

Hidden pleasure

'HERE to please women, to make you feel wonderful, and to add a touch of love to your beautiful day,' ... Mr X promises his clients on his Facebook page to give them "everything they desire". In an exclusive, he reveals to The Spectator what it takes to be a male escort.



**EMMA-JAYNE
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"Maybe I (have) a 'secret identity', but then when you think about it, don't we all? A part of ourselves very few people ever get to see. The part we think of as me."

— Kurt Busiek, *Superman: Secret Identity*

HE may not be superman, but Leo* has a secret so hidden, even his family doesn't know ... a secret so big it has changed his life forever.

This covert life is the choice Leo made when he decided at the age of 15 to become a male escort.

He now travels the south-west allowing people to "feel loved, to feel wanted, and to have fun in their lives".

He may be "in love with the universe" but he is not willing to share his secret with many.

"It is not something I talk about to people; it is something that has to stay hidden, kind of like a second identity," the 25-year-old said.

"To protect my own reputation, and to respect and protect my clients' anonymity, very few people know I am an escort.

"My family have no idea ... but keeping it hidden from my parents is not too hard, even though I live with them.

"I just tell them I am going somewhere and I have a few excuses."

Sex is different for everyone and Leo is the first to admit it – but to him, attraction and desire is necessary for

good sexual chemistry.

"I find I am able to be attracted to most people and have desire for them," he said.

"I don't think you do have to have feelings, though feelings can develop and it is normal to feel some kind of feelings when you are intimate with someone."

He said love and sex didn't come hand-in-hand.

"I think people can truly fall in love without sex, as some people have less libido and it is about finding a balance.

"Love and sex can be separated somewhat or intricately linked."

Leo isn't venturing into a new avenue with his chosen career and prostitution has been described by many as the world's oldest profession.

Religion, fear of sin, cultural norms and dirty stereotypes have stopped people from being open about sex in the past but people are becoming more frank about their desires.

And no-one can deny that sex has always offered pleasure to human beings since the dawn of time.

"I think our views on sexuality have been created by society and shaped, but yes we are all sexual beings," Leo said.

He said his clients knew him as Leo or Mr X or Doctor X but everyone else in his life other than a select few knew him by his birth name.

"My few friends who know I am an escort think it is nice but I suppose they are a bit different to most people, as am I," he said.

"Not just anyone can be an escort, and especially a male escort; I do this job not because it is easy, but because it is hard and necessary for some people."

Without a partner in his life, Leo has to find his satisfaction from his customers

but he said that might all change if he met the right person.

"I have had a few partners before I started working and if ever in the future I meet the 'love of my life' I'm not sure how things would play out ... I may in the future get married and have children and change my line of work.

"For the moment though, I am in love with the universe and everyone that I meet."

He admits it's not an easy job – but said he was 'a bit different' from most people and sex was needed in the world for pleasure, intimacy and procreation.

And for Leo, the world of bringing strangers sexual pleasure is not the seedy, dangerous world that it is often made out to be – it's more about companionship and bringing people a sense of belonging.

He said many people didn't understand the challenges that sometimes came with sex, especially for those with disabilities who couldn't easily access sex.

"I do see people with disabilities as well and I really feel honoured to be able to help those who cannot help themselves, or enjoy the intimate bond with someone," he said.

"Even though they may have a disability, they can still feel good within themselves, and that reflects onto how they feel, live, and act, so the intimacy can have a profound effect on their quality of life."

Despite the negative stigma and taboos regarding sex, in particular with escorts, Leo said sex wasn't dirty and was a type of therapy for some.

He said there was "nothing wrong with paying an escort for their time, which could be used for any purpose".

"I think (sex) is truly healing," Leo

said.

"Sex, and intimacy, and love, can do amazing things to our minds, and our bodies, and help people to feel better within themselves.

"Aside from being biologically necessary to our species' survival, I believe it is something that is needed in the world.

"We are the only species that has sex often without the desire for procreation.

"Even if someone feels they are doing it just because it feels good, at a cellular and spiritual level they are being refreshed, rejuvenated, and, ultimately, healed."

Getting paid \$190 an hour for his 'time' comes with its perils but there are also advantages that come with the job for Leo, who describes himself as "a little bisexual".

"A few not so good things are having to keep everything private and to not tell the truth about where I am going, but that's all part of it," he said.

"I do visit males and females but the service to males is more limited as safety is a very important factor.

"There is also a sense of intimacy, rather than just sex, particularly with my female clients.

"(Most) are looking to be loved and to realise that they are loved and be able to talk, to listen, and do things together, rather than just massage and/or sex."

Leo also revealed some men who had contacted him changed their mind at the last moment, through fear or a change of heart.

It might not be Leo's full-time profession and he said it was a very taboo topic in small country towns such as Hamilton, but there was a need for his services in the south-west.

"Out of confidentiality for my clients,

I cannot discuss how many people I may see or have seen near Hamilton, though there is some interest that I am able to fulfil," he said.

"I am based in Warrnambool and travel throughout the south-west to Hamilton, Portland, and Ballarat and it keeps me fairly busy, though I do have a full-time job away from escorting as well.

"A male escort does not make as much money as a female escort but as well as for the money, I do this because of the effect I can have on other people's lives."

Leo said he was not limited to being an escort and "could have chosen many pathways and still can".

"I suppose I have always been thinking of ideas and different things to do and I was about 15 when I first thought of being an escort," he said.

"I was fairly good in school, though this is really what I feel is right for me at the moment and for the foreseeable future.

"As to how I decided to get into the escort business, I thought hey maybe there are people who for whatever reason, cannot get the intimacy or companionship they are looking for, or feel that they cannot."

"I first became registered when I was 18 and did not start working (as an escort) until age 22."

And while most people think being an escort is all about the money, for Leo his job choice fulfils his philosophy of life; 'Work like you don't need the money; Love like you've never been hurt; And dance like nobody's watching'.

*Leo is not his real name. He has chosen to remain anonymous for confidentiality of his clients and himself.