

My Saturday ritual

Nick Simpson-Deeks

Actor

What time do you wake up on a Saturday? Right now, I have a 9.30pm performance of *Ghost Stories* on Friday nights, so I get to bed pretty late, and would love a sleep-in on Saturday mornings ... but my cat, Loki, wakes me for breakfast at 6.30am without fail. He has no respect for the weekend. (I usually go back to bed for a while once he's fed.)

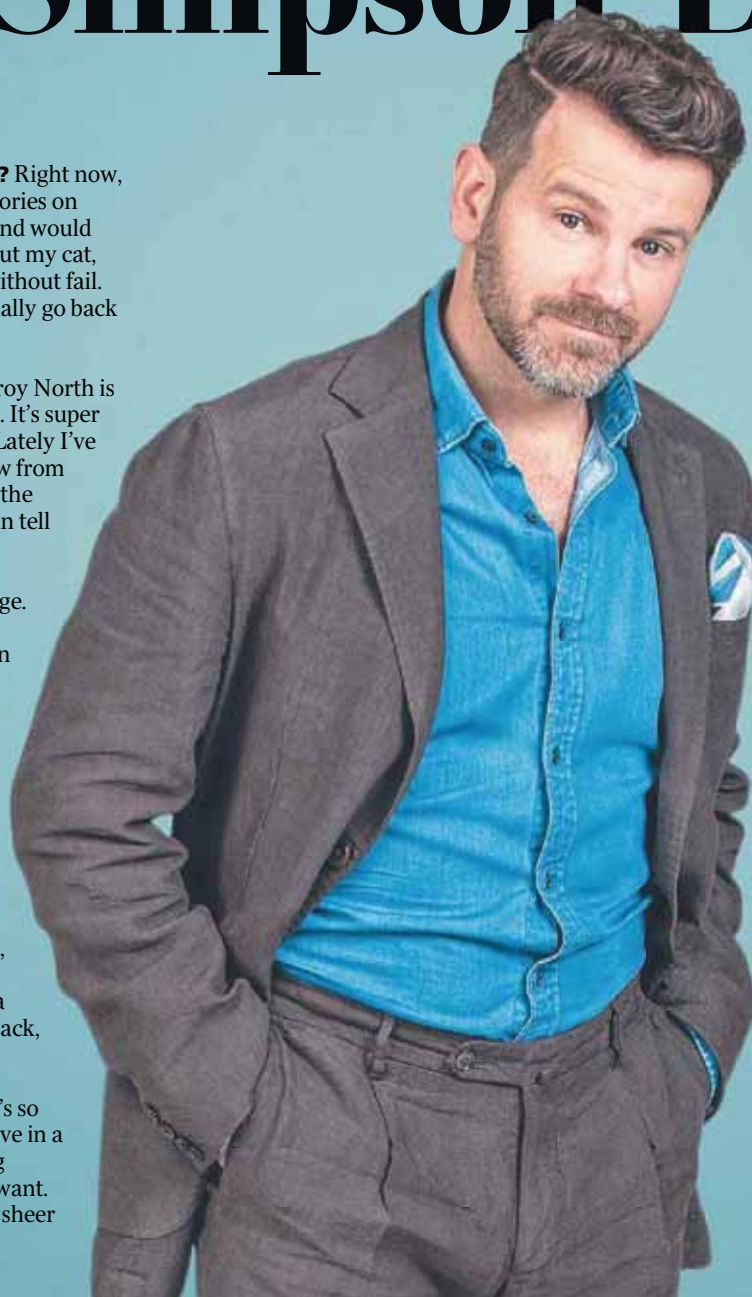
Local coffee haunt? Cafe Piccante in Fitzroy North is my go-to, especially in the cooler months. It's super cosy and has a real neighbourhood vibe. Lately I've been grabbing my Saturday morning brew from Standing Room. They've just opened but the menu is great and the staff are lovely. I can tell I'm going to be there a lot.

Best spot for date night? Westgarth Village. Dinner at Vex Dining – the panisse is a must-have and the wine list is killer – then a movie at the Palace. Kelvin Bar afterwards for whisky or cocktails.

Favourite takeaway? Vegetarian laksa from Malaymas, or literally anything from Horn Please on St Georges Rd.

Favourite pub/bar to catch up with friends? LongPlay. It was the very first bar I visited when I moved to the area almost 10 years ago. The food is excellent, and it's my absolute favourite for dinner and drinks with friends I haven't seen in a while. (There's also a tiny cinema in the back, which I love.)

Best thing about your neighbourhood? It's so hard to pick one thing. I'm very lucky to live in a beautiful pocket of Fitzroy North, walking distance to absolutely everything I could want. But if I had to choose I'd probably say the sheer



number of dogs. I'm comfortable admitting I often walk to Edinburgh Gardens to loiter at the dog park.

Where and when do you exercise? Healthy Fit in Fitzroy North. I try to get there at least four times a week. Actors' schedules are constantly shifting, so I just have to work my training in around whatever else I have going on. Occasionally I'll throw in a boxing class or some PT sessions when I need motivating.

Best hidden treasure in Victoria? The gardens at Heide Museum of Modern Art in Bulleen. The grounds are beautiful, and they're open to the public all year round, for free. You can wander through the sculpture park or just sit on the grass with a picnic lunch and a good book.

Favourite place to holiday in Victoria? I love Mornington Peninsula – there's so much on offer there: glamping, hot springs, plenty of nature walks. I'm a bit of a hobbyist photographer so I'm often looking for places to explore with a camera in hand. Bushrangers Bay and Cape Schanck are two spots I'd love to go back to.

What's your idea of the perfect Saturday? Cuddle time with Loki (after he inevitably gets me up) followed by breakfast and a cold brew out in the neighbourhood. Then meandering through Fitzroy or Collingwood with my camera, some lazy window-shopping on Gertrude St, and a second coffee in the sun before heading to the Athenaeum to get ready for the *Ghost Stories* matinee. I'm at the theatre for nine hours on a Saturday, so I make sure I've got plenty to keep me occupied backstage ... Right now I'm building a Lego Galaxy Explorer and reading David Sedaris.

Nick Simpson-Deeks stars as Mike Priddle in *Ghost Stories*, playing at the Athenaeum Theatre until November 5

PICTURE: JODIE HUTCHINSON.

NICK'S TOP PICKS

COFFEE



Cafe Piccante,
St Georges Rd, Fitzroy North

DATE NIGHT



Vex Dining,
High St, Northcote

BAR



LongPlay,
St Georges Rd, Fitzroy North

HIDDEN TREASURE



Heide Museum of Modern Art,
Templestowe Rd, Bulleen