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GUY WILLIAMS: FUNNY AF

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GUY WILLIAMS

Comedian Guy Williams got his funny training in early, with a mum who kept Jerry Seinfeld cassette tapes on repeat. He began performing comedy in Wellington in 2007, then quickly rose through the ranks, winning the Billy T Award in 2012. TV Guide named him New Zealand's sexiest male TV personality in 2014, he went all the way to number two in the charts in 2015 and recorded his first stand-up special in 2017. He hosted a TV show with a second season coming in 2021 and fronts the news satire show New Zealand Today. That's... a lot. So it's probably pretty lucky that Guy doesn't drink — and hasn't ever — just so he has the stamina to get everything done.



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up scene, anyone who lived through the 90s will recall our cringe-worthy early voyage into TV and film comedy. Guy sees that as a matter of learning and resources.

“You don't realize that Jon Stewart just doesn't sit down at a desk to opine on the news – he's got 30 people writing for him.”

Guy says that while New Zealand comedy has improved, it's people's perceptions of it that are changing, too. *Seven Days*, he reckons, was a massive breakthrough, along with comedians doing epic things overseas.

“There's *Tape Face*, Rose Matafeo doing stuff with HBO and Ursula Carlson is the biggest ticket seller in Melbourne. She's a superstar in Australia.”

Those international successes have “proved it, so NZ would wake up” to our funny-guy chops.

Big head, loud voice

The soundtrack to Guy's earliest years was

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voice, a huge head, kind of awkward. I was like, ‘Hey, this guy’s not much different to me.’ Hewasn't a genius at school or anything like that. He wasn’t an amazing basketball player.”

Listening to his tapes, alongside comedy legend Mitch Hedberg, led Guy to his first love – stand-up.

“Stand-up was terrifying and a lot of fun too. It’s you and your idea. But after you do stand-up for a while, you realise you need people to come to your shows. So you have to become a bit of a New Zealand Shit-lebrity, which is whyI started to try and get on TV.”

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MAYBE ONE
DAY, WHEN I'M
75 AND I'M

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DROPPING
LSD AND
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TO MITCH
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Guy's hard-hitting Feilding exposé

And as you're probably aware, Guy succeeded in getting on the telly. He's just finished filming a new season of *New Zealand Today*, where he took a deep dive into the 'bullshit' behind Feilding's 17-time win of NZ's Most Beautiful Town trophy.

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but I like to do that on a trivial level, too. Like the Taupo Hole-in-One scam or two Countdowns next to each other in Napier – that’s ridiculous. I like venting my own personal grievances.”

His interviews with Feilding locals were positive experiences but he also found it a bit sobering, if you’ll excuse the pun.

“These pensioners are there when the bar opens. Then they drive home on mobility scooters so they don't get DUIs, which is kind of hilarious genius. But there's something really sad there, especially when you look at how small towns are just fucked because of it.”

No Dutch courage required

Guy once told a reporter that he doesn’t drink because he’s “got too much irrational self-confidence as it is.” But Guy’s booze-free life goes a bit deeper than that, with a family history of

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asshole to my mum. He was a serious drinker and that kind of pushed my mum to sobriety. She became quite anti-alcohol, which she passed on to me.”

While university could have been a time for the young Guy to explore alcohol, basketball practice would mean he’d turn up to parties late.

“By that stage, there’d be the carnage – the girls who are crying because their boyfriend had abandoned them, another guy who’d got in a fight and was bleeding from his head. And all of that was alcohol-related. So it’s like, why would I drink after seeing that?”

“I sound like a Christian fundamentalist here, but really all you need, guys, is a bit of water and you’ll be high on life.”

Alcohol and comedy go hand in hand

Moving to Auckland and seeing so many comedians struggle with

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themselves because of alcohol. Drinking culture's just ingrained."

The way the industry is structured doesn't help – comedy clubs often subsidise ticket prices by requiring a two-drink minimum, a challenge for a non-drinker.

"I'll order weird things like iced chocolate."

Laughing in the face of social pressure

Living life sober AF seems like a pretty positive decision to Guy, but being that outlier in society hasn't always been easy. He'd nurse a single beer to avoid constant questions at parties.

"Or, as a gag, I'd walk around with a can of baked beans or something in my hand."

Not drinking is a non-issue with Guy's usual group of friends, but when he steps out of his bubble, he does still get some flack.

"They're like, 'You judging me or something?' And,

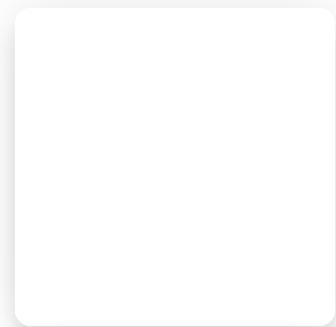
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worried about their own drinking, but don't know what to do about it.”

People tell Guy he's missing out by not drinking, so he has a plan.

“Maybe one day, when I'm 75 and I'm completely fucked, I'll start dropping LSD and really get into heroin as a tribute to Mitch Hedberg.”

We talked with Guy on the Drunk AF Podcast here — have a listen if you'd like to get to know him more.



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