



# WHAT I KNOW ABOUT *MEN*

## MARTA DUSSELDORP

Occupation *Actor and producer* / Age *48* / Relationship status *Married*  
Best known for *A Place to Call Home*

**M**y Dutch paternal grandfather, Dick Dusseldorp, ran Lend Lease in Australia. He built Thredbo, so we spent a lot of time at the ski resort when I was growing up. He set an example of gravitas and success.

**My maternal grandfather**, Sandy Robertson, was a paediatric surgeon. He was a very quiet man and often saw patients at home, even accepting live chickens as payment for treatment. He'd been a prisoner of war in Japan, but never spoke about it.

**When I was really young** my father, Tjerk, ran Legal Eagle, a not-for-profit for people who couldn't afford legal help, then Priority One, a government

initiative to build skills in kids who fell out of school. After that he ran the Dusseldorp Skills Forum, which brought the Youth Skill Olympics to Australia in 1988. For my 21st, Dad commissioned a piece of jewellery from a winning Skill Olympics' jeweller. I'm not a jewellery wearer but I treasure it, and still have it for my daughters.

**I was 10** when my twin brothers, Tom and Joe, were born. I loved them dearly, although they were really naughty. Now they are fabulous grown-up men with families.

**Innovation runs through** the men in our family: Joe is a surgeon, working on vascular plastic surgery

to get veins moving. Tom has done many things and is currently involved in a start-up to introduce a new product to Australia. I'm really proud of them both.

**I'd been doing ballet** since I was four. A male teacher told me I would never be a dancer, as my body was the wrong shape. But my drama teacher at Geelong Grammar, Dick Johnson, flipped that negativity when he said I was an actor. You can't underestimate the effect of those words. Seeing his respect when I played Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* instilled in me that acting was what I was born to do, and that I had a gift.

*My husband Ben has taught me to walk alongside so there is no co-dependency in our relationship.*

**I've always been attracted** to men with drive, purpose, intelligence and kindness; bad boys are full of heartache.

**While studying** at the Victorian College of the Arts, I met a man who was as obsessed with acting as me. We were both absolutely sure we wanted to be actors and encouraged and pushed each other. We had bar jobs and I worked in a video shop, and we read plays together on weekends. He joined Sydney's Belvoir St Theatre and I went into the Melbourne Theatre Company. Our relationship lasted five years. I was a serial monogamist.

**My husband**, actor Ben Winspear, is the greatest influence on our children, Grace, 14, and Maggie, 11. I'm so happy for that as he is intelligent, kind, nurturing and creative. Over the past 16 years, Ben's taught me how to walk alongside so there is no co-dependency in our relationship. I've learnt how to be exactly who I need to be.

**Ben and I formed** stage and screen company Archipelago Productions in Hobart, where we live. Ben brings the ideas and the capacity to fulfil them, as he's been directing since I met him as the 27-year-old resident director at the Sydney Theatre Company. Ben has such a lateral brain; creatively, he's an inspiration to me.

**I've played opposite** Guy Pearce in *Jack Irish* for nine years. We've never had anything other than a great working relationship. He is totally meticulous on set, and a really good human being.

**I've had a few scenes** with Aaron Pedersen in *Jack Irish*, but more on *A Place to Call Home*. Aaron is a very quiet, considered and humble man. He lit up the screen in *Mystery Road* and I'd love to play opposite him in a lead scenario. I might put that on my bucket list. *Robyn Doreian*

*Jack Irish* screens on Sundays at 8.30pm on ABC TV and is available on ABC iview.