



# “THOUSANDS READ MY DIARY EVERY DAY”

His antics have led to the huge success of his online blog. VIVA talks to the English Man in Dubai

During a night on the town with my friends, I had the pleasure of running into a long-time crush. Egged on by my buddies, I plucked up the courage to approach the bar to buy the lady in question a drink. Cue stifled giggles and barely concealed derision from her gang of gal pals.

Confused, one of her friends - a portly redhead - enlightened me. “You’ve been banging on about her on your blog for long enough,” snorted ginger. “We’ve all read about your crush.”

‘Rumbled,’ I cringed, skulking back to my mates who erupted into raucous laughter. But as embarrassing as the incident was, it’s part and parcel of posting my inner-most thoughts on my online blog, [www.englishmandubai.com](http://www.englishmandubai.com), every week. When you start a blog private things will come out once in a while - that’s the way it goes.

The idea of starting a blog first came to me two years ago, just before I moved to Dubai from the

UK. I was drowning in relocation paperwork and a friend suggested putting it all down in a diary. A few weeks later I read about a school friend, who had a popular blog with a strong following. I’m a bit of a cyber-geek, so it occurred to me this was how I could diarise my exploits.

My mates laughed when I told them and said I was going to become Dubai’s answer to Bridget Jones, but I reasoned that no one was going to read it anyway, so

what did it matter? It was just an outlet to record all the trials of the average Dubaiite. But not long after I launched, I noticed I was receiving a lot of hits from people I’d never met.

Soon the readership turbocharged with people from all over the world logging on and leaving me comments and questions. Then I was short-listed in the *Top 50 Blogs Abroad* list on the *Guardian Abroad* website. Since then, the site’s popularity has totally skyrocketed.

The embarrassing crush from the bar aside, I have a large female following, which is flattering. Unfortunately, I also have a few

cyber stalkers. One lady wrote to me asking if she could move to Dubai and marry me. A nice offer, but a little bit forward!

I also get a lot of comments from young men who are thinking about relocating to the UAE. A man in South Africa wrote me an email saying that his decision to accept a job in Abu Dhabi had been tipped by reading my blog. “Just read your blog and I’m sold,” he wrote.

Worried mums whose sons are moving to Dubai are also big hitters. They ask me everything from how the roads are to whether the girls in Dubai are good wife material. I feel like an agony uncle sometimes!

The site has landed me in hot water a couple of times too. I could have kicked myself a while back after I dropped one guy in it for flirting with a waitress on a night out. His girlfriend wasn’t impressed, to say the least.

But generally, doing the blog has been great. Over the past two years I’ve had many compliments and I often get emails from enthusiastic readers. People say, “Keep it up!” and I intend to. All I can say is there’s plenty of blogging left in me yet! ●

## BLOGS UNCENSORED!

**X-RATED** New Yorker Zoe Margolis had her cover blown when journalists unmasked her as the genteelly pseudonymed Abby Lee; raunchy blogger of [www.girlwithaonetrackmind.com](http://www.girlwithaonetrackmind.com).

**YOU’RE FIRED!** [www.petiteanglaise.com](http://www.petiteanglaise.com) blogger, Catherine Sanderson, was sacked after her boss decided her hugely popular blog had brought the firm into disrepute.

**FACEBOOK TO FELON** A bit of fun turned criminal when Moroccan computer engineer, Fouad Mourtada, was jailed for four years for creating a Facebook profile in the name of a member of the royal family. He is still in jail.