

Q&A

BRADLEY TREVOR GREIVE



Writer and dog-lover Bradley Trevor Greive, author of the best-selling *Blue Day Book*, thinks his new work, *Why Dogs are Better Than Cats*, is his funniest and most beautiful book yet. He hopes it will encourage people to reassess the way they value friends – on four legs or two.

Are you either a dog person or a cat person, or can you really be both?

No, the division is usually very clear. Some people believe they are both, but in fact they generally suffer from a virulent form of cat-induced schizophrenia — fortunately, treatment and support is readily available. There is no reason you shouldn't be kind to all animals, and thus tolerate a cat in your house. Most dual-species owners start out with a cat, due to their reputation for low maintenance, but when they realise they didn't get a pet but rather a plush toy with a bad attitude, they rush out and buy a dog.

If you are a dog person, what does that say about your nature?

That you appreciate others and are prepared to do what it takes to make the world a better place. And that you look awesome in tight jeans. It's well established that dog lovers are more active and healthier than sofa-ridden moggly molesters.

If you are a cat person, what does it reveal about you?

That you are lonely and have low standards and yet, ironically, have an enduring aversion to commitment.

Do people take it personally if you insult the animal they relate to?

I hope so. I could never fall in love with a cat woman and there is no point pretending otherwise. Pets are an immediate extension of one's

true values and naturally there are very strong feelings involved. Since my book has come out the poorly punctuated hate mail has piled up. I am now the target of a catwa. I live in fear of a cat-fancier jihad which, though unsettling, is wonderful for my publishing career. I'm like Salman Rushdie but with better hair.

Ever met a dog you didn't like?

Sure have. There are so many dog breeds there are literally dogs to suit everyone, including sadistic half-wits. Perhaps there are decent, intelligent, cultured, mild-mannered and accomplished people who own pit bulls and other aggressive fighting breeds — but I've not met one.

Are dog-actors like their characters in real life or can they really act?

I have met a few animal actors. They are simply trained to go through their paces in exchange for which they are showered with rapturous praise and delicious rewards. In other words, their lives are no richer or more meaningful than human actors.

Why do people attribute evil qualities to cats?

Because they are the embodiment of whiskered wickedness. Because they slide through the midnight shadows hoping to tear the unblemished souls from baby birds and marsupial mice. Because, behind their bright eyes, they are always dreaming of delicious

murder. Because they breed like rabbits, rats and Marlon Brando. They also have stinky fish breath.

Are some dogs (such as golden retrievers) as dumb as they look?

Golden retrievers are not dumb in the least! Cats, however, are stupid, though not nearly as stupid as people who try to argue that cats are intelligent. Still, getting back to golden retrievers, how sad is it we assume genuinely happy people and animals are idiots, instead of asking ourselves what we can learn from them? Since when was being slim-hipped, aloof and emotionally dislocated indicative of advanced intelligence?

Can you love and despise your dog at the same time?

Love the dog, despise the act. My great danes have run off with Christmas cakes, broken walls and windows, shredded bed linen, trashed furniture and footwear and cleared coffee tables with a single wag of the tail. But possessions are replaceable. Friendship is forever.

What is the best quality of the dog?

Unfettered optimism that reminds us every day has the potential to be the best day of our lives.

What is the worst quality of the cat?

Ooooh, that's tough. If I had to pick just one ... I would have to say "contagious narcissism".

* Bradley Trevor Greive's *Why Dogs are Better Than Cats* (Andrews McMeel publishing), rrp \$32.95, is out now.

AS TOLD TO WENDY TUOHY

GETAWAY

If frocking up and watching a lot of horses run around the track is all a bit ho-hum, why not leave town this semi-long weekend.

Many take Monday off for an extended break, and it's a good time to squeeze in a mini break in the country.

The good folk of South Gippsland are doing their bit with a special Summer Starters weekend at some of the region's wineries.

Each of the featured vineyards will have food, entertainment and, of course, great wine for one or more days of the Melbourne Cup weekend.

Participating wineries include Basia Mille Vineyard and Olive Grove, Bass Valley Estate Wines, Clair de Lune Vineyard, Djinta Djinta Winery de Vine Restaurant, The Gurdies Winery, Lyre Bird Hill Winery, Purple Hen, Ramsays Vin Rose, Waratha Hills, and Windy Ridge Vineyard and Winery.

You can stay anywhere from Phillip Island to Inverloch and Wilson's Promontory.

* More information, www.southerngippslandwine.com.au

