

September 18, 2005

life

Sunday

the Sunday Age Magazine

**The real Russell:
A mate's view
of a volatile man**

Your place or mine?
Couples who live apart

How to find peace and
happiness in 20 minutes

Karen Martini's
spring chicken

NOW & THEN

Now The value of
sales of Australian

organic
products

domestically and overseas is

\$300 million

Then In 1990,
it was

\$28 million

HOW TO...

rid of lingering guests

Such a part of dinner parties as conversational pas are the attendees who simply don't when to call it a night. Oblivious to the nger-muffled yawns of their hosts, they hang and like barnacles. This behaviour presents mma: make your feelings known and tially sour the evening or accept your lot rust that they will depart in their own time. supremo Mark Patrick – whose agency nises hundreds of functions a year – believes are more options available. "If you know eople reasonably well, there's no harm in

delivering a light-hearted, 'C'mon, you lot, time to go home' or take on the role of a bartender calling last drinks," he says.

If, however, you run the risk of offending with honesty, there is an alternative strategy to employ. "To help them on their way," he says, "alter the environment – something as simple as clearing the tables, saying that you have run out of alcohol, turning up the lights or switching off the music. All of these actions convey a message. Add a few of them together and you get your point across without having to verbalise it." *David Smiedt*



The couple
Rafal and Magda
Kita, married for
eight years.

For better, for worse

Research scientist Magda Kita, 30, a Polish-born Australian, was holidaying in Warsaw in 1995 when she met policeman Rafal Kita, now 31. Two months of fun led to marriage – which meant Rafal relocated to Melbourne and had to learn English from scratch. He also retrained as a systems engineer.

Magda says "A mutual friend set us up when I was in Warsaw. Rafal rang me and took me out. I was primarily attracted to him because he was a cop. But he was also friendly and open. He was the first guy I ever knew who was really nice – you know, opening the door and things – but not irritating. We went out for two months, drinking Scotch and having fun, and he ended up in debt for a year as he always paid! He was 21 and I was 20. After the holiday was over, I came back to Australia to finish my science degree and we started writing letters once a month. We aren't a romantic type of couple but when I read those letters now, it's kind of surreal. I missed him so much. After a year I decided, 'This is ridiculous. We can't have a long-distance relationship for two years.' So I flew back to Poland to see him.

We never discussed getting married; it just kind of happened. We got married in August 1997, in Poland, and moved to Melbourne a few months later. I was amazed because it wasn't problematic for Rafal to move here – it all happened naturally. Rafal was really thrown into the deep end."

Rafal says "When I met Magda, I didn't know what Australian girls were like but she was kind of exotic. I love Magda – she was the first girl I met who wasn't girly. When Magda came back to Poland, I thought, 'Cool, she's back' but she went to Paris before she saw me!

I looked into being a policeman here but the job has too much stress already without having the language problem. Also, you have to start from the bottom and, in Poland, I had been a sergeant. I got a job in a factory making pillows. A job is a job, for me. After a couple of months, I had to watch *The Bold And The Beautiful*, with Magda's mother translating – it's a stupid show but the words are very simple and slow so I could do it.

One day I was at a tram stop and two boys asked me, 'How long have you been here?' I said, 'Five months.' They started laughing. They meant how long had I been waiting for the tram.

I started from the beginning here but I never considered going home. I didn't sacrifice anything. I just changed my life and went to live somewhere else. It's been a big adventure." *Louisa Deasey*