

Larry Emdur

'I bluffed my way to the top!'



He's been entertaining us on our lounges for decades and now **LARRY EMDUR**, 51, is at the top of his TV game. *The Morning Show* co-host tells *Paul Ewart* about his roller-coaster ride to success, staying in shape and keeping the romance alive after 20 years of marriage

Entering Larry Emdur's cliff-top house through the opulent foyer and passing the sweeping staircase, the first thing that strikes you is the sea. It's everywhere. Floor-to-ceiling windows offer uninterrupted Pacific Ocean views.

"This is our dream house," Larry says. "It's taken a long time to get here, but the long slog has been worth it."

The two-storey Sydney abode features an infinity pool, lavish master bedroom with marble ensuite fitted with a steam room and spa, a gym (with retractable roof) and a separate self-contained guest apartment. It could easily be home to a Hollywood star but its lavish style belies its humble owner.

Down to earth and the epitome of the Aussie larrikin, "Laz" snapped up the mansion for \$6.8 million back in 2011 after decades in the property market. For this Bondi-born surfer, the ocean's an essential part of his daily life.

"You can't beat this view!" he says, sipping a coffee on the terrace. "Whether I'm out here doing laps in the pool or watching the whales swim past, I never get bored. We feel very lucky to live here."

As warm, self-deprecating and funny offscreen as on, Larry jokes with and entertains the *Yours* crew. It's this unpolished, fun-loving persona that's the secret to his success. But the 51-year-old admits his journey from high school dropout to TV fave wasn't premeditated.

"I'd never have thought I'd be where I am now," he says, earnestly. "I had

no expectations of a TV career at all. When I got kicked out of school at 15, I realised I was a bit of a dodo – I couldn't read, write or add up. I just couldn't pay attention at school.

"I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I knew I was qualified at nothing!"

He started out as a copyboy at *The Sun* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* newspapers, then made the leap into television, where – at 17 – Larry became the youngest national newsreader in the country, doing the

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graveyard shift for Channel Seven. Years later, he showed his versatility by switching to game shows, hosting the likes of *Cash Bonanza*, *Wheel of Fortune* and *The Price is Right* – a show that made him a household name.



BIG WINNER
Game-show king Larry enjoys the fruits of his labour

"I fell into the media and I feel like I've bluffed it for the last 33 years," he admits. "I've been lucky enough to go from one thing to the next – in any other job I would've been sacked 100 times over!"

"Even now on *The Morning Show* where I have to read autocue and scripts... it's far from my strong suit. *The Price is Right* was just good fun and ad-libbing, but now the autocue is a real challenge for me. At school I couldn't read a book properly and had a low level of concentration – which my co-host Kylie [Gillies] will tell you is true to this day – so I've been lucky I've landed in a job where that's OK."

Almost a decade on from its debut on the Seven Network, *The Morning Show* has gone from strength to strength in a competitive market. But when Larry's quizzed on whether he thought this would be the enduring role of his career, he's adamant he never saw himself as a morning television mainstay.

"No way in the world!" he exclaims. "We came on for a three-month trial when both Channel Nine and Ten had popular existing morning shows – but I'm very proud to say that we won the ratings from day one."

One of the bonuses of his co-hosting duties is the countless famous faces he's



ROCK OF AGES
Wife Sylvie's the gorgeous glue that holds Larry and the clan together



GREAT MATES
Jye and Larry enjoy their blokey bond of surfing and sparring

interviewed over the years. From that A to Z of Hollywood's finest, there are two definite standouts.

"They've both passed away, unfortunately, but my two all-time favourite interviews have to be Joan Rivers and Robin Williams. Both for the same reasons. They were both over the top, outrageous and incredibly funny – they embraced the interview and really engaged," he says.

A natural comedian himself, Larry is the foil to his more serious co-host Kylie. "We have a very TV relationship," he says, laughing. "We get together at about 8.55am and then at 11.29am, I send her back to her real husband!

"You can't fake a relationship over that period of time and I think – just like a normal relationship or a marriage – it's very warts-and-all, too. We'll have a bad day or argue about something... to sit there, be all vanilla and agree with one another, it's not something we do."



While Kylie is Larry's TV wife, offscreen he only has eyes for his spouse of 22 years, Sylvie. They met when Larry spotted the Polish-born beauty working as an air hostess on a flight from Sydney to Melbourne.

"She's incredible," Larry swoons. "She's the perfect wife and the perfect mother. In this business, there are so many ups and downs, a lot of time away and a lot of stress with ratings battles, shows being axed. Sylvie's so supportive and encouraging in everything I do, but at the same time, she'll let me know if she doesn't like something.

"She's the strong one in the relationship, she's the one who keeps us all on track – I can't imagine doing anything I've done in the last 20 years without her."

Larry's life on the box

Larry's ruled the roost on telly for more than 30 years, bantering with Kylie Gillies on *The Morning Show*, reading the news and hosting *The Price is Right*...



It's been a romance from the start: Larry's proposal involved a fleet of Harley-Davidsons, each with a flag attached, spelling out: "Sylvie, will you marry me?" They renewed their vows six years ago on the pristine shores of Bora Bora, and in 2014 celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary.

"Yeah, we keep the romance alive," Larry says. "I'm home around lunchtime, so we'll have lunch together, we'll go to the movies and with both of the kids being older, we have a lot of time together, which is great. It probably says a lot about the strength of our relationship, as I know a lot of couples crumble when they spend more than an hour or so a day together!"

And Larry's a doting dad to son Jye, 22, and daughter Tia, 17.

"My priorities totally changed," he explains. "They're my world... the most important thing in my life, way above anything else. When I first held them I thought, *This is why I'm here now, this is my main job. There will never be a more important role than to be a father to these little munchkins.* It's also the most challenging thing I've ever done – and something you desperately want to get right.

"Jye's a great mate. That's always been our relationship.

"But I'll also spend as much time with Tia, whether we pop out for an ice-cream or hang out on the beach.

"Teenage girls are a bit different, though, in that they don't always want to hang out with their dad.

Once I got on Instagram I thought I was being cool, but I don't think she thought the same!"

Jye – who is carving out his own career as a model and DJ – is never far from Larry's side. They surf together, spar at the gym and even have the same life motto – "If not now, when?" – inked on their bodies.

It's this goal-tackling motto that spurred on Larry's body transformation last year, which saw him shed 13kg.

"I had my 50th in sight and my 20th wedding anniversary. I was feeling old and unfit and woke up one day and just thought, *I don't like this.*

"The Channel Seven wardrobe department people had to go out and buy bigger clothes for me. I didn't want to be like that, so I decided to get fit and I worked hard at it."

However, the subsequent challenge of maintaining his newly lean frame is a different matter entirely.

'Everything's come together. I feel secure and comfortable'

"It's up and down," he says. "I can drop a little bit here and put on a little bit there. I'm just a normal guy. I've also found that as you get older, it's just tricky to keep that body shape – which anyone over the age of 40 will attest to! But I hope I can get it back on track and I know I can certainly be fit throughout my fifties."

While getting older has meant the risk of an extra kilo or two for Larry, age has brought something else well worth the extra weight – security. A security that comes from knowing that his family are happy and healthy.

"Everything has come together. My family are healthy, busy and focused on what they're doing," he says. "For me, work is good and I feel that we have real stability in our lives. I feel secure and comfortable, which is a great thing." ●

PICTURES: NICK SCOTT; COURTESY OF INSTAGRAM HAIR & MAKE-UP: RENAE MICHEL STYLING; GEORGIA ASHDOWN

CLOWN PRINCE
The flip side to the showbiz glamour is a happy, healthy and secure family life

