast, in search of a better life.



READER'S DIGEST

During his time as a paratrooper, Juan Carlos learned all too well that in war, those who suffer most are the poor who can't go into exile and are exploited by people profiting from their vulnerability.

Now, driving to work, he had no idea that today was going to be unlike any other.

AT AROUND 10.15 THAT MORNING, a Delta 4 piloted by Captain Álex Gómez from the Spanish Air Force's 802 squadron, 46th Wing, was flying over the Atlantic on a maritime-traffic surveillance flight. When the plane was some 500 kilometres southwest of the Canary Islands and at an altitude of 700 metres, crewman Serafín Santana, sitting to

Gómez's right, spotted a black dot about ten kilometres away. Staring straight ahead through the cockpit window, he could just make out that it was a boat adrift on the flat sea, a vessel so small he almost missed it. Santana was surprised to see it – they were a long way from any shipping lanes.

"Captain, there's something down there!" said the crewman through the microphone on his headset, while keeping his eyes on the boat.

"Let's take a look," replied Gómez.

As they approached it and descended to around 300 metres, they saw that it was a cayuco, the kind of wooden fishing boat they had seen carrying migrants from Africa – and there were bodies in it. They

Juan Carlos Serrano (left) and Fernando Rodríguez (right) aboard the SAR helicopter



PHOTO: COURTESY JUAN CARLOS SERRANO/SAR

"There's Something Down There!"

made several passes over the flimsy craft as Santana took photos. Then he passed a USB with the images to Gómez, who was able to view them on his onboard computer screen and zoom in. They counted 17 bodies, all immobile, tightly packed together. The men wouldn't know until later just how many more corpses lay buried underneath.

A STRONG

DESIRE TO HELP

REFUGEES

DROVE

SERRANO TO

JOIN THE SAR

Gómez shuddered. Suddenly, some of the bodies began to move. A young woman weakly lifted an arm, attempting to wave. A young man was trying to lift one of his hands with the help of the other. And

a third person, also a young man, was doing his best to stand up. My God, thought Gómez. We have to get them help.

It was 10.25am. The captain quickly informed the naval command, then contacted the Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC), located on Grand Canary, to give them the exact coordinates of the boat. A helicopter would be dispatched to attempt to rescue the survivors, and a military ship would be sent to tow the boat ashore.

WITHIN A COUPLE OF HOURS, a twin-engine Eurocopter Super Puma piloted by Ignacio Crespo, Air Force Commander of the SAR, had taken off from the RCC and headed to the

island of El Hierro, the closest fuelling stop to the drifting migrant boat. Sitting in the back of the helicopter were Juan Carlos Serrano and First Sergeant Fernando Rodríguez, both wearing their flight suits that bore the patch depicting the SAR division's emblem: an angel throwing a life buoy from the sky.

After refuelling, Crespo again took to the skies, heading southwest. The Delta 4 flew in front of the helicopter, guiding it to the boat. The conditions that day were calm.

Finally, the cayuco came into sight. Crespo looked at his watch:

4pm. As the helicopter hovered above the boat, he did the fuel calculations and determined they could have no more than 30 minutes here before they'd have to start back for El Hierro.

Juan Carlos and Fernando changed into their wetsuits as Lieutenant Cristina Justo, the on-board nurse, made sure her first-aid equipment was ready. Juan Carlos set his watch to start the 30-minute countdown.

To prepare for what might lie ahead, he shut down his emotions and concentrated on his mission: saving lives.

"It's not going to be easy to board the boat," First Sergeant David Rodríguez, the winch operator,

READER'S DIGEST

shouted to his colleagues over the thundering sound of the helicopter's blades. One downside of the calm weather was that the whirling helicopter blades were spinning the small craft around like a top.

"Any survivors will be very weak and hypothermic," Justo said.

"We can save time using the lifting strap instead of the stretcher," Juan Carlos said. In a small boat like the cayuco, the harness-like strap would be easier to manoeuvre than stretchers.

Now, David Rodríguez helped the two rescuers into their harnesses, which were attached to a 75-metre steel cable that would be lowered from the open hatch.

Looking out from the open belly of the helicopter, Juan Carlos could see the cayuco bobbing like a cork due to the helicopter's spinning blades some 30 metres above.

Typically, at this stage of a rescue, he'd spot passengers standing

up and waving, greeting him as if he were a guardian angel. Rescuers who experience that moment feel a deep sense of joy; it's a reminder that what they do is worth risking their own lives. But Juan Carlos saw no movement, despite the fact the Delta 4 crew had spotted survivors a few hours earlier. *That's strange*, he thought.

Then, he caught a glimpse of something shifting in the stern. Maybe a young woman. But he wasn't sure.

But indeed, Aicha had been roused from her lethargic state by the helicopter's thundering engine. She weakly opened her eyes.

Dehydrated and numb, she could barely move, but somehow she was able to sit up. No longer daring to hope that she or anyone else might be saved, she wondered if the helicopter was real. Once she realised it was, she began to cry.

I've been found. And by the grace of God, she was still alive.

The Delta 4 guided the Super Puma to where the migrant boat had been spotted





Winch operator David Rodríguez helps to lower Juan Carlos

THE FIRST TO DESCEND on the steel cable was Fernando Rodríguez. It was difficult. From overhead, David Rodríguez needed to make several manoeuvres to get Fernando close enough to the boat to put one foot on it; he came close to falling into the sea. Now it was Juan Carlos's turn, and he looked at his watch: 14 of the 30 minutes had been used up. They had 16 minutes to rescue any survivors.

As Juan Carlos descended, the pungent smell of decomposing corpses slammed into his nostrils. There were so many bodies, most bloated after many days at sea (27 people were on board and 24 of them dead), and he unintentionally landed on several of them. Juan Carlos had never seen so many dead in one place. But he knew he could not allow himself to become

paralysed by horror. He had to get anyone left alive off this boat.

Steeling their stomachs, he and Fernando Rodríguez spotted three survivors: two in the stern and one in the middle of the boat. They had opened their eyes wide and were staring at the two men, who must have looked to them like angels.

Too weak to speak, they were literally between life and death. Aicha, huddled in her pale red parka and grey trackpants, was near a teenage boy in torn jeans and a T-shirt. The third survivor was a young man in a waterproof jacket and jeans; he seemed the most lucid.

With no time to waste, Juan Carlos and Fernando held Aicha and the young man upright and attached them to harnesses. The pair were

READER'S DIGEST

then winched together up to the helicopter. To reach the third survivor, Juan Carlos had to jump over corpses, falling onto the dead several times. He gathered him into his arms and carried him back to Fernando to be winched up into the helicopter.

With the three survivors now in Justo's care, it was time to check if there was anyone else left alive in this hell. Juan Carlos took a pulse oximeter from his pocket, a device that is clamped to victims' index fingers by

rescuers to detect vital signs. He determined there were no more survivors. A tugboat dispatched by Spain's Maritime Safety and Rescue Society would arrive in a few hours to tow the boat to shore.

As the two men waited their turn to be brought up to the helicopter, they looked at

each other. "I've never seen anything like this," said Fernando as he tried to keep his balance on the rocking boat.

"It's true horror," Juan Carlos replied quietly. He checked his stopwatch again; it showed 34 minutes had passed. They were past their deadline. "It's better that they leave without us," he told Fernando. "They have to get to the hospital."

Knowing that a backup helicopter was stationed on El Hierro, they were willing to stay among the dead

for a few hours. But in the cockpit, Crespo had recalculated how much fuel remained, and determined that they had a few minutes to spare. So he gave the 'OK' to pull the men up. As they ascended, leaving the nightmare below, Fernando vomited. Then, once safely inside the helicopter, the two rescuers embraced and wept. The job had taken its toll.

They went to check on the three survivors, who were receiving first aid and being helped to drink wa-

ter and juice. Of the three, the young man was in the best condition; the teenager was in the worst. Aicha, for her part, was conscious but still unable to say a single word. Seeing her bare feet, Juan Carlos suddenly realised she must be cold. He gave her a pair of socks from his pack.

suddenly realised she must be cold. He gave her a pair of socks from his pack.

As they turned to fly back towards El Hierro, towards life and a future, the sun was setting on the horizon behind the helicopter, leaving the

THE THREE YOUNG PEOPLE were transferred to Canary Islands University Hospital on the island of Tenerife, where they remained for several days. Aicha Koné was in hospital for nearly one week before being transferred to a foster home. The other two survivors

cayuco and the dead in its shadows.

ONCE SAFELY
INSIDE THE
HELICOPTER,
THE TWO
RESCUERS
EMBRACED
AND WEPT



Juan Carlos and his family formed a special bond with Aicha after her rescue

were also given care; the younger one went to a foster home, the older to a detention centre for migrants.

In the days after the rescue, Juan Carlos couldn't get Aicha out of his thoughts. The poor young woman was close in age to his own daughters. She was in a foreign country, with no family or friends. She must be so frightened, he thought. After all that misfortune, he felt she deserved a second chance.

Juan Carlos, Lidia, and their daughters talked it over, and together they decided to offer Aicha a place in their home. Not only did the family want the young woman to stay with them for a while, but they were willing to apply for guardianship.

On a Saturday in early May, they all went to visit her in the foster home where she was staying. It was an

emotional reunion. Aicha hadn't seen Juan Carlos since that awful day, but she recognised him immediately. She hugged him and cried inconsolably in his arms. She didn't want to let go.

The family had brought Aicha gifts, including clothes, a backpack and a small notebook in which they asked her to write down her telephone numbers. With the help of an interpreter - Aicha speaks French - and Juan Carlos's daughters, who are studying French, Aicha said she planned to live with relatives in Paris. "But I am very grateful for your offer," she told them quietly through her tears.

In August 2021, Aicha flew to Paris, where she is awaiting residency papers. Now 25 years old, she has dreams: she'd like to learn English and Spanish, and she hopes to study

READER'S DIGEST

nursing – a plan that took shape after she bonded with her caregiver on Tenerife.

Juan Carlos and his family have maintained contact with her, speaking regularly via WhatsApp. They plan to visit her and have made it clear that they will always be willing to help her.

Juan Carlos admits that this mission was one of the toughest he's ever

experienced. When asked if he feels he is a hero, he says, "We do a job that we have been trained for.

"These people risk their lives to embark on these boats not on a whim, but in search of a better life for themselves and their families. They are almost always being deceived."

Both Juan Carlos and Fernando teach survival courses. They marvel that Aicha and her two fellow migrants lived so long without water – but they have seen people survive extreme situations before. "The capacity of the human body to endure

in these conditions is amazing. But the greatest survival stories are those of people who have the will to live," says Fernando.

"When I first arrived in Spain, I regretted leaving home and risking my life," says Aicha today. "I came so close to death. But I no longer feel that way. Now, I'm focused on building my future."

"THE GREATEST
SURVIVAL
STORIES ARE
THOSE OF
PEOPLE WITH
THE WILL
TO LIVE"

According to the
International
Organization for
Migration, 1109
migrants died in the
Atlantic Ocean in 2021
trying to reach the
Canary Islands by boat
in search of a better
life – fleeing the war,
hunger and poverty

that plague their countries. That is the highest number in a single year since the UN began collecting data in 2014. The true total is thought to be much higher, as migrant boats – and their occupants – sometimes sink without anyone knowing they were ever there.



Robo Meals

BOTS&POTS, a sci-food bistro in Zagreb, Croatia, is offering meals in a pot made solely by robotic chefs – with no human involvement other than loading the devices with fresh ingredients. The robotic chefs add oil and seasoning, according to digital recipes, and are able to rustle up 70 different one-pot meals. REUTERS

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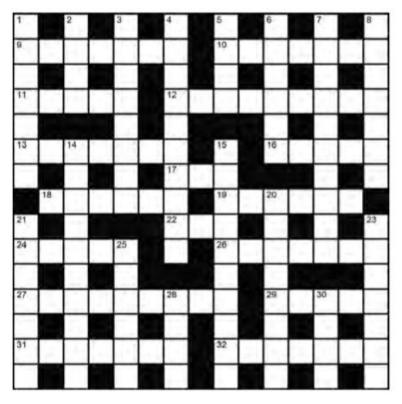
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Challenge yourself by solving these puzzles and mind stretchers, then check your answers on page 134.



ACROSS

- 9 Georgia's capital (7)
- **10** An ancient one had an albatross problem (7)
- **11** Banish (5)
- 12 Comparable (9)
- **13** Road journey refreshment break (3,4)
- **16** Wield (5)
- **17** Fish eggs (3)
- 18 Oddball (6)

- **19** Entirely (6)
- **22** Pre-DVD technology (1,1,1)
- **24** Poppy drug (5)
- 26 Door knockers (7)
- **27** Seen behind the scenes (9)
- 29 Believer in karma (5)
- **31** Found between sea and shining sea (7)
- 32 Make clear (7)

Crossword

Test your general knowledge.

DOWN

- **1** Try (7)
- 2 Roman eight (4)
- 3 First-class (4-4)
- 4 View unfavourably (10)
- **5** Youth charity (1,1,1,1)
- **6** Monotonous routine (6)
- 7 Next? (6,4)
- 8 Adjusts beforehand (7)
- **14** If it's too hot, get out of it (3,7)
- **15** Prime television role (10)
- **20** Last remaining chance of relief (4,4)
- **21** Tofu base (7)
- 23 Publishing (7)
- 25 Home of the Prado (6)
- **28** Oil-rich monarchy on the Arabian Peninsula (4)
- 30 Biblical boatman (4)



		4			5		1	
1			9	6		5		
	3			2				9
7							9	
	8	9		5		7	4	
	8 5							6
4				9			3	
		3		1	6			8
	1		4			9		

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: To win, put a number from 1 to 9 in each outlined section so that:

- Every horizontal row and vertical column contains all nine numerals (1-9) without repeating any of them;
- Each of the outlined sections has all nine numerals, none repeated.

IF YOU SOLVE IT WITHIN:

- 15 minutes, you're a true expert
- 30 minutes, you're no slouch
- **60** minutes or more, maybe numbers aren't your thing

To enjoy more puzzles and interactive games, go to www.readersdigest.com.au/games-jokes

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Spot The Difference

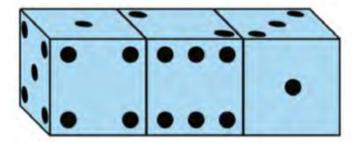
There are ten differences. Can you find them?





Domino Dilemma

What is the sum total of the dots on the 11 hidden sides of these three dice?



(3	7													
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	





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Test Your General Knowledge

- **1.** Contrary to popular belief, Singapore is not a single island, but is comprised of a) 21 b) 63 c) 79 islands at present? *2 points*
- **2.** What kind of natural energy did Glasgow nightclub SWG3 begin using in 2022? *1 point*
- **3.** What bird, often considered an urban nuisance, can be trained to distinguish between cubist and Impressionist art? *1 point*
- **4.** Which gemstone is associated with May birthdays, good luck and the Greek goddess Venus? *1 point*
- **5.** What archipelagic state plans to develop the world's first floating city? *2 points*
- **6.** When Sir Edmund Hillary climbed Mount Everest in 1953, what morning toast-topper did he take with him on the expedition? *1 point*
- 7. According to the McKinsey Institute, what human-rights goal could increase global GDP by 26 per cent?

 1 point

- **8.** Which Venezuelan lake, the largest in South America, also holds the record for most lightning strikes on earth? *2 points*
- **9.** NASA's DART mission, successfully tested in 2022, aims to defend the Earth from what? *1 point*
- **10.** In 2022, which European Union country became the first to enact a nationwide ban on many short-haul flights where train services exist? **2 points**
- **11.** As Douglas Adams fans may guess, how many digits of pi (π) are required to measure the

circumference of the known universe within the precision of a proton? *2 points*

12. What climatedriven event has devastated civilisations in Mesopotamia, Yucatán and

14. Known as 'welly wanging' in the UK, what is the popular boot-tossing sport called in New Zealand?

1 point

China? 1 point

13. What kind of poem uses the first letters of lines or stanzas in alphabetical order? *2 points*

16-20 Gold medal

11-15 Silver medal

6-10 Bronze medal

0-5 Wooden spoon

ANSWERS: 1. b) 63. **2.** Body heat from the crowd. **3.** Pigeons. **4.** Emerald. **5.** Maldives. **6.** Marmalade. **7.** Women's equality. **8.** Lake Maracaibo, averaging 389 strikes per day. **9.** Asteroid impact. **10.** France. **11.** 42. **12.** Drought. **13.** An abecedarian poem – also known as an abecedarius. The first letter of each line or verse begins with successive letters of the alphabet. **14.** Gumboot throwing.

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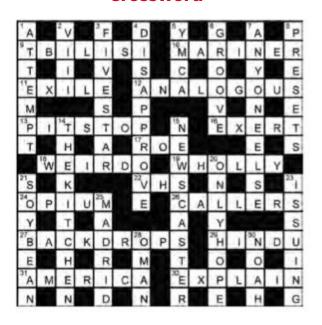
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PUZZLE ANSWERS

From Page 128

Crossword



Sudoku

6	9	4	8	7	5	3	1	2
1	2	7	9	6	3	5	8	4
8	3	5	1	2	4	6	7	9
7	4	6	3	8	2	1	9	5
2	8	9	6	5	1	7	4	3
3	5	1	7	4	9	8	2	6
4	6	8	5	9	7	2	3	1
9	7	3	2	1	6	4	5	8
5	1	2	4	3	8	9	6	7

Spot The Difference



Domino Dilemma

Answer: 41.

There are 21 dots on each die, thus a total of 63 dots on the three dice. Since 22 dots are visible, the total number of dots on the sides that are not visible amounts to 41.







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Photo Finish

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. How many photographic terms do you know?

BY Rob Lutes

- **1. bokeh** effect creating A: shadow. B: blurred background. C: high contrast.
- **2.** catchlight A: light reflected in a person's eye in a photo. B: light panel used in photography. C: 19th-century term for flash.
- **3. lookbook** A: camera shaped like a paperback novel. B: viewfinder. C: set of photos showing a designer's collection.
- **4.** daguerreotype A: early photograph produced on a copper plate. B: hyper-realistic painting. C: date stamp on photos.
- **5. vignette** A: photo negative. B: photo made to appear older through costumes and sets. C: portrait with darkened corners.
- **6. aperture** A: film sensitivity to light. B: space through which light passes. C: appetite for photography.
- 7. noise A: visual distortion in a photo. B: items cluttering an image. C: celebrated school of abstract photography.

- **8.** resolution A: staged photo. B: final image in a series. C: measure of the sharpness of an image.
- **9. pixel** A: smallest unit of digital information in a photo. B: tripod stand. C: miniature camera.
- **10. golden hour** A: hour when the sun is highest in sky. B: midnight during harvest moon. C: period just after sunrise or before sunset.
- **11. aspect ratio** A: relative size of the subject in a photo. B: distance between the photographer and the subject. C: ratio of the width to the height of an image.
- **12.** panorama A: prism photography. B: photo containing a wide view. C: negative reaction to a photo.
- **13.** camera shy A: related to the time before photography. B: disliking having one's photo taken. C: nervous to take photos.
- **14.** photobomb A: high-intensity flash. B: move into the frame of a photograph as a prank. C: bad photo.

Answers

- **1. bokeh** B: effect creating a blurred background. Siobhan's use of bokeh gave the photos a painterly look.
- **2. catchlight** A: light reflected in a person's eye in a photo. Gabe set up metal reflectors to impart catchlights to Bonnie's eyes.
- **3. lookbook** C: set of photos showing a designer's collection. Aurora browsed the lookbook for dress ideas.
- **4.** daguerreotype A: early photograph produced on a copper plate. Aiden brought out an 1850s daguerreotype of Thoreau.
- **5. vignette** C: portrait with darkened corners. Winnie's vignette looked like an image from a silent film.
- **6. aperture** B: space through which light passes. At dusk, Brent needed a larger aperture to allow more light through the lens.
- **7. noise** A: visual distortion in a photo. Long exposures can result in images with a lot of noise.
- **8. resolution** C: measure of the sharpness of an image. Fatima needed photos with a high resolution for her posters.

- **9. pixel** A: smallest unit of digital information in a photo. The pixel count determines an image's resolution.
- **10. golden hour** C: period just after sunrise or before sunset. Taken during the golden hour which provides the perfect light for photographers, Jal's images had a warm hue.
- **11. aspect ratio** C: ratio of the width to the height of an image. Most TVs sold today have an aspect ratio of 16:9.
- **12. panorama** B: photo containing a wide view. A panorama of Auckland covered the entire wall in the entrance hall of the mansion.
- **13. camera shy** B: disliking having one's photo taken. Though camera shy, Nanette allowed her excited grandchildren to take her picture on her birthday.
- **14. photobomb** B: move into the frame of a photograph as a prank. The wedding was going smoothly until the rugby team photobombed the family photo.

VOCABULARY RATINGS

5-8: Fair

9–11: Good

12-14: Word Power Wizard



Trusted Brands

2023

Winners

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Australia's Most Trusted Brands of 2023

Retaining trust and loyalty through challenging times requires innovation, adaptability and excellence

n a culture as brand aware and sophisticated as Australia, consumers have high expectations. A trusted brand must be genuine, reliable and consistent – a set of traits only the best brands can achieve. In the current economic climate of high inflation and rising interest rates and rentals, consumers are even more discerning about every dollar spent and which brands will be deserving of their business.

Trust is crucial to every decision the consumer makes: from deciding where to buy groceries, to what life insurance to purchase to protect their family's future needs.

Post-pandemic rebuilding has created more complications for consumers, with the cost of living pressures making it necessary to shop around for the best deal in every aspect of their household spending. Switching retailers – large and small, across all industries – is now seen as a real threat to businesses that enjoy established customer trust. So what can these companies do to hold on to this trust?

While affordability and reliability remain the key drivers in securing



and maintaining customer loyalty and trust, the vast majority of brands are looking to better strengthen their core brand values, and this can often mean rebranding to help reach a greater share of the market.

Rebranding A Brand

While the pandemic necessitated a low-risk, careful consolidation of existing business activities to match the health order restrictions, since 2022 the market has seen a drive to celebrate a brand's participation in its customers' lives with revitalising initiatives. These ideas are designed to make the brand more modern and relevant to the customers' needs.

According to American Express,

rebranding is the ideal strategy to help boost not just a customer base, but to also improve internal culture. "Rebranding is a good way for any business to stimulate growth, expand, increase profits, strengthen its workforce, and gain a competitive advantage."

Over its 101-year history, Reader's Digest has rebranded many times. While our subscription delivery, fonts, or even logo may have changed over time, our core journalistic and publishing values, which readers trust, have not.

Rebranding can take many forms. It can mean a name change, or a new website, perhaps it reflects a merger with another powerful brand,

2023 TRUSTED BRANDS SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

or a change in delivery model away from storefronts. It can take the form of a bold new logo or switching to environmentally-friendly packaging.

Whatever the strategy chosen, a rebrand is designed to capture the attention of both existing and potential new customers. It is also a sign of strength and commitment to harvest growth for the future.

Ongoing Commitment

For Weber, winner of the category of Australia's Most Trusted Barbecue brand since 2014, rebranding has involved repositioning its commitment to women's sport inclusivity, in particular, women's cricket.

Late last year, Weber extended its naming rights deal for the Women's Big Bash League (WBBL) until the end of the 2023/2024 season. "Barbecuing and cricket are the perfect recipe for the Australian summer and our partnership is enthusiastically supported by our consumers, our retail partners and our team," explains Michael McDonald, Weber Barbecues Managing Director, Australia and New Zealand. "We believe that getting involved in barbecuing, like playing cricket, should be inclusive of everyone and we are very proud to be able to support the growth of women's cricket in Australia."

	TOP 20 TRUSTED BRANDS WINNERS*					
1	Dettol					
2	Weber					
3	Cadbury					
4	Bunnings Warehouse					
5	Panadol					
6	Victa					
7	Band-Aid					
8	Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia					
9	Dulux					
10	Glen 20					
11	Specsavers					
12	Selleys					
13	Bega Cheese					
14	Dyson					
15	Cancer Council Sunscreen					
16	Dairy Farmers					
17	Ryobi					
18	Bridgestone					
19	Sanitarium Weet-Bix					
20	Woolworths					

^{*} Of brands surveyed

The enthusiasm Australians have for Weber is genuine and clearly linked to good times. Australians take pride in their barbecuing skills and have long turned to Weber as the barbecue they can rely on when it's time to fire up the grill and relax with family and friends. The brand has enjoyed this ongoing consumer trust by constantly adapting their products to meet their



customers' changing cooking and entertaining needs.

Weber has also worked hard to deliver innovation that enriches their customers' cooking experiences.

This year, in the Top 20 Most Trusted

Brands overall, Weber has leapt from the 20th spot to number two.

Congratulations to all the hardworking brands celebrating their due recognition in the 2023 Trusted Brands Survey.

A TRUSTED METHODOLOGY

For 24 years, the Reader's Digest
Trusted Brands Trustmark has been
helping consumers identify the
brands in the marketplace that are
value-for-money, reliable and worthy
of their business. This is especially
relevant in today's e-commerce
environment where 'trust signals' are
used ever more frequently to provide
customers with insights and confidence
to determine whether investing their
trust in a brand is worthwhile.

Reader's Digest is proud of the consistency with which the Trusted Brands survey has been conducted over the past 24 years, with the survey upholding the highest level of independence and honesty to ensure the accuracy of the results. These awards for the Most Trusted Brands are based on the genuine opinions of everyday Australians. It is not a reader survey.

We commissioned Catalyst Research, experts in marketing research, to independently survey a representative sample of consumers across Australia to discover their views on products and services in 74 categories across a broad range of thriving industries.

The purchasing opinions of around 2800 individuals were collected. Each of these 2800 participants completed an online questionnaire that first required them to name the brands that they trust for each category. This was an unprompted question to ensure the rating of top brands in each of the 74 categories, as selected by Australians, was without prejudice. The participants were then asked to rate which was their most trusted brand in each category, and explain why. In each category, one overall Winner was awarded, along with two Highly Commended brands. These brands scored higher in their respective categories than the other brands polled.

The Reader's Digest Trusted Brands survey and its Trustmark logo are valuable achievements for businesses of all sizes and industries. Being awarded a Trusted Brand in a category helps to boost an organisation's reputation; it sets these brands apart from the majority. It also gives the workforce an immediate boost in confidence, knowing that their hard work, focus and dedication to customers has not gone unnoticed.

2023 Australia's

CATEGORY	WINNER
» Australian Iconic Brand	Bunnings Warehouse
» Bank of the Year	Bendigo Bank
» Aged Care & Retirement Villages	Anglicare
» Air Conditioner	Daikin
» Air Freshener	Glen 20
» Air Purifiers & Dehumidifiers	Dyson
» Airlines	Singapore Airlines
» Australian Wine Club/Subscription	Naked Wines
» Barbecues	Weber
» Breakfast Food	Sanitarium Weet-Bix
» Car Rental	Hertz
» Cars	Toyota
» Charity	Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia
» Cheese	Bega Cheese
» Coffee Machines	De'Longhi
» Cold & Flu Medicine	Panadol
» Confectionery	Cadbury
» Cough Medicine	Vicks
» Cruise Operators	Princess Cruises
» Dishwashers	Bosch
» Dishwashing Tablets	Finish
» DIY Power Tools	Bosch
» Electricity Provider	AGL
» Fabric Softener/Conditioner	Cuddly
» First Aid	Dettol
» Fridges	Westinghouse
» Funeral Insurance	Australian Seniors
» Garden Power Tools (exc. Lawn Mowers)	Ryobi
» Gardening Products	Seasol
» Gas Suppliers	AGL
» Glues & Construction Adhesives	Selleys
» Health Insurance	Bupa
» Hearing Services	Hearing Australia
» Home & Contents Insurance	AAMI
» Home Care NSW/ACT	CatholicCare

Most Trusted Brands

HIGHLY COMMENDED	
Uniting	Bupa Aged Care
Fujitsu	LG
Air Wick	Ambi Pur
Samsung	Philips
Air New Zealand	Qantas
Cellarmasters	Australian Wine Club
Jumbuck	Matador
Uncle Tobys Oats	Kellogg's Corn Flakes
Budget	Avis
Mazda	Mercedes-Benz
Guide Dogs	Cancer Council
Mainland	Devondale
Breville	Sunbeam
Vicks	Nurofen
Lindt	Darrell Lea
Codral	Benadryl
Royal Caribbean	Holland America Line
Miele	LG
Fairy	Earth Choice
Makita	Ryobi
Origin	EnergyAustralia
Comfort	Fluffy
Band-Aid	Betadine
Fisher & Paykel	Samsung
Suncorp	Apia
STIHL	Bosch
Yates	Scotts Osmocote
Origin	EnergyAustralia
Bostik	Tarzan's Grip
Medibank	HCF
Specsavers Audiology	Amplifon
Allianz	Budget Direct
Anglicare At Home	Australian Unity

CATEGORY	WINNER
» Home Care QLD	BlueCare
» Home Care SA/NT	RDNS
» Home Care VIC/TAS	Australian Unity
» Home Care WA	Silverchain
» Honey	Manuka Health
» Household Cleaning Products	Dettol
» Humidifiers & Vaporisers	Vicks
» Incontinence Products	Poise
» Irons	Sunbeam
» Jewellers	Michael Hill
» Kettles & Toasters	Breville
» Laundry Appliances	Fisher & Paykel
» Laundry Detergents	ОМО
» Lawn Mowers	Victa
» Life Insurance	Suncorp
» Milk	Dairy Farmers
» Optometrists	Specsavers
» Ovens	Westinghouse
» Pain Relief	Panadol
» Paint	Dulux
» Pet Care (exc. Food)	NexGard
» Pet Insurance	RSPCA Pet Insurance
» Plasters & Adhesive Bandages	Band-Aid
» Property Developers	Stockland
» Real Estate Agencies	Ray White
» Retailers (exc. Supermarkets)	Bunnings Warehouse
» Sealants & Fillers	Selleys
» Skin Care (Anti-Ageing)	Nivea
» Stain Removers	Vanish Napisan
» Sugar Substitutes	Equal
» Sunscreen	Cancer Council
» Superannuation	AustralianSuper
» Supermarkets	Woolworths/Safeway
» Tea	Twinings
» Tyres	Bridgestone
» Vacuum Cleaners	Dyson
» Vegetarian/Vegan Food	Vegie Delights
» Vitamins & Supplements	Blackmores
» Yoghurt	Dairy Farmers

IIICHIY COMMENDED	BRAIN .
HIGHLY COMMENDED	Ones we
Anglicare Southern Queensland Anglicare	Ozcare Resthaven
Mercy Health	Uniting AgeWell
Brightwater	Bethanie
Capilano	Beechworth
Pine O Cleen	White King
Breville	Philips
TENA	Depend
Philips	Tefal
Prouds	Pandora
Sunbeam LG	Russell Hobbs
	Westinghouse
Cold Power	Dynamo
Honda	STIHL
AAMI	Allianz
Devondale	Pauls
OPSM	Laubman & Pank
Miele Nurofen	Fisher & Paykel Voltaren
Taubmans	British Paints
Frontline	Advocate (Bayer)
Woolworths Pet Insurance	Coles Pet Insurance
Elastoplast	Smith & Nephew
AVJennings	Lendlease
LJ Hooker	Elders Real Estate
Kmart	JB Hi-Fi
Poly	Bostik
Dove	L'Oréal
White King	Sard Wonder
Natvia	Splenda
Nivea	Banana Boat
Hostplus	HESTA
Coles	Aldi
Lipton	Dilmah
Goodyear	Michelin
Electrolux	Miele
Yumi's	Quorn
Swisse	Nature's Own
Gippsland Dairy	Tamar Valley

147



WINNER AUSTRALIAN ICONIC BRAND

Bunnings Warehouse

ustralians have voted
Bunnings Warehouse
the country's Most
Iconic Brand for the third
consecutive year.

This result is, perhaps, unsurprising for a brand that prides itself on being a central part of the local community. Bunnings Warehouse stores are a local institution for many Australians

and not just
 because they offer
 the widest range
 of value-for-money
 products and provide
 knowledgeable
 service with a

smile. Store teams regularly participate in projects involving their local communities, from planting a veggie garden at the neighbourhood kindy to painting the local Scout Hall.

"Being part of the communities where our stores operate and our team members live and raise their families is really important to us," says Mike Schneider, Bunnings' Group MD. (And let's not forget the all-important community sausage sizzle!)

From humble beginnings the company has grown to include more than 300 stores nationally, employing more than 50,000 team members. While the brand continues to grow and prosper, it never loses sight of its core values of putting its team, and customers, first.

Bunnings understands all too well that for a business to excel

and earn customer loyalty, it needs good leadership coupled with a strong, people-led culture. By focusing on nurturing a

"Any awards we win are a testament to our hardworking team."

passionate, committed team who sees retail as a rewarding career path, every store is able to consistently offer customers high levels of service, value and experience, allowing this iconic brand to remain resilient even through challenging times.

"Our teams do an incredible job serving customers in our stores every day and the awards we win are a testament to their hard work," says Mr Schneider.

Visit www.bunnings.com.au

THANK YOU

We're building the best...Our team makes it happen





WINNER AGED CARE & RETIREMENT VILLAGES

Anglicare Southern Queensland

66

"Quality care. Transparent in their operations."

MALE, 50-59, QLD

"Staff treated my grandfather with respect. Nothing was too much trouble."

FEMALE, 40-49, QLD

"Good service with nice, helpful people."

FEMALE, 50-59, QLD





angular aged care facilities provide ageing Australians with a high standard of care, catering to every level of need. Their person-centred care model supports staff to focus on the individual needs of residents.

In recent years, the organisation opened one of Queensland's first Commonwealth-approved Specialist Dementia Care unit in one of their Brisbane homes. It's designed for residents who are impacted by severe behavioural responses.

For 150 years, Anglicare Southern Queensland has supported Queenslanders with services including home and community aged care, youth support, mental health, family counselling and foster care. Anglicare Southern Queensland also provides residential aged care, with eight locations that more than 800 residents call home.

Visit www.anglicaresq.org.au



Most trusted in Residential Aged Care

Backed by over 150 years experience

anglicaresq.org.au | 1300 610 610



WINNER AIR CONDITIONER

Daikin



"Energy efficient, stylish and quiet."

MALE, 70+, VIC/TAS

"A reliable and innovative brand."

MALE, 30-39, NSW/ACT

(1)

"Quiet, efficient units."

FEMALE, 50-59, VIC/TAS

"Long lasting, reliable."

FEMALE, 40-49, VIC/TAS



OPERATING IN AUSTRALIA for more than 50 years, Daikin understands the extremes of the Australian climate. As air conditioning specialists, Daikin continually strives to offer cutting-edge heating and cooling solutions, and designs, develops and manufactures a broad range of products here in Australia to benefit communities right across the country. "Our commitment in delivering high-quality products go hand-in-hand with environmental sustainability," says Raj Singh, GM Product & Marketing.

"Daikin was first to launch R-32 residentialuse air conditioners, which have a lower globalwarming potential and



zero ozone depletion potential." Daikin was also the first to introduce VRV air-conditioning systems, the world's first use of variable refrigerant flow control.

Given that most people spend around 90% of their lives indoors, indoor air quality is an area of focus for Daikin. Its flagship residential air conditioning split systems and air purifiers, endorsed by the National Asthma Council, include the brand's innovative signature Streamer Technology to provide continuous comfort and superior indoor air quality to the occupants. • Visit www.daikin.com.au







HIGHLY COMMENDED AIR CONDITIONER

Fujitsu General



"High quality. Works well and lasts a long time."

MALE, 40-49, VIC/TAS

"Effectively cools and heats the home."

FEMALE, 40-49, SA/NT

"Well-built and quiet."

MALE, 50-59, NSW/ACT

"Reliable."

MALE, 18-29, NSW/ACT





since 1936, When Fujitsu General was founded, research and innovation have been at the heart of the company's values. Still to this day, Fujitsu General's continuous pursuit in delivering excellence relies on supportive people and services, as well as their strong Japanese heritage of innovative research, manufacturing and product development.

"Our Vision as 'Australia's Favourite Air®' is to be the best air conditioning company, through an expanded product range, exceptional customer experience and employer of choice, with an unprecedented focus on inclusion, innovation and sustainability," says Zdenka Micallef, Head of Marketing & Communication ANZ.

This year, Fujitsu General is celebrating 25 years with former Australian test cricket captain, Mark Taylor, as its brand ambassador. To commemorate the occasion, Fujitsu has some great offers planned for the year (see ad on the inside of the front cover for details).

The brand recently launched its new Comfort range. Boasting energy-efficient features and award-winning design, it will provide maximum value and user satisfaction. • Visit www.fujitsugeneral.com.au



Come home to Fujitsu comfort

Fujitsu has an extensive range of high-quality and efficient air conditioning solutions to meet the heating and cooling requirements of a single room, multiple rooms or the whole home.

More and more people are still coming home to Fujitsu comfort.

It's Australia's Favourite Air.

Visit fujitsugeneral.com.au for more details.



WINNER BARBECUES

Weber



"Easy to use and maintain."

FEMALE, 60-69, VIC/TAS

"Nice design. Good cooking results."

FEMALE, 30-39, OLD

"Easy to clean. Convenient."

FEMALE, 50-69, NSW/ACT

"Best range of different styles. Great quality."

FEMALE, 30-39, NSW/ACT



WEBER BARBECUES HAVE BEEN A CENTREPIECE of

Australian backyards for more than 40 years. Today, Weber is still guided by the principles of its founder, Ross McDonald, who



along with his wife, Joy, held cooking demonstrations in Rundle Mall, Adelaide, in the 1970s, and personally cooked customers' first meal on their brand-new Weber. "While we can't cook for all of our customers in their backyards, we do support them with educational and instructional content, included with their barbecue, to make sure they have the very best result the first time they cook on their new barbecue," says Daniel Pike, National Marketing Manager ANZ.

Helping and inspiring customers continues in 2023 thanks to technology with Weber's range of 'Smart' barbecues, such as the Weber Genesis and Spirit ranges. Weber owners can find recipe inspiration, cooking instructions and step-by-step guides all from their smart phone. They can also control some of the barbecue features from their phone. "Weber barbecues are designed to make the whole barbecue experience simpler and inspire the next delicious creation."

Like barbecuing, sport should be inclusive and open to all. Weber is helping to support the development of professional women's sport and help provide a platform to inspire the next generation of female cricketers. • Visit www.weber.com



For every year there has been an award for barbecues, Weber has been voted by Australians as the Most Trusted Barbecue brand. So, thank you Australia.



WINNER BREAKFAST FOOD

Weet-BixTM



"Amazing taste, family friendly."

MALE, 60-69, NSW/ACT

"Nutritional and tastes great."

MALE, 40-49, VIC/TAS

"Healthy, filling and delicious."

FEMALE, 18-29, NSW/ACT

"Easy to choose your own portion size."

MALE, 30-39, NSW/ACT

Weet-Bix

FOR THE 11TH YEAR IN A

ROW, Australians have declared Sanitarium Weet-Bix™ their Most Trusted Breakfast Food. Australians young and old have long been



proud to call themselves **Weet-Bix** kids. In fact, more than 90 years after Sanitarium launched its now-iconic wholegrain cereal, you'll find **Weet-Bix** in almost half of all Australian homes – and it still represents simple, honest nutrition that the whole family will love.

Alongside the classic 'two with milk' approach, Aussies love piling them high with fruits, nuts and seeds, smashing them into smoothies, smothering them with spreads and even dipping them in yoghurt. But of course the age-old battle lines remain drawn – do you do them crunchy or soggy?

In response to changing tastes and health needs, there's now a wide range of **Weet-Bix** options including **Weet-Bix** Bites, **Weet-Bix** Gluten Free, **Weet-Bix** Little Kids Essentials and **Weet-Bix** Cholesterol Lowering – containing plant sterols, clinically proven to reduce LDL cholesterol by up to 9% within 4 weeks as part of a healthy diet low in saturated fat.

Weet-Bix remains Australian-owned and made, but perhaps what makes it quintessential to the Australian cultural experience is its passion to help Aussie kids achieve their potential. Whether it's combating food and nutrition insecurity through nationwide support of breakfast clubs or inspiring self-belief through sports ambassadors, Weet-Bix has always been about much more than breakfast. • Visit www.weetbix.com.au





WINNER CONFECTIONERY

Cadbury



"Good quality, well-made product."

MALE, 70+, QLD

"Yummy, can't beat it."

FEMALE, 50-59, WA

"Good variety of flavours and products."

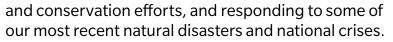
FEMALE, 40-49, VIC/TAS

"Most loved and well-known brand."

FEMALE, 60-69, WA



CADBURY'S FOUNDER
JOHN CADBURY believed
chocolate could make the
world a better place and
built his company on its
generous, visionary and
pioneering values. Cadbury
today still embraces these
values and has a proud history
supporting communities
through national sporting
partnerships, environmental



This year, Cadbury launched its 'A Cheer & A Half' campaign, encouraging Aussies to support their local sporting clubs via donations and volunteering. To celebrate some of Australia's most inspiring and generous moments in sport, Cadbury launched ten limited-edition, specially designed Cadbury Dairy Milk blocks. The athletes and teams featured on the packs Adam Goodes, Ash Barty, Daisy Pearce, Mark Taylor, Cedric Dubler, Sam Bloom, Simon Clarke, Commbank Matildas, and The Wallabies – were chosen because they embody the spirit of generosity both on and off the field. "By sharing these stories with Australian families, we hope to inspire generosity amongst the community, show the power of connection through sport and encourage people to get more involved with their local sporting clubs," says Mondelez International ANZ Vice President of Marketing, Paul Chatfield.

Visit www.cadbury.com.au







FOR VOTING US

READER'S DIGEST MOST TRUSTED

CONFECTIONERY BRAND



WINNER CRUISE OPERATORS

Princess Cruises®

66

"Great food and entertainment and very comfortable beds."

FEMALE, 60-69, WA

100

"Love Princess, lovely staff who look after every request happily."

FEMALE, 70+, VIC/TAS

"Great value offers and a quality holiday experience."

MALE, 18-29, WA



WHAT BEGAN
AS ONE SHIP
AND A MAIDEN
VOYAGE to
Mexico in 1965
has sailed into
history books
as an awardwinning cruise
operator with
15 vessels that



take guests to more than 330 ports around the world.

Past guests agree, there's so much to love about a Princess® cruise, starting with the Princess MedallionClass® experience. Designed to make your holiday personalised and effortless, guests can enjoy food and drinks delivered on demand, keyless stateroom entry, reserve dining tables and activities, and Medallion Net® WiFi.

Guests are also provided with a dazzling array of world-class cuisine by award-winning chefs, live Broadway-style production shows, and a true Princess original experience – Movies Under the Stars: Hollywood films poolside.

Need to rejuvenate your body and mind? No problem, Princess has just what the doctor ordered, such as the Lotus Spa® and the Sanctuary – a tranquil retreat reserved just for adults. When it's time to turn in for the night, you can delight in a good night's sleep in a Princess Luxury Bed.

Princess, connecting you with what you love.

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You'll love cruising Australia

7 nights from \$999 per person twin share*

Contact your travel agent | 1300 385 631 | princess.com

^{*} Fares as per person, in AIID, in complete twin accommodation based on the lead interior stateroom categories, Publication, inclusive of all discounts, taxes, fees and port expenses (which are subject to change). Supplements apply for other stateroom categories, Fares based on 7-Dey Tasmania round trip from Sydney departing 23/02/24. Highers may apply to other departure dates. Princess Cruises has set aside a reasonable number of staterooms which are available at these fares. Once these staterooms are sold, fares may vary. Valid for new bookings and not combinable with any other offer. All offers are subject to availability. Princess Standard fare is the cruise fare only without any inclusions. To be read in conjunction with the Passage Contract available at princess.com/legal/passage_contract which passengers will be bound by. A credit card surcharge of 1.1% for Visa and Mastercard and 2.75% for AMEX, and a 1.0% surcharge for PayPaI will apply to direct bookings made through our website or call centre. No surcharges apply to debit cards. Travel agents may charge additional fees – check with your travel agent. Carnival pic trading as Princess Cruises ABNI 23 107 998 443.



HIGHLY COMMENDED CRUISE OPERATORS

Royal Caribbean®



"The service, entertainment and food are first class."

FEMALE, 60-69, QLD

"Great food, great staff, great fun."

MALE, 30-39, VIC/TAS

"Best cruises for family holidays."

MALE, 40-49, NSW/ACT

"Great fleet. Lots of fun onboard. Good price."

MALE, 40-49, NSW/ACT



SINCE THE 1970s Royal Caribbean International has been delivering innovations at sea. Each successive class of ship is an architectural marvel that features the latest technology and guest experiences for today's adventurous traveller. "We continue to focus on providing a memorable guest experience through our Quantum class ships. Our sailings from Brisbane and Sydney offer destination-rich itineraries, a wonderful array of dining options and some of the best Broadway entertainment. For our guests who opt for our Royal Suite Class – available on our Quantum Class ships – every detail is thought of, so guests don't have to lift a finger. Guests have access to perks that range from exclusive lounge spaces and dining venues to a Royal Genie who will craft unique, VIP experiences for each guest," says Gavin Smith, VP and Managing Director Royal Caribbean Australia and New Zealand.

Royal Caribbean travels to more than 270 destinations in over 60 countries, including Royal Caribbean's private island destination in The Bahamas. Guests will discover beauty rich and rare as they circumnavigate Australia or embrace the island life in the South Pacific on *Brilliance of the Seas®* inaugural Australian season (summer 2023-2024). Also this summer fan favourite *Ovation of the Seas®* is returning to sail from Sydney and *Quantum of the Seas®*, the most innovative ship, to sail from Brisbane. Endless onboard adventures await, including skydiving and surfing or just hanging out in the adults-only Solarium. Royal Caribbean's commitment to offering memory-making adventures with friendly service and exceptional value keeps their guests coming back time and time again. • *Visit www.RoyalCaribbean.com.au*



















GETAWAY FROM IT ALL

Whether you're travelling solo, as a couple or bringing the whole extended adventure squad along, our ships offer so many ways to play, stay and unwind.

With so many holidays to experience, what will you get out of your next Royal Caribbean® getaway?



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WINNER DISHWASHERS

Bosch



"The best dishwasher I have ever had."

FEMALE, 50-59, WA

"Best quality and longlasting."

MALE, 30-39, VIC/TAS

"Most reliable and work the best."

MALE, 60-69, WA

"Energy efficient and operates quietly."

FEMALE, 70+, QLD



BRAND TRUST IS SOMETHING BOSCH

continuously strives for. It understands the importance of building confidence in the minds of its customers, so they can trust that a Bosch dishwasher will not only meet their expectations, but exceed it. Bosch's German heritage has a strong foundation in precision engineering and exceptional quality, with the ultimate goal of making life in the kitchen easier and more enjoyable.

"Our products are always designed with the customer in mind," says Jessica Deuscher, Head of Brand. "Our expertise in home appliances shines through with our user-friendly yet aesthetically pleasing designs, and our commitment to continually developing new innovations in the kitchen, such as the Home Connect app."

This innovative feature enables you to start, stop and monitor the status of your dishwasher – even when you're not home. Featuring suggestive programs, tablet top-up reminders and mid-cycle adjustment and customisation, the Home Connect app makes doing the dishes simple. In addition, it

also tells you the estimated water and energy consumption of wash cycles, so you can look out for the environment and your utility bills at the same time.

www.boschhome.com.au





Model shown: SMU8EDS01A

Invented for life

Smart Home Connectivity

with Serie 8 Dishwashers

Upgrade your home with a Bosch Series 8 dishwasher. Handy features include auto door open for improved drying results, three baskets and program control on the go!





Home Connect



WINNER DIY POWER TOOLS

Bosch



"Leaders in power tools. Well made and reliable."

MALE, 50-59, QLD

"Provides a good range of excellent products."

MALE, 70+, NSW/ACT

"Good quality, good range, good warranty."

MALE, 60-69, QLD

"Long lasting, easy to use."

FEMALE, 40-49, WA



POPULAR NOT ONLY IN AUSTRALIA BUT ALL OVER THE WORLD,

German-designed and engineered Bosch Power Tools empower people to make the projects they set their minds to, and provide



DIYers with high-quality tools made to last.

At the heart of Bosch is a long history of innovation that is inspired by improving the lives of the people who use Bosch products – whether that be a simple home repair or a major local development of a sustainable wastewater system.

Bosch takes environmental matters seriously. In fact, sustainability is one of the company's core values, and throughout this year Bosch will be re-launching over 40 DIY measuring tools with new sustainable packaging and products made with recycled materials.

Bosch also provides a place for DIYers to share their passions. "Our vibrant social media community is fuelled by showcasing local home projects in regular competitions and other online activity," says Scott Stevens, Sales and Marketing Manager (Home and Garden). "We would like to thank Australia for voting Bosch the winner of the Reader's Digest Most Trusted DIY Power Tools Brand for the 11th year in a row."

Shop the Bosch Home and Garden range online at Amazon or eBay. • Visit www.bosch-diy.com/au



THE Battery for your Home.

The 18V POWER FOR ALL system has over 60 tools in the cordless range covering gardening, cleaning and DIY power tools for your next project.

Australia's Most Trusted Brand, 11 years running.



Scan to see the Bosch range





Comfort

HIGHLY COMMENDED FABRIC SOFTENER/CONDITIONER

66

"Leaves my clothing feeling softer and fluffy."

MALE, 30-39, QLD

"Products for kids with sensitive skin."

FEMALE, 18-29, NSW/ACT

"Smells the best and lasts the longest."

MALE, 30-39, QLD

"Quality products at affordable prices."

MALE, 40-49, QLD



WHILE LAUNDRY DETERGENTS

'take out' the dirt from your clothes, Comfort Fabric Conditioners 'add back' the softness, helping to make them more comfortable to wear as well as smelling fresh all day long.

Comfort's Fabric Care Collection goes beyond longlasting fragrance and softness to deliver the ultimate in clothing



care. With patented Fibre Protect technology, it smooths fibres and keeps colours brighter for longer to extend the life of your clothes.

Comfort's Fragrance Collection has been created by world-renowned fragrance houses to give your clothes an exquisite luxurious all-day scent, with choices such as Amber and Rose, Vanilla Orchid or Rainforest Fresh. Its luxurious softness smooths fabric fibres to prevent stiffness, making your clothes, towels and bedsheets soft and gentle to touch. Recommended by leading washing machine manufacturers, Comfort reduces the wrinkles in clothes when they dry and helps the iron to glide over them. Comfort also moisturises fabric so that electrostatic charge is decreased, making surfaces less likely to stick to each other.

Comfort's revolutionary In-wash Scent Booster Beads use scent-lock technology to infuse clothes with luxurious freshness for up to 12 weeks from wash to wear. The scent booster beads come in two gorgeous fragrances infused with botanical extracts.

Visit www.unilever.com.au



Malke Freshness last



Keeps your clothes staying fresher for longer



WINNER FUNERAL INSURANCE

Australian Seniors

66

"Policies that are very easily accessed."

FEMALE, 60-69, WA

"Good customer experience. Quick and easy claim resolution. Caring staff."

FEMALE, 60-69, WA

"I feel they offer a great service."

MALE, 70+, QLD



LAUNCHED IN

1998 to meet the needs of the often neglected over 50s market, Australian Seniors have since helped countless Australians protect the most important things in life – whether it's their



family's future, valuable assets, or their long-planned retirement activities.

Australian Seniors pride themselves on carefully selecting underwriters that share their vision of providing insurance that's simple, easy to understand and cost-effective. They also offer exclusive discounts to Australians over 50, providing added value and a sense of community. Australian Seniors are always thinking of ways they can support the over 50s.

With Australian Seniors, you know you're in good hands. With their quality life, funeral, health, car, home, landlords, pet and travel insurance products, and award-winning customer service team, they continue to be recognised by clients and throughout the insurance industry. Their policies help the seniors market (from hard-working over 50s, self-funded retirees, to pensioners) take control of what matters most to them. Australian Seniors are committed to providing the older Australian community with cover for years to come.

Call 1300 248 703 or visit seniors.com.au



Protect loved ones from your funeral costs with Seniors Funeral Insurance

- ✓ Australian residents aged 40–79 are guaranteed acceptance
- ☑ Choose cover amount that suits you, from \$3,000 to \$15,000
- 100% of cover amount paid to you if diagnosed with terminal illness²
- Award-winning brand















Call 1300 248 703 today or visit seniors.com.au

¹ Claims generally paid within one business day from receiving completed documentation.

² Cover for accidental death and accidental serious injury only in the first 12 months. Terminal illness with diagnosis of 12 months or less to live. This is general information and does not take into account your financial situation. Please consider the relevant Product Disclosure Statement and Target Market Determination available at seniors.com.au to ensure this product suits your needs. Seniors Funeral Insurance is promoted and distributed by Australian Seniors Insurance Agency, a trading name of Greenstone Financial Services Pty Ltd ABN 53 128 692 884, AFSL 343079, and issued by Hannover Life Re of Australasia Ltd ABN 37 062 395 484, AFSL 530811. Terms, conditions, limits, and exclusions apply.



HIGHLY COMMENDED GARDEN POWER TOOLS

STIHL



"Quality, reliable and durable."

FEMALE, 60-69, WA

"Sturdy and handy. Powerful and easy to use."

MALE, 40-49, SA/NT

"A deserved reputation for quality and reliability."

MALE, 60-69, VIC/TAS

"Good tools. Long lasting."

FEMALE, 50-59, NSW/ACT



RENOWNED FOR QUALITY and reliability, STIHL is committed to pushing the boundaries of innovation year after year. Using revolutionary technology, STIHL tools are built to last, providing Australian gardeners and professionals alike with peace of mind that their STIHL tools – whether that be a mower, hedge trimmer or blower – is ready to take on diverse garden challenges.

Sold exclusively through a 600-strong network of independently owned STIHL dealers nationwide, Australians can rest assured that the customer service they receive is equal to STIHL's state-of-the-art products.

A global market leader backed by over 95 years of German engineering excellence, and the No.1 chainsaw selling brand worldwide, STIHL is renowned for a broad array of quality products across their petrol and battery ranges.

Visit www.stihl.com.au







WINNER GARDENING PRODUCTS

Seasol



"Never fails to give my plants a boost."

FEMALE, 50-59, WA

"My plants, veggies and herbs grow beautifully."

FEMALE, 30-39, QLD

"Restored my lawn quickly."

MALE, 18-29, VIC/TAS

"A natural fertiliser that is reasonably priced."

MALE, 60+, NSW/ACT





AT SEASOL, 'A BETTER WAY TO GROW' is our aspiration and our inspiration. For over 40 years we have been inspiring people to change the way they grow food and green their landscapes, so we can all enjoy a healthier world, today, tomorrow and indefinitely.

From our signature garden health treatment Seasol to soil improvers and fertilisers, innovative watersaving products, potting mixes and soil media, we want everyone to feel confident that they can create a beautiful, productive garden in any condition, whether it's juicy tomatoes, blooming roses or lush green lawns.

Seasol has a product to help you, including: Seasol GOLD enhanced with calcium to strengthen plant health and boost plant growth; Seasol plus Nutrients range to help feed plants and revitalise soil health; Seasol for Lush Green Lawns to improve growth and colour of all lawns.

"We believe everyone should have the opportunity to enjoy some kind of garden and grow their own food naturally. We are proud to say our products are sustainably sourced and proudly manufactured in Australia." Visit www.seasol.com.au





WINNER GLUES & CONSTRUCTION ADHESIVES

Selleys



"Versatile and good for general use in any job."

FEMALE, 18-29, VIC/TAS

"Proven reliability and effectiveness. A trusted effective product."

MALE, 70+, NSW/ACT

"Tough and durable. Easy to apply to a range of surfaces."

FEMALE, 40-49, SA/NT



FOR MORE THAN 80 YEARS, SELLEYS has been providing innovative, world-leading glues and construction adhesive products – such as Selleys Liquid Nails, Hold Up, Power Grip, Aquadhere, Araldite, Kwik Grip and more – that help people achieve lasting results and deliver pride and satisfaction in a job well done. Absolute customer

satisfaction is what drives Selleys forward and is what ensures that 'If It's Selleys It Works'.

That 'cando' spirit and commitment to quality that Selleys embodies



today were the hallmark of the company's founder, Martin Selley, who immigrated to Australia from Germany in 1939 and quickly set up a factory in Sydney where he gained a reputation for making superior quality putty and adhesives.

Selleys was established with a focus on invention and creativity, and today, Selleys is the leading choice for Australian and New Zealand consumers and tradespeople when it comes to adhesives, sealants, fillers and paint preparation products. A trusted brand for over 80 years, Selleys products make it easier to get the job done right, the first time. • selleys.com.au

POWER GRIP

SAVE THE THINGS THAT MATTER







AUSTRALIA'S MOST TRUSTED BRAND

IN GLUE & CONSTRUCTION ADHESIVES*

*Readers Digest, voted by Australians



WINNER HEALTH INSURANCE

Bupa



"High quality coverage and customer service."

MALE, 60-69, NSW/ACT

"Flexible options. Speedy claims process."

FEMALE, 40-49, QLD

"Reliable and efficient."

FEMALE, 18-29, NSW/ACT

"Leads the way in healthcare."

MALE, 50-59, QLD



FOR OVER 75 YEARS, Bupa has been helping Australians prepare for life. Since the very beginning, they've been driven by a passion to make sure everyone has access to high quality, affordable healthcare with the overall outcome and purpose to be to help people live longer, healthier, happier lives and make a better world.

Today, almost four million Aussies trust Bupa to support their health. Bupa maintains one of the largest hospital networks of any major health insurer. That means members can have peace of mind that they'll be covered without any additional out-of-pocket costs if their hospital is registered under Bupa's Medical Gap Scheme as a "No-Gap Provider".

Since the pandemic began, Bupa has supported customers to the value of almost \$1 billion through cashbacks, premium deferrals, and financial assistance. And this year, to support families with rising costs, Bupa lifted the age that dependants can remain on their family policy to 32.

To give their members even more value, Bupa recently launched their new loyalty program – Life Rewards – the first of its kind for a large health insurer. Life Rewards gives members access to exclusive offers, discounted eGift cards, dining discounts and much more from over 200 popular brands.

As people's mindsets have shifted about their health and how they want to receive treatment, Bupa has invested in new and innovative ways to deliver care. This includes virtual care like rehab and chemo in the home, and free mental health pilots through This Way Up.

Bupa.com.au





Over 75 Years of preparing Australians for life

Q

Bupa Health Insurance



WINNER HEARING SERVICES

Hearing Australia

66

"Have been a satisfied customer for 77 years."

MALE, 70+, NSW/ACT

"They look after their customers very well."

FEMALE, 40-49, QLD

"Recommended by doctors."

FEMALE, 60-69, NSW/ACT

"Good service and products."

MALE, 70+, NSW/ACT



HELPING RETURNED WWII VETERANS and young children affected by the rubella epidemic in 1947 is how Hearing Australia first started. In the 75 years since, the brand has been dedicated to world-leading research and expert hearing care, positively impacting the lives of more than 1.5 million Australians with its care, compassion, professionalism and innovation.

Hearing Australia's commitment to keeping people at the heart of everything it does has not changed over time – just ask Ron Hansen (below left), a Hearing Australia client for over 70 years, since he returned from RAAF service in the Philippines. Hearing Australia is also dedicated to the prevention, early detection and treatment of hearing loss in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and works with communities across metro, regional and remote Australia.

This year Hearing Australia launched its new hearing aid range, which represents the cutting-edge in 'organic hearing' technology and ensures every Australian can receive the most natural and easy to use hearing solutions – no matter what their hearing loss, lifestyle or budget. • Visit www.hearing.com.au







Australia's most trusted hearing provider







Book an appointment today





🌭 134 432 🔞 hearing.com.au



HIGHLY COMMENDED HEARING SERVICES

Specsavers Audiology



"A good range of products that are affordable."

MALE, 70+, VIC/TAS

"My hearing test was seamless and thorough."

FEMALE, 60-69, QLD

"You can get your eyes and ears tested at the same store."

FEMALE, 60-69, NSW/ACT



EYES AND EARS
GO TOGETHER. It

just makes sense.
Audiology has been a part of
Specsavers globally since 2004, long before it entered the Australian optometry market in 2008. After significant success changing the market in the UK,



Ireland and Northern Europe, Specsavers recognised the difference it could make in reducing prices and making hearing care accessible to Australians.

Specsavers Audiology started offering Aussies hearing screenings and transparent pricing for latest technology hearing aids in 2017.

"It's normal for hearing to deteriorate over time, sometimes so slowly it can creep up on you," says Nick Taylor, Specsavers Chief Audiologist.

Specsavers believes that everyone has the right to access the highest quality hearing-care services. Since launching audiology six years ago, Specsavers has screened over 2 million Australians for hearing loss.

Specsavers everyday low prices on latest technology hearing aids are available on the website or instore making it easy for customers to shop around.

Specsavers: changing lives through better hearing.

Visit www.specsavers.com.au/hearing



You know us for experienced eye care, but did you know Specsavers can also care for your hearing? Come in and see one of our qualified audiology professionals. We'll take the time to understand your individual needs with comprehensive testing of your hearing health. From there, we can tailor solutions from our range of latest technology hearing aids that fit your lifestyle and budget.

Start your hearing care journey at specsavers.com.au/hearing







HIGHLY COMMENDED HOME CARE NSW/ACT

Australian Unity



"Excellent care."

FEMALE, 60-69, NSW/ACT

"Good service. Nice people."

FEMALE, 60-69, NSW/ACT

"Use them every week, recommend."

MALE, 70+, NSW/ACT

"Kind and professional."

FEMALE, 70+, NSW/ACT



FOR OLDER AUSTRALIANS who wish to stay at home for as long as possible, Australian Unity offers tailored services: from home maintenance through to personal care. With a track record of having delivered various health, wealth and care services since 1840, today Australian Unity supports around 36,000 home care service customers.

As the nation's first member-owned wellbeing company, Australian Unity is committed to 'Real Wellbeing' for all Australians. Its promise of Real Wellbeing means so much more than simply physical health: it's about standards of living and feeling safe in your home. It's your personal relationships and being connected to your community. It's about what you want to achieve in life and having the security to do what makes you happy.

"We offer support to our clients through a range of services that include domestic assistance, personal care, social support and transport," says Prue Bowden, Chief Executive Officer for Home Health. "With our team of health professionals, our personalised and tailored support can also include care to support the health and wellbeing of our clients through regular check-ins and in-home care from nurses, allied health practitioners and other supports."

Australian Unity invests in its care teams to ensure they deliver excellent service and the best possible care for clients. Care workers are carefully selected and screened and receive training and ongoing support. It's why Australian Unity clients love their care workers, rating them 8.9 out of 10.

Visit www.australianunity.com.au/readersdisgest







WINNER HOME CARE QLD

BlueCare



"A highly trusted brand."

FEMALE, 50-59, QLD

"Friendly and professional care."

MALE, 70+, QLD

"Absolutely great in-home care."

MALE, 70+, QLD

"BlueCare cares about the people they look after."

FEMALE, 70+, QLD



EMPOWERING QUEENSLANDERS TO LIVE LIFE

THEIR WAY is just one thing that has continued to set BlueCare apart from its competitors since 1953.

From its very first home visit, BlueCare has been driven by a genuine desire to serve Queenslanders and improve the lives of those who need care.

Today, BlueCare makes more than 3.5 million visits each year and is one of Queensland's largest and most trusted not-for-profit providers of in-home care, residential aged care, disability services and retirement living. But none of this would be possible without the passion of its 8000-strong, big-hearted BlueCare team – the state's largest network of aged care workers – who provide a continuum of care in homes, on the road and in BlueCare centres.

Through simple and trusted advice and guidance, BlueCare makes the options clearer, decisions easier and outcomes



better-suited to individuals, so the whole community knows it's in good hands.

With one vision and wearing one colour, the BlueCare team is here to help you live life, your way.

Visit www.bluecare.org.au



Whether it's help with everyday tasks or more complex care with our allied health or specialist nursing team, BlueCare can help you live life your way.

Thank you for voting BlueCare as Australia's Most Trusted Brand for Home Care in Queensland.









HIGHLY COMMENDED HOME CARE QLD

Anglicare Southern Queensland

66

"Highly respected. Has contributed to improvements in aged care."

MALE, 50-59, QLD

"Very happy with the service."

MALE, 70+, QLD

"Nurses and aides are always pleasant and helpful."

MALE, 70+, QLD

"Highly recommend."

FEMALE, 40-49, QLD



RECOGNISED AS ONE OF QUEENSLAND'S most

trusted care providers, Anglicare Southern Queensland provides a range of services including home and community aged care, residential aged care youth support, mental health, family counselling and foster care.

The organisation cares for more than 32,000 Queenslanders choosing to age at home by supporting them with lifestyle activities, personal care, cooking, cleaning, gardening, home maintenance, pastoral care, allied health services, nursing and palliative care.

Anglicare Southern Queensland is a registered charity providing support to one in 30 Queenslanders each year. The individualised care that Anglicare



provides is reflected through the organisation's values of love, care, hope and humility.

The organisation actively seeks feedback

from clients to better understand and continuously improve the quality of services and support clients receive. This also allows them to promote a culture of improvement, enhance clinical care and governance, and ensure that it delivers exceptional client outcomes and experiences. • Visit www.anglicaresq.org.au



Trusted in Home Care

Supporting older Queenslanders to maintain their independence at home

anglicaresq.org.au | 1300 610 610



HIGHLY COMMENDED HOME CARE SA/NT

Resthaven



"It is local and has a very good reputation."

MALE, 70+, SA/NT

"My parents' friends have used Resthaven and have complete confidence in their caring."

MALE, 60-69, SA/NT

"Always been good when I've needed them."

MALE, 70+, SA/NT



OPENING IN 1935 DURING

the Great
Depression,
Rest Haven,
as it was then
spelt, was
established
to support
elderly women
who had no
home or family
and who had



served the Methodist Church all their lives. Since that time Resthaven has evolved but never strayed from its core values: trust, dignity and choice.

Today the not-for-profit charity is governed by a dedicated Board that ensures the brand's long-term success by providing a solid moral compass that shapes all organisational decisions, continually directing the focus back to its values and purpose of providing outstanding care and support to older Australians and their carers.

Resthaven is proud of its heritage and looks forward to a strong future. To remain in this enviable position, Resthaven listens to feedback from both customers and their communities – such as suggestions for social group outings at Resthaven Northern Community Services to menu items at Resthaven Leabrook and everything in between – to continually improve its care and support. Need aged care? Ask Resthaven.

Visit www.resthaven.asn.au





From home help or social support to respite and clinical aged care, our trusted, friendly staff will give you as much or as little help as you need, so you can stay in your home longer. Visit resthaven.asn.au



WINNER HOME CARE VIC/TAS

Australian Unity



"My Nana was always well cared for and respected with dignity."

FEMALE, 30-39, VIC/TAS

"Took great care of my grandmother."

FEMALE, 18-29, VIC/TAS

"Trustworthy and helpful."

MALE, 50-59, VIC/TAS

"People focused."

FEMALE, 60-69, VIC/TAS



FOR OLDER AUSTRALIANS who wish to stay at home for as long as possible, Australian Unity offers tailored services: from home maintenance through to personal care. With a track record of having delivered various health, wealth and care services since 1840, today Australian Unity supports around 36,000 home care service customers.

Prue Bowden, Chief Executive Officer for Home Health, said with a focus on real wellbeing, Australian Unity brings together experience and expertise in the delivery of quality home care services, tailored care and case management, and virtual health services to create an integrated health service for our clients – built around the principles of high quality, choice and access, and for a broad range of health acuities and needs.

"We offer support to our clients through a range of services that include domestic assistance, personal care, social support and transport.

"With our experience in providing healthcare and a team of health professionals, our personalised and tailored support can also include care to support the health and wellbeing of our clients through regular check-ins and in-home care from nurses, allied health practitioners and other supports."

Australian Unity invests in its care teams to ensure they deliver excellent service and the best possible care for clients. Care workers are carefully selected and screened and receive weeks of training and ongoing support. It's why Australian Unity clients love their care workers, rating them 8.9 out of 10.

Visit www.australianunity.com.au/readersdisgest







HIGHLY COMMENDED HOME CARE VIC/TAS

Mercy Health



"Reliable and with different care arms."

FEMALE, 50-59, VIC/TAS

"Reputable. Good service."

FEMALE, 40-49, VIC/TAS

"A trusted brand."

FEMALE, 19-29, VIC/TAS

"Great service."

MALE, 60-69, VIC/TAS



PROVIDING HEALTHCARE FOR OVER 100 YEARS,

Mercy Health's mission has always been to bring God's mercy to those in need. That mission remains true today.

With courage, persistence and determination, the pioneering Sisters of Mercy have been at the forefront of healthcare and advocacy in Victoria and beyond for over a century.

Today, Mercy Health is a dynamic and growing national organisation and a highly trusted and respected brand, delivering compassionate health, aged care and home care services to Australians at every stage of life.

Mercy Health Home Care Services provide community aged care and disability services that keep thousands of people happy, healthy and independent at home.

It can be confusing to navigate in-home care services, but Mercy Health prides itself on its Care Advisory Service, a free and personalised service that provides guidance on the aged care system and how to get the care you need, including help with aged care referrals, applications and eligibility.

In the spirit of the Mercy values of respect and hospitality, Mercy Health Home Care Services work with clients to learn their personal story, help them choose a care team and coordinate services that are tailored to their unique needs.

When it comes to getting some extra support to keep you comfortable and independent at home, Mercy Health is a trusted provider.

Visit www.mercyhealth.com.au



What does Healthy Ageing mean to you?



For Mercy Health, it's about supporting people to live healthy and fulfilling lives that nourish their physical and mental wellbeing.

Whether it's aged care, home care or retirement living, we can help you take the next step to understand all your healthy ageing options.

Embrace the future with us today. mercyhealth.com.au





HIGHLY COMMENDED HOME CARE VIC/TAS

Uniting AgeWell



"Good reputation. Expert staff and service. Compassionate."

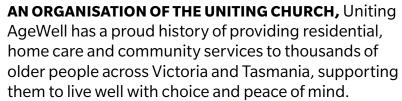
FEMALE, 70+, VIC/TAS

"Provide quality service."

MALE, 60-69, VIC/TAS

"Caring and helpful."

FEMALE, 40-49, VIC/TAS



While Uniting AgeWell services have grown significantly in recent years – with customer numbers increasing by 39% in 2022 for in-home care, allied health and therapy services, respite and carer



support and social connections programs – customers remain at the heart of everything the organisation does. "Supporting an individual's ageing journey, providing them with access to high quality services to support their goals, respecting their choices and enabling them to get the most out of life, are key to us building customer trust," says Uniting AgeWell CEO Andrew Kinnersly. "We truly listen to our customers and actively pursue opportunities for improvement.

"COVID-19 created unprecedented challenges for everyone, and I am very proud to say it did not stop our dedicated staff from seeking to strengthen services or find innovative ways to enable our customers to continue doing the things they love."

Visit www.unitingagewell.org





Care and support tailored just for you with Uniting AgeWell



Help at home

Get assistance with personal and clinical care, household chores, assistive technology and transport



Community support and wellbeing

Remain connected with social groups, outings, allied health and therapy services, seniors gyms, carer support and respite services



Independent living

Maintain an independent lifestyle in one of our vibrant retirement living communities



Residential care

Specialist 24/7 care and support, including dementia and palliative care, within a safe and caring community

Uniting AgeWell

With services across Victoria and Tasmania, Uniting AgeWell's expert, caring team can help you find the right services to meet your needs.





HIGHLY COMMENDED HOME CARE WA

Brightwater



"Provides good care to clients."

FEMALE, 50-59, WA

"Caring, compassionate and inclusive."

FEMALE, 60+, WA

"Has a good reputation."

MALE, 60+, WA

"Really professional. Great customer service."

MALE, 70+, WA



SINCE BRIGHTWATER FIRST OPENED ITS DOORS IN SUBIACO, PERTH, IN 1901, the not-for-profit has been underpinned by its mission of 'pursuing the dignity of independence' and a strong commitment to community service – so it's not surprising it has grown to become one of the leading aged care and disability services providers in Western Australia.

The charity expanded its business offerings in the mid-1990s to support the growing population of seniors who wanted to remain independent for longer, and began providing services to people still living

in their own homes.
"We acknowledge
everyone's unique
personalities
and individual
circumstances. Our
high-quality care is
backed by findings
from the Brightwater

Since the 1990s
Brightwater has
supported seniors
who want to
remain in their
own homes

Research Centre, which focuses on neurological conditions, dementia care and living environments to benefit individuals and the wider community," says Jenni Gamble, General Manager, Brightwater at Home.

Brightwater at Home has an in-house allied health team to support clients with integrated services and programmes dedicated to improving their outcomes. As such, over the past 12 months it has enriched its services with podiatry, remedial massage, a falls prevention programme and 'Sunshine Calls' – which bring joy and ensure clients maintain a social connection. • Visit www.brightwatergroup.com



Christine loves chickens. She especially loves talking to her chickens. However, she couldn't keep them if she had to move somewhere smaller. That's why she loves having home care help from Brightwater. Our close-knit team of professionals helps you keep your independence with services such as physio, nursing and help around the house and garden.





WINNER HONEY

Mānuka Health



"Quality Mānuka honey with high MGO values."

FEMALE, 50-59, NSW/ACT

"Healthiest and most environmentally friendly."

FEMALE, 30-39, NSW/ACT

"Good quality honey. I trust its purity."

MALE, 50-59, QLD

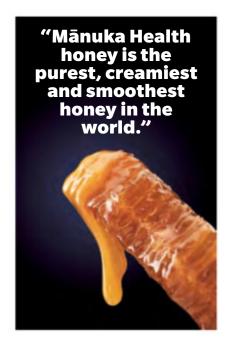
"Great taste. Great health record."

MALE, 70+, QLD

Mānuka Health

ESTABLISHED IN
TE AWAMUTU, New
Zealand, in 2006,
the Mānuka Health
collective is committed
to crafting the world's
finest Mānuka honey
while safeguarding
the wellbeing of
people, bees and the
environment.

Mānuka Health
has spent many
years discovering the
extraordinary properties
of Mānuka honey and
propolis, and pioneered



MGO testing after a groundbreaking discovery found it to be the elusive 'magic ingredient' that gives Mānuka honey its myriad of benefits.

Late last year, Mānuka Health launched its new creative direction. "Through visual expression, we shine a light on the pure beauty of our product with close-up film photography," says Chelsea Drury, Brand Manager.

"Our honey is unique due to where it comes from and the care our master blenders take. The result is the purest, creamiest and smoothest honey in the world."

The importance of managing the whole honeymaking process also can't be underestimated, and Mānuka Health outperforms key competitors through its expert handling from hive to jar.

Visit au.manukahealth.com



What Mother Nature provides, our master blenders perfect.





WINNER HOUSEHOLD CLEANING PRODUCTS

Dettol

66

"Great price and results are outstanding."

MALE, 40-49, VIC/TAS

"Most trusted brand. Works the best."

FEMALE, 70+, VIC/TAS

"Longstanding brand. Experts in their field."

FEMALE, 30-39, SA/NT

"Amazing cleaning products."

FEMALE, 18+-29, VIC/TAS



Dettol Antiseptic Liquid was used as a post-surgery antiseptic skin wash in hospitals, Dettol has evolved to become the trusted brand in germ protection around the home.

Since then Dettol's germ protection heritage has expanded across a growing portfolio of antibacterial hand wash, household cleaning and hand sanitiser products, to laundry sanitisers.

This year, Dettol will continue to focus on the expansion of its range in areas where germ protection is important and relevant, such as in the laundry or protection from germs when you are out of the house.

Dettol has also made a sustainability pledge* which includes making 100% of its packaging recyclable or reusable and to include at least 25% recycled plastic content in its packaging by 2025 where safety and regulations allow.

So far it has made significant steps by launching its first biodegradable and compostable wipes in its household cleaning range.
Always read the label. Follow



directions for use. • Visit www.dettol.com.au

*Full pledge details, visit www.rb.com/responsibility/plastics-packaging-and-waste/ ^ Biodegradable in accelerated active landfill conditions within 60 days and home compost conditions within 12 months under success criteria AS 5810 measured under ISO 14855 (EN13432).





WINNER HUMIDIFIERS & VAPORISERS

Vicks



"I grew up with Vicks. It can be used in many ways and works well."

FEMALE, 50-59, NSW/ACT

"Vicks are the experts in this field, so I trust them the most."

FEMALE, 40-49, WA



FOR MORE THAN 125 YEARS.

Australians have relied on Vicks when they get the sniffles. Starting out as the Vicks Family Remedies Company in



1898 with a croup and pneumonia salve, the product was so in demand it was soon followed with cough drops, a nasal inhaler, cough syrup, nasal spray and other cold remedies – all of which cemented Vicks as the brand people can turn to when they're unwell.

Vicks continues to be inspired to create innovative products that allow families and friends to care for one another. In 2002, the brand launched the Vicks Vaporizer which, for the past 20 years, has become a firm family favourite and top seller in Australia.

The Vicks Vaporizer provides natural steam therapy which helps combat excessive dryness by keeping the throat and nasal passages hydrated – important in the winter months when heating robs the air of moisture. And by using the Vicks WarmSteam Vaporizer overnight, it helps you to breathe easier for a more restful sleep.

So it is no wonder Vicks is Australia's Most Trusted Vaporizer, and Winner of a Trusted Brand Award in 2019, 2020 and 2023 and Highly Commended in 2021 and 2022. • Visit www.vaporizers.fgb.com.au





AUSTRALIA'S MOST TRUSTED VAPORIZER

WITH NATURAL STEAM THERAPY



Always read the label and follow the directions for use.



WINNER LAUNDRY APPLIANCES

Fisher & Paykel



"Wellestablished, high-quality brand."

MALE, 40-49, QLD

"My new front loader has a variety of settings and is extremely quiet."

FEMALE, 30-39, NSW/ACT

"Fisher & Paykel has produced reliable washers and dryers for many years."

FEMALE, 70+, QLD

FISHER & PAYKEL

FOUNDED IN NEW ZEALAND IN 1934, Fisher & Paykel has since grown into a global, design-led company of more than 4000 people.



When choosing Fisher & Paykel, you are doing more than simply buying a product – you are buying an enduring lifetime experience that is extended to every touchpoint, including delivery professionals, 24/7 Customer Care and Global sales support.

Fisher & Paykel designs its laundry appliances with people in mind and the life they live around their products. Last year, the brand launched a new Steam Care function in selected Fisher & Paykel washers and dryers, which brings exceptional levels of fabric care and convenience to daily laundry routines. The quick, stand-alone 20-minute cycle deodorises and dewrinkles garments, leaving them clean, smelling fresh and ready to wear in minutes.

As steam is a less-intensive refresh option, it saves water and reduces wear on your favourite garments and is suitable for almost every fabric – from delicate silks and activewear, through to cotton, linen and blends – compared to a full wash cycle. Steam Care is also not only kind on your clothes, it's gentle on the environment. • Visit www.fisherpaykel.com/au

LOVE YOUR LAUNDRY

Washing machines and dryers that deliver exceptional fabric care and are designed to be part of a holistic laundry system.



FISHER & PAYKEL

fisherpaykel.com



WINNER LAUNDRY DETERGENTS

OMO



"Effective and simple to use. Cleans my laundry beautifully."

FEMALE, 70+, NSW/ACT

"Always been reliable to keep our clothes bright and clean."

FEMALE, 60-69, WA

"The most effective at removing stains."

MALE, 40-49, NSW/ACT



ACTIVE OUTDOOR PLAY IS CRUCIAL FOR CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT, which can result in messy stains on clothing. But OMO believes that every stain is a proud mark of a life fully lived and advocates outdoor play and learning, which benefits children in mental, physical and social development.

OMO provides laundry detergents that have delivered amazing stain removal every time for over 65 years. OMO offers a wide variety of products: **OMO Ultimate**, with its ability to treat 48-hour dried-in stains; **OMO Sensitive**, which is tough on stains but gentle on skin; and **OMO 3-in-1 Capsules**, which provide a deep clean and fabric care with a long-lasting fragrance. Recommended by leading machine manufacturers, the capsules have been designed to be thrown directly into the machine drum and work on all machine types.

Because OMO recognises that doing the laundry can have a big impact on the environment, it has provided a Sustainable Living Plan on its website to help all Australians change their laundry habits and reduce their impact on the environment, without compromising on a high-performance wash. And with **OMO Dilute at Home Refill,** you can be tough on stains but help the environment by reducing your plastic use.

Visit www.omo.com/au













WINNER LAWN MOWERS

Victa



"Tough products, reliable, great variety."

FEMALE, 40-49, VIC/TAS

"Durable, efficient, powerful, competitive prices."

FEMALE, 18-29, NSW/ACT

"Original and the best. Built to last."

MALE, 50-59, VIC/TAS



EVER SINCE MERVYN VICTOR RICHARDSON tinkered in his Sydney garage with a few scraps of metal, billy cart wheels and a peach tin for a fuel can to produce his first lawn mower prototype, Victa has helped Australian gardeners keep their lawns and gardens looking great.

For more than 70 years, Victa has continued to innovate, producing mowers such as the Victa 18V Twin Lawn Mower range and the Victa Corvette 18V Starter Self Propelled Mower – both utilising Briggs & Stratton 18V batteries.

And with the recent introduction of Victa's light weight and compact battery-powered mini handheld range, which includes the 18V pruning saw, 18V mini chainsaw and 18V hedge trimmer and shears, it's clear to see how Victa continues to be the choice for Australians when it comes to lawn mowers and garden power tools to get the job done.

Visit www.victa.com







From turning your grass into lawn to taming those unruly hedges, your Most Trusted Lawn Mower Brand, Victa, now offers a range of Mini Handhelds for all your garden needs.

Victa's new battery powered 18V pruning saw, mini chainsaw and hedge trimmer and shears are easy to handle, light weight and compact.

Refining and maintaining your garden has never been easier.



TO FIND OUT MORE OR FOR YOUR NEAREST DEALER GO TO VICTA.COM.AU





HIGHLY COMMENDED LAWN MOWERS





"The best mowers I've ever had."

FEMALE, 70+, VIC/TAS

"Good variety. Easy to use."

FEMALE, 18-29, QLD

"Quality products that are reliable."

FEMALE, 30-39, SA/NT

"Quality products that last for generations."

FEMALE, 40-49, QLD





FOR MORE THAN 95 YEARS, STIHL has offered some of the highest quality outdoor power equipment on the market to home and professional gardeners. A global market leader, and the No.1 chainsaw selling brand worldwide, STIHL is renowned for a broad array of quality products across their petrol and battery ranges.

In the 50 years that STIHL has been sold in Australia, we have grown to trust and rely on the brand for their personal and ongoing service across their wide-stretching 600-strong network of privately owned STIHL dealerships. These smaller individual and family-owned businesses are able to build close local connections with customers who can turn to the specialists for advice, service, care and maintenance of their trusted STIHL lawn mowers and outdoor power equipment.

In the business of innovating and developing industry-leading firsts, STIHL's mission is to continuously enhance the customer experience. From their iMOW robotic mower range to their ever-expanding battery range and the incredibly handy GTA 26 garden pruner, STIHL takes pride in continuing to provide the ultimate in outdoor power equipment. • Visit www.stihl.com.au



AWARDED BATTERY MOWERS









WINNER OPTOMETRISTS

Specsavers



"Trusted experts who provide best products and services."

FEMALE, 18-29, NSW/ACT

"Guaranteed wonderful customer service."

FEMALE, 50-59, VIC/TAS

"Provides excellent levels of care and attention to eye health."

FEMALE, 40-49, SA/NT





OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS Specsavers has delivered exceptional eye health to Australians and achieved some incredible milestones in its eye health strategy.

Specsavers is leading the way in detecting early stages of conditions like glaucoma. Every customer is given an OCT 3D eye scan free of charge as part of their eye test. So far, Specsavers has identified over 160,000 unique cases of glaucoma that may have gone undetected.

Specsavers is genuinely determined to change lives through better sight and hearing and sees it as its personal mission to do all it can to stop patients from encountering avoidable vision loss.

As well as offering industry-leading care, Specsavers is also focused on delivering great products and provides a huge range of value-for-money frames, lenses and contact lenses, plus it has introduced new designer brands to its frames collection.

Visit www.specsavers.com.au

Cheers Australia! We're raising our glasses to you













AWARD WINNERS

2020-2023 Most Trusted Brand Award 2018-2023 Quality Service Award





AUSTRALIA'S MOST TRUSTED PAIN RELIEF BRAND*

"Reader's Digest Trusted Brand Survey 2023 Panadol Brand.

Trade marks are owned by or licensed to the Haleon Group of Companies

2023 Haleon Group of Companies or its licensor, PM-AU-PAN-23-00107

HALEON



Always read the label and follow directions for use. Incorrect use could be harmful.



HIGHLY COMMENDED PAINT

British Paints



"It's a great brand. We have used it many times on our interiors. Beautiful colours."

FEMALE, 40-49. NSW/ACT

"Great paints for every circumstance."

FEMALE, 70+, WA

"Quality products at affordable prices. Stand the test of time."

MALE, 40-49, QLD



AUSTRALIANS HAVE BEEN IN LOVE with British Paints for more than 50 years. Its high quality products – such as British Paints 4 Seasons and Clean & Protect cemented the brand's status as trustworthy and reliable many years ago.

For DIYers, that was just the beginning. In 2021, British Paints launched its 'Good Job Guarantee' effectively giving home renovators 'painting' insurance'. If you make a mistake with your painting, British Paints will replace your paint for free!

To make your painting job easier, last year British Paints launched an Easy Pour pack containing **British** Paints PRFP 4in1

The innovative design was recently recognised as a finalist in the 2023 PIDA (Australasian **Packaging**



Visit www.britishpaints.com.au

products to consumers.





FEELLIKE AGOOSE?

British Paints' Good Job Guarantee means, make a mistake & we'll replace your paint, free.



Scan for painting tips and support

See conditions at BritishPaints.com.au





WINNER PET CARE

NexGard®

66

"I know my pets are safe and healthy."

MALE, 30-39, QLD

"Best option and most affordable."

FEMALE, 30-39, VIC/TAS

"Perfect protection every time."

FEMALE, 18-29, QLD

"Complete protection from fleas, mites and ticks."

FEMALE, 18-29, SA/NT



THE LAUNCH OF NEXGARD

marked a pivotal moment for parasite control in dogs. The first of a new generation of products





in Australia, and the world's first chewable monthly paralysis tick prevention product, NexGard provides pet owners with long-lasting control of fleas, ticks and mites. Since the introduction of this next generation of parasite control products, research has shown cases of potentially fatal tick paralysis in Australian dogs have dramatically decreased, highlighting the significant health benefits they bring.

NexGard SPECTRA® marks the next evolution in parasite control, providing the most complete protection against fleas, ticks, mites, intestinal worms and even heartworm, all in one tasty monthly chew. Parasite control has never been so easy for dog owners, or as tasty for their dogs!

In February this year, the brand continued its NexGard SPECTRA 'Let's Go' media campaign, which focuses on the freedom to enjoy life with your dog, whatever you do or wherever you go.

NexGard SPECTRA is a proud national partner of Guide Dogs Australia and provides all Guide Dogs with NexGard SPECTRA for year-round parasite protection, from their eight-week-old pups to their professional working dogs. • Visit www.nexgard.com.au





WINNER PET INSURANCE

RSPCA Pet Insurance

66

"Innovative policies and rates."

FEMALE, 18-29, VIC/TAS

"Best pet insurance. Affordable premiums."

FEMALE, 60-69, NSW/ACT

"Easy claims, quick refunds."

FEMALE, 18-29, VIC/TAS

"Excellent service."

FEMALE, 30-39, QLD



RECOGNISED AS AUSTRALIA'S MOST TRUSTED PET INSURANCE BRAND for the third year, RSPCA Pet
Insurance aims to provide financial protection for dog
and cat owners, giving them peace of mind knowing
their furry friends can receive the care they deserve,
should they need it. With four levels of cover to choose
from, RSPCA Pet Insurance allows you to claim up to
80% of your eligible vet bills to a maximum of \$20,000
per year^, with no excess to pay and the freedom to use
any registered vet in Australia. Plus, their customers are
happy knowing that a portion of first-year premiums help
support the RSPCA, so they can continue their great work
of helping animals in need.

With a customer-first culture and an aim of establishing lasting relationships, RSPCA Pet Insurance consultants make sure every interaction with a customer is honest,

fair and respectful. Winning multiple awards for quality service and trust, the RSPCA Pet Insurance team is



always truly looking for ways to elevate the customer's experience. • Visit www.rspcapetinsurance.org.au or call 1300 683 091, 8am-8pm Monday to Friday (AEST).

^Pre-existing conditions and certain illnesses are excluded. Terms, conditions, exclusions, benefit limits and sub-limits apply. A \$2,000 annual condition limit applies to General Cover. Eligible vet bills only, claim for reimbursement. Benefit Percentage varies based on the level of cover selected.



Be prepared for the unexpected & enjoy that RSPCA Pet Insurance feeling!

- Four levels of cover to choose from
- 🕏 Claim up to \$20,000 a year
- Get back up to 80% of eligible vet bills²
- No excess to pay
- A portion of first-year premiums help support the RSPCA







SCAN FOR A QUICK QUOTE **1300 683 091** rspcapetinsurance.org.au

PDS and Target Market Determination available at rspcapetinsurance.org.au

¹One month free is applied as a discounted premium over the first year of cover. For full terms and conditions visit rspcapetinsurance.org.au/promotions/one-month-free-terms

²Pre-existing conditions and certain illnesses are excluded. Terms, conditions, exclusions, benefit limits, sub-limits and annual condition limits may apply. Eligible vet bills only, claim for reimbursement. Benefit percentage varies based on the level of cover selected. Insurance issued by The Hollard Insurance Company Pty Ltd and promoted and distributed by Greenstone Financial Services Pty Ltd and by its Authorised Representative RSPCA Australia. Terms, conditions, waiting periods and exclusions apply. Consider the relevant Product Disclosure Statement (PDS) before deciding if the product is right for you.



WINNER SEALANTS & FILLERS

Selleys



"Best products for a range of uses."

MALE, 30-39, SA/NT

"Versatile and good for any job."

FEMALE, 18-29, VIC/TAS

(1)

"Never failed me."

FEMALE, 70+, WA

"High quality. Easy to apply. Long-lasting."

FEMALE, 40-49, SA/NT



'IF IT'S SELLEYS, IT WORKS' is the motto the brand has lived by since its founder opened up shop in Sydney in 1939. For more than 80 years, Selleys has been offering high-quality, innovative products that help ordinary Australians achieve results that deliver pride and a feeling of achievement in their home decorating and renovation projects.

Over the past three years, hardware stores across the country saw an influx of everyday Australians trying their hand at DIY for the first time. The success and satisfaction of completing a job is what every DIYer strives towards, but all too often novices end up feeling overwhelmed with their lack of skills and confidence.

Selleys aims to create even easier ways to tackle DIY tasks and continues to innovate with new DIY-friendly tube formats of its award-winning sealants and fillers. This means that everyone, no matter their skill level, can see their project go from task to triumph.

Visit www.selleys.com.au





IN SECONDS

NOVICE

with Selleys No More Gaps® easy-to-use tube.





AUSTRALIA'S MOST

*Readers Digest, voted by Australians



HIGHLY COMMENDED SEALANTS & FILLERS

Poly



"Works well to fill any gaps."

MALE, 70+, NSW/ACT

"Easy-to-use products for around the house."

MALE, 50-59. NSW/ACT

"As a painter and decorator I've used most fillers but I always go back to Polyfilla."

MALE, 70+, VIC/TAS



CELEBRATED for preparing decorative surfaces, Poly is a trusted brand of choice amongst everyday Australians and trade professionals alike.

The premium quality, tailored range of sealants and fillers are ready to use and make it easy to fill fine surface imperfections, offering a DIY solution for all painting preparation tasks.

With a continued focus on innovation that makes paint preparation simple and easy, you can rely on Poly to help you achieve a great finish every time.

Prep with one of Poly's range of premium products for a quality finish you will be proud of. Unsure of how to prep a wall for painting? Or how to fill a large crack or hole? Don't panic, Poly provides handy guides and videos to these questions and more on its website.

Visit www.polv.com.au



START YOUR PAINT PREP WITH





WINNER SKIN CARE (ANTI-AGEING)

Nivea



"Premium quality. Value for money."

FEMALE, 40-49, NSW/ACT

"Great variety of all different products."

FEMALE, 40-49, QLD

"Affordable. Achieves the desired effect."

FEMALE, 50-59, QLD

"Consistent quality."

MALE, 70+, WA





PRODUCT QUALITY IS PARAMOUNT at NIVEA, which has been helping us to care for our skin for more than 100 years.

At its skin research centre in Hamburg, Germany – recognised as one of the world's most advanced skin care institutes – its 850-plus scientists continuously develops innovative skin care products while endeavouring to establish a new generation of active ingredients that will take skin research into the next dimension. Due to its

commitment to animal-free testing and the number of safety and effectiveness tests it performs, NIVEA products can take over five years before they reach the market.

In March this year, NIVEA expanded its 'Cellular Filler Expert' range and launched its first Hyaluronic Acid serum. Applied using a pipette, this unique serum deeply moisturises and provides lasting hydration while plumping the skin to leave it looking and feeling fresh, supple and smooth.

NIVEA's level of care extends beyond skin, with its ongoing commitment to Foodbank helping to provide food and grocery relief to thousands of Australians.

Visit www.nivea.com.au





WINNER STAIN REMOVERS

Vanish



"Proven to get even the toughest stains out."

FEMALE, 40-49, VIC/TAS

"Best quality, gentle on fabric."

FEMALE, 40-49, QLD

"Effective, reliable, my go-to brand."

FEMALE, 18-29, QLD

"Highly recommended."

MALE, 70+, QLD



STARTING OUT AS A NAPPY STAIN **REMOVER** for young mothers, Vanish NapiSan has evolved over the years to become a multipurpose stain remover that stands by its excellent results. Vanish NapiSan Gold Oxi-Advance contains a multi-benefit formula that removes stains even in a cold wash, brightens colours. removes odours and bacteria during soaking.



To ensure its consumers' laundry routine is quick and effective, Vanish will be further enhancing its formula for Vanish Gold Multi Power Pink.

Last year Vanish launched a campaign to help tackle textile waste and drive more sustainable clothing behaviours. The campaign #MakeTextileWasteVanish encourages people to extend the life of their clothes and avoid discarding them with the help of Vanish. Over the next year, with the help of its partnership with Upparel, Vanish wants to divert 1 million items of clothing from landfill.

Vanish's Gold Multi-benefit formula provides consumers with the means to help prolong the life of their clothes. • Visit www.vanishstains.com.au



EVEN IN COLD WASH AND SHORT CYCLE



WINNER SUGAR SUBSTITUTES

Equal



"Has the best taste in my experience."

FEMALE, 40-49, SA/NT

"Consistent quality."

MALE, 40-49, VIC/TAS

"Best tasting and healthiest."

MALE, 40-49, NSW/ACT

9

"Helps with my sugar intake."

FEMALE,50-59, NSW/ACT



FOR MORE THAN 40 YEARS

Equal has been a saviour for people wanting to quit sugar – or cut back on their sugar intake – without having to give up the sweetness in life.

"We don't take for granted the love and the trust consumers have given to Equal for all these years,"



says Natasha Mullick, Senior Marketing Manager. "Our topmost priority is providing the same iconic taste that our consumers have loved for so many years. We believe that is why Equal has continued to win the Most Trusted Brand consistently for 11 years in a row and is clearly the number 1 sugar replacement in the country."

The rising cost of living has made consumers more conscious than ever about how they spend their money. Equal has come to the party with a promise of providing great taste at best value, and recently launched a Super Value 300 Sticks pack in Coles so that consumers can enjoy more of Equal's classic sweet taste with better savings.

 Visit www.equalchoice.com.au or find Equal on Facebook www.facebook.com/EqualAustralia





The No. 1 Sweetener In Australia & New Zealand



DITCH SUGAR. SWITCH TO EQUAL



WINNER SUNSCREEN

Cancer Council



"Well informed about skin cancer and sun damage."

FEMALE, 70+, WA

"Lasts longer than most brands and is affordable."

MALE, 40-49, VIC/TAS

"My skin isn't irritated by their range."

FEMALE, 40-49, SA/NT



US to protect ourselves from the harsh Australian sun by following its well-known



'slip, slop, slap, seek and slide' measures. Offering formulas to suit a range of lifestyles, Cancer Council sunscreen is the number one selling sunscreen in Australia, and provides very high, broad-spectrum protection from harmful UV rays.

Cancer Council sunscreens are proudly Australian made, TGA (Therapeutic Goods Administration) listed and have been voted Most Trusted Sunscreen for seven consecutive years.

The Cancer Council's key message this year is to Protect Your People. You should protect your loved ones from harmful UV rays when UV levels reach three and above – which is year-round in most states – regardless if it is cloudy. To access live UV information for your location, download the SunSmart app. And remember, every time you purchase a Cancer Council product, you're helping support the charity with its lifesaving cancer research and services.

cancercouncilshop.org.au

Always read the label. Follow the directions for use. Sunscreen is only one component of sun protection. Reapply every two hours and avoid prolonged sun exposure. 1. Slip on protective clothing, slop on SPF30 or higher sunscreen, slap on a hat, seek shade and slide on sunglasses.







Every purchase goes towards cancer research and services

Always read the label and follow the directions for use. Reapply every two hours and avoid prolonged sun exposure. Sunscreens are only one part of sun protection.









HIGHLY COMMENDED SUNSCREEN

Banana Boat



"Available everywhere and pack sizes to suit everyone's needs."

FEMALE, 30-39, WA

"Very effective and feels good on the skin."

FEMALE, 40-49, QLD

3

"Great to use on my kids. Easy to apply. Doesn't run into eyes and sting."

FEMALE, 30-39, NSW/ACT



A HOUSEHOLD NAME IN SUN PROTECTION for more than four decades, Banana Boat allows Aussie families to have fun in the sun while staying protected from its

harsh UV rays.

Uniquely formulated for the Australian climate, Banana Boat's SPF50+ formulas provide the highest level of sun protection so we can say



'yes' to time spent outdoors all year round. Banana Boat believes fun in the sun is vital to family life, that's why it delivers long-lasting protection that stands up to any outdoor activity.

All Banana Boat products are made in Australia and are free from oxybenzone and octinoxate – meaning they are reef friendly. They are also comfortable to wear, easy to use and come at a great price.

This year Banana Boat is launching two new products to give delicate skin the very best protection from the sun: a face sunscreen and a baby sunscreen.

Banana Boat is also committed to kids' sun safety education and has developed the 'Sun Safe School Program' which introduces key sun safe behaviours to primary school children while encouraging an active outdoor lifestyle. • Visit www.bananaboat.com.au







WINNER SUPERANNUATION

AustralianSuper



"I completely trust AustralianSuper to look after me."

FEMALE, 30-39, WA

"Very large company with low fees and consistently good investment returns."

MALE, 60-69, QLD

"Good communication channels."

FEMALE, 50-59, VIC/TAS

AustralianSuper

MANY WORKING
AUSTRALIANS take their superannuation rights for granted, but until the social revolution in the 1980s, superannuation was, for many, a privilege rather than a right. Back then, union leaders and employers



established a number of industry super funds – amongst these were the predecessors of Australian Super.

Today, AustralianSuper is the 20th largest pension fund globally¹. It uses its size to access better investment opportunities around the world and keep costs low. It is one of the top performing funds in Australia² over the long term. "As a profit-for-member fund, our brand reflects our unwavering focus on doing what's best for members," says Rose Kerlin, Chief Member Officer. "This has led to us becoming the largest fund in Australia, investing \$274 billion (as of 31 December 2022) of over 3 million members' retirement savings. AustralianSuper is driven by its purpose to help members achieve their financial position in retirement. Over 1200 members join AustralianSuper every day, which is testament to the trust Australians place in us and our products."

Visit www.australiansuper.com

1. Thinking Ahead Institute, Willis Towers Watson, Global top 300 pension funds, September 2022. 2. AustralianSuper Balanced investment option compared to the SuperRatings Fund Crediting Rate Survey - SR50 Balanced (60–76) Index to 31 December 2022. Investment returns are not guaranteed. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future returns. Before making a decision about AustralianSuper, you should think about your financial requirements and refer to the relevant Product Disclosure Statement available at australiansuper.com/pds or by calling 1300 300 273. A Target Market Determination (TMD) is a document that outlines the target market a product has been designed for. Find the TMDs at australiansuper.com/tmd. Sponsored by AustralianSuper Pty Ltd, ABN 94 006 457 987, AFSL 233788, Trustee of AustralianSuper ABN 65 714 394 898



Eleven years as your 'most trusted' super fund is why over 3 million Australians are with AustralianSuper.^{1,2} When it comes to making the most of yours, choose the fund with a history of strong, long-term performance.³



1. Readers Digest Most Trusted Brand – Superannuation 2013-2023. Awards are only one factor to consider when choosing a super fund. 2. As at 31/12/22. 3. AustralianSuper Balanced investment option compared to the SuperRatings Fund Crediting Rate Survey - SR50 Balanced (60-76) Index to 31 December 2022. Investment returns are not guaranteed. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future returns. This may include general financial advice which doesn't take into account your personal objectives, financial situation or needs. Before making a decision consider if the information is right for you and read the relevant Product Disclosure Statement, available at australiansuper.com/pds or by calling 1300 300 273. A Target Market Determination (TMD) is a document that outlines the target market a product has been designed for. Find the TMDs at australiansuper.com/TMD. AustralianSuper Pty Ltd ABN 94 006 457 987, AFSL 233788, Trustee of AustralianSuper ABN 65 714 394 898.



WINNER TEA

Twinings



"High quality and consistent in taste."

FEMALE, 30-39, SA/NT

"Good for a refreshing break."

MALE, 60-69, VIC/TAS

"Love all the flavours."

FEMALE, 70+, WA

"Nice hot or iced, day or night."

FEMALE, 70+, WA

TWININGS*

EXPERTLY CRAFTING TEA

since 1706, Twinings has a rich history as tea pioneers. Famous for lobbying the British government in the 18th century to reduce the tax on tea, Thomas Twining turned his passion for tea into that nation's favourite hot beverage. Fast forward 300 years, and that



passion for tea still pulses through the company. "For Twinings, tea is more than just a drink," says Danielle lero, Head of Communications. "It is part of our daily lives and the lives of generations of tea lovers."

Twinings continuously works towards offering an ever-expanding range of exciting new blends to tea lovers. Twinings masterblenders and herbalists carefully craft high quality ingredients to make every cup an enjoyable experience. In 2021 Twinings introduced its Benefits tea range to help consumers enrich their daily wellbeing. Recent additions to the range include teas that are fortified with vitamin C to support your immune system, probiotics to support healthy digestion, vitamin B6 for sustained energy, and valerian root to promote relaxation at night.

As a tea brand, Twinings is committed to improving the wellbeing of tea-growing communities through its Sourced With Care programme. To date Sourced With Care has positively impacted the lives of over 540,000 people in tea and herb-growing communities.

Visit www.twinings.com.au





HIGHLY COMMENDED TEA

Lipton



"Best tasting both hot and cold."

MALE, 18-29, VIC/TAS

"Love their range of good quality products."

FEMALE, 30-39, QLD

"Quality teas for various tastes."

FEMALE, 60-69, WA

"Great variety and tastes good."

FEMALE, 40-49, QLD



LOVED BY AUSSIES
SINCE 1912, Lipton has
always made a great
cup of tea. Founded
by Sir Thomas Lipton
in Glasgow, Scotland,
the brand has been
providing tea-drinkers
of the world with a
great quality cuppa
since the 1870s. At that
time, he packed the



best quality tea into small yellow packages (the origin of the Lipton yellow box), which allowed everyday consumers to afford and enjoy their daily cuppa.

As the No. 1 tea brand in the world*, Lipton wants to contribute to a better world for people and nature. "That is why we source our Lipton Quality Black Tea responsibly by buying from Rainforest Alliance Certified farms," says Sarah Shen, Marketing Manager, ANZ Lipton Teas and Infusions.

Lipton has always been about offering the best quality cup of tea to make you feel good – from the Lipton Jiggler of yesteryear to today's tea bag and iced tea sachet varieties. "Our quality tea is a harmonious blend from our tea gardens around the world, which receive sunshine all year long." Lipton combines the best of nature to give that signature, rich natural taste and aroma in every single cup. There's nothing quite like a Lipton to start the day. • Visit www.lipton.com/au/

^{*} Source: Euromonitor International Ltd, based on Hot Tea and RTD Tea Retail Value Shares combined, RSP, 2021 data.





WINNER TYRES

Bridgestone

66

"They perform perfectly with phenomenal mileage."

MALE, 70+, WA

"Helpful staff. Tyres last much longer than other brands."

FEMALE, 50-59, VIC/TAS

"Keep our car safe in all weather conditions."

FEMALE, 50-59, WA



FOR THE TENTH YEAR RUNNING, Bridgestone has been named Australia's most trusted tyre brand, representing a decade of delivering quality, safety and performance. Bridgestone remains the sole winner of the coveted title since the introduction of the Tyres category. "We're truly honoured to be recognised as Australia's Most Trusted Tyre Brand for an entire decade," said Bridgestone's Managing Director of the Australian and New Zealand Business, Heath Barclay.

"We're proud of our achievements and value the trust that we've built with Australians, and we're excited for our future as we continue to innovate and provide even more reasons for motorists to put their trust in Bridgestone," he added.

Bridgestone continues to invest in its future as a sustainable solutions company, not only through its own product development, but through its newly established 'Bridgestone E8 Commitment', focusing on eight values solidifying our commitment to a more sustainable world. An example of the Bridgestone E8

Commitment in action is Bridgestone's low rolling resistance tyre products, reducing fuel use and CO₂ emissions whilst in use, as well as the company's unwavering commitment to the RYDA road safety education programme, supporting safer roads through youth education.

www.bridgestone.com.au







Bridgestone celebrates 10 years as Australia's most trusted tyre brand.

You're in safe hands with Bridgestone.





Swisse

HIGHLY COMMENDED VITAMINS & SUPPLEMENTS



"Good formulas that work better."

MALE, VIC/TAS

"High quality brand. Recommended by healthcare professionals."

FEMALE, NSW/ACT

"A premium but authentic brand."

FEMALE, VIC/TAS



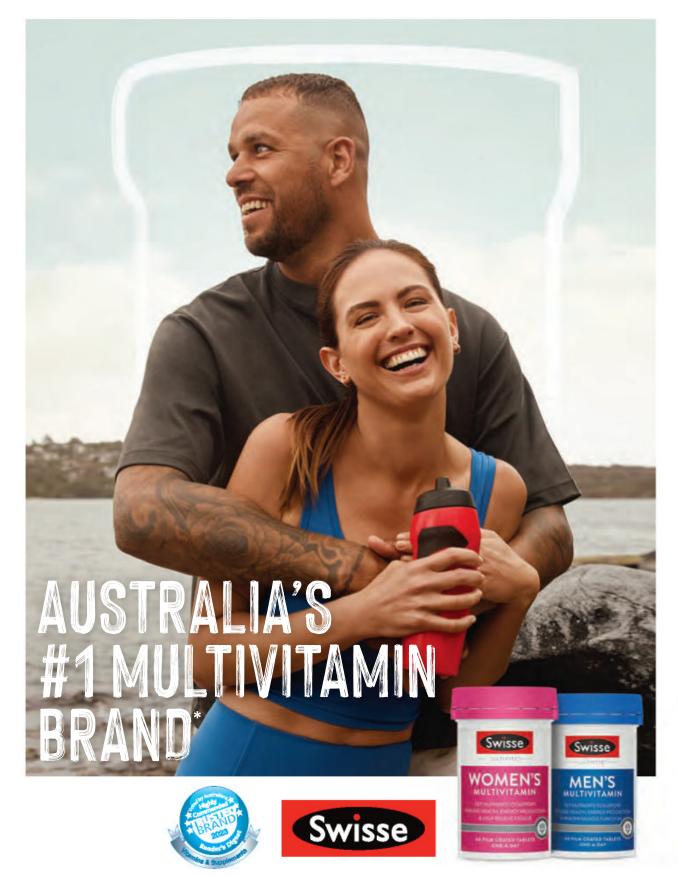


health. More recently, Swisse has taken its wellness expertise and extended it to offer skincare and sports nutrition.

"It's hard to believe that the Swisse story started over 50 years ago in a little bakery in Collingwood, Victoria," says Kerrie Wade, Marketing Director ANZ. "Our founder, Kevin Ring, set off on a journey to explore the world in search of nutrient-rich ingredients from nature that inspired the first Swisse products."

From those humble beginnings, Swisse has evolved into a global business, bringing premium wellness solutions to millions of people in 16 markets. Along the way, Swisse has maintained its position at the forefront of the wellness industry and continued to develop innovative concepts, resulting in the more than 170 products that make up the Swisse range.

Proudly part of the H&H Group – a global health, nutrition and personal care company – Swisse has always stayed true to its mission to help people become healthier and happier. "This has never changed throughout our evolution as a business, and we continue to feel inspired daily to support and promote healthier communities." • swisse.com.au



Always read the label and follow the directions for use. *Swisse calculation based in part on data reported by NielsenIQ and IQVIA through the IQVIA™ & NielsenIQ© RMS Sell Out Service for the Pharmacy & Grocery Database, Vitamins and Supplements Multivitamin segment for the 52 week period ending 2022-12-31 for the Australia Grocery and Pharmacy, Domestic market according to the client defined product hierarchy.



WINNER VEGETARIAN/VEGAN FOOD

Vegie DelightsTM



"Delicious. always exceed expectations."

MALE, 40-49, WA

"Many options. **Tasty and** nutritious."

MALE, 30-39, OLD

"Good tasting quality products."

FEMALE, 18-29, VIC/TAS

"Suit my taste and needs."

FEMALE, 50-59. NSW/ACT



AT THE HEART OF THE **VEGIE DELIGHTS™** brand is a simple premise: easy plant-based eating every day. Vegie Delights is proudly Australian owned. Sanitarium



Health Food Company has been making plant-based meals in Australia since 1900, with products like Nutolene and Nutmeat, which are still available today.

Vegie Delights is the only plant-based brand you will find in the fridge, freezer and canned meals section of the supermarket, and it has over 20 product lines. Vegie Delights are a compromise-free way to include plant-based alternatives into easy weekday meals. The range formats are easy to prepare and provide a source of protein and iron.

With consumers looking to actively reduce their animal meat intake, more consumers are choosing to 'Make Tonight a Vegie Delight™' so they can continue to serve their mealtime favourites at their table.

"We believe that enjoying more plant-based meals can have a positive impact on overall wellbeing, and we're dedicated to genuinely making a positive, meaningful difference to the wellbeing of the communities we collaborate with and serve," says Jessica Manihera, Head of Marketing ANZ.

Sanitarium Health Food Company employs more than 100 staff at its purpose-built meals manufacturing facility on the NSW Central Coast.

Visit www.vegiedelights.com.au







Trust By The Numbers



Along with affordability and quality, consumers often consider a company's environmental footprint before purchasing products.

SUSTAINABLE CHOICES INCLUDE:

BUYING MORE SEASONAL PRODUCE

54%

BUYING LOCALLY PRODUCED GOODS

48%

REDUCING FOOD WASTE

39%

Consumers
believe that
brands have as
much responsibility
as governments
to create positive
environmental
change.

43% of global consumers want to buy more from organisations that benefit society.
64% are prepared to behave differently if it benefits society.

SOURCES: EY FUTURE CONSUMER INDEX; DELOITTE'S SUSTAINABLE CONSUMER 2022 REPORT; THE ECONOMIST INTELLIGENCE UNIT, SURVEY, 2021

WINI

A BOSCH UNLIMITED 7! Valued at \$649.00



BOSCH
Invented for life

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