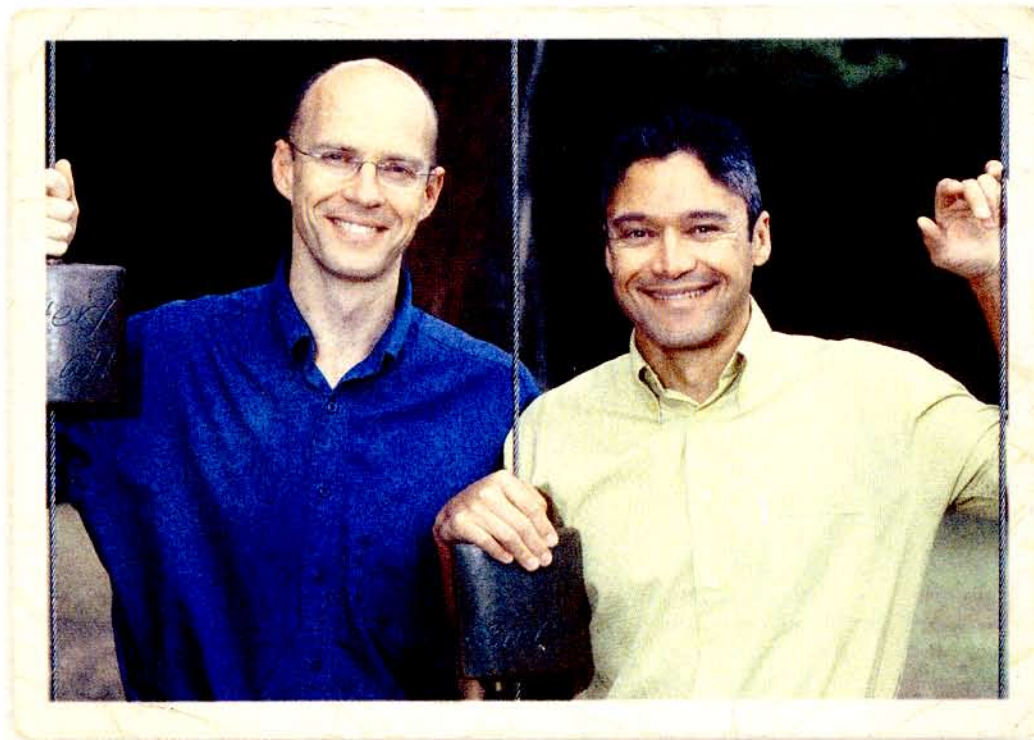


MARCH 1, 2003 Anton Enus (at right), 41, is the newsreader for *SBS World News Tonight*. His partner, Roger Henning, 40, is a patent attorney. Both South Africans, they emigrated to Australia in 1999. They live in Sydney.



Update:

"It was meant to be a summer fling and here we are, 17 years later and still going strong," says Anton. "We still haven't had a fight." When *Good Weekend* caught up with them, the pair had just returned from Germany, where Anton worked on the SBS broadcast of the World Cup, and then a trip home to see parents – Anton to Namibia and Roger to South Africa. "In the future we would like to do more travel together, but at the moment we both have ageing parents, so holidays overseas mean visiting home."

Anton: We met in 1988 in Johannesburg, through a gay running club called Frontrunners. I thought he had a great pair of legs. We ended up at the same New Year's Eve party and at three o'clock in the morning he invited me to look at the apartment he'd just bought. We've been together ever since.

We come from very different backgrounds. He's from a middle-class, white, comfortable, private-school-educated Johannesburg family. I'm from the wrong side of the tracks, a poor background. Nobody finished high school. My parents are what South Africans call "coloured". My father is half Indian and my mother from local stock.

We were subject to all the race laws. I had to get special permission to get exempted from the whites-only rule at the only university that had a journalism school. It was humiliating.

By the time Roger and I got together, racial mixing wasn't such an issue. We didn't have to skulk around in alleyways or anything. And in our circle we felt a lot of support: there were other mixed-race couples. It wasn't a big deal.

I worked as a journalist under apartheid. We saw democracy come to South Africa, there were racial reforms. But there was a dark side to

the democracy, an explosion of crime that scared us. We had friends who were raped, or shot to death in their homes while they were sleeping. We thought: "We've got to find something else."

It was hard to leave South Africa. We loved it. I'd worked through the ranks and got the job presenting the evening news for the national broadcaster. And Roger is very close to his family. When we said goodbye at the airport there was a lot of emotion. Tears on both sides.

We have a simple lifestyle; you'll never find us on the social pages. We read and talk about books. Intellectually I think Roger is much brighter than me. He's an engineer by profession, so he knows how things work and why. And he's had a lifelong interest in serious music. He introduced me to opera, and over the years I've become quite a fan. He's a modest person. And he's very even-tempered; we've never had a fight.

Fourteen years is a long time to be together, but I feel like we're getting more compatible as we get older. And we're a lot more comfortable with ourselves. It took me about four years before I could say, "I love you." But if we weren't partners, we'd be best friends. I don't think there's been a single day when I've not looked forward to seeing him.

Roger: I joined the running club Anton was a member of. He was a parliamentary reporter, so he divided his time between Cape Town and Johannesburg. I'd been with the club for a couple of months when he came back from Cape Town. Everyone was very pleased to see him. They made quite a fuss about him. The funny thing is he's not a demonstrative person. Even so, you could see people were attracted to him – he was the centre of attention.

He's determined and tenacious. There's a famous race in South Africa called the Comrades marathon, which is 90 kilometres. He did that 10 years in a row. He's taken up tennis competitively in the past year and won a gold medal in tennis doubles at the recent Gay Games. He was stoked about that.

He's a loyal person. Anton still has friendships with people he knew in primary school, and he keeps up a correspondence with people from around the world. One of the things I've missed out on by living with him is receiving letters from him. He's the most marvellous letter-writer.

Our backgrounds are so different and yet we have so much in common in terms of shared values. We're both small "I" liberals. We both believe in tolerance and equal treatment for all. We have some differences – he's the world's most systematic shopper. He can take five minutes to decide which soap to buy. He'll look at the ingredients, the value for money, and how environmentally friendly it is. I start feeling very lethargic, so I don't shop with him.

We'd been together for about 10 years when we decided to move to Australia. We got work about six weeks after we arrived here. I branched out into a new area, knowing I had support at home if things didn't go well. Taking a risk and changing countries is easier when there's two of you.

Relationships take work, but we've both been prepared to give. It's never felt one-sided. In Johannesburg we had a house with a traditional lawn. I liked it. Anton wanted more bushes. It took two years of negotiations. We ended up with this wild garden full of indigenous species. He was quite subversive: he'd secretly chop off a bit of lawn and stick in a native plant. It was very funny.

I grew to love the garden and he kept enough lawn for us to take tea at a table outside. That kind of compromising has probably helped our relationship grow stronger, and last as long as it has.

SARAH HENRY ■