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'IT WAS UNSUITABLE FOR MORNING VIEWING - BUT VERY FUNNY'

DR SCOTT MILLER AND ZO CHRISTIEN

THE 'THIS MORNING' VET AND HIS LATE-NIGHT TV GIRL LUNCH AT LEADENHALL AND TALK FRISKY DOGS, MONKEYS AND DRUNKARDS!

He's the dashing resident vet on *This Morning* she's the gorgeous right-time TV quiz hostess - and together they're one very eye-catching couple! It was mutual friends who got Dr Scott Miller and Zo Christien together on a blind date, and the plan worked a treat, although Scott assures us that if Zo wasn't such a big fan of animals, especially his beloved border terrier Betty, they might not be together today!

'I think animals make people grounded - and I could never go out with somebody who didn't love animals,' says 52-year-old Scott, who was born in Australia but has lived and worked in Britain for the past eight years. Zo, meanwhile, has to deal regularly with another kind of animal - the drunken caller phoning in with very cheeky answers to ITV's *Make Your Day*. Her method of dealing with them? 'I'm usually just reduced to giggles,' says 29-year-old Zo.

We grabbed the pair for lunch at the Leadenhall Ristorante Italiano, in London's historic Leadenhall Market. All the ingredients for this fabulous meal were supplied by Lidl, using special produce from the popular food store including their Bresola Italian meat slices for a delicious antipasto starter...

Scott, how long have you been a vet?

I've been a vet for over ten years. I graduated in 1997 in Queensland University, and then I worked for a year in Sydney, at the biggest RSCPA clinic in Australia. Because both my parents are English I had a British passport, and thought I'd give good old Blighty a go, so I came over in April 1999 and have been here ever since.

How did the *This Morning* job come your way?

When I came to London, I took on a vet practice in Mile End, which just happened to be around

the corner from the *Big Brother* house, during the first series. So when all that stuff with Marjorie the very famous sick chicken kicked off, I went into the house to tend to her - I was the only person to be in the *Big Brother* house who wasn't a contestant. Through the *Big Brother* stint, I got introduced to some people at *This Morning*, and before I knew it I'd landed a regular job there. Recently Zo and I went to an ITV party, and I saw Craig, the winner of the first *Big Brother*, and I went up to him and said 'It's because of you guys and your antics that I've got a career - so thanks very much!'



How many pets do you have?

That's Betty, our pride and joy, a border terrier who's just over a year old. I also have two cats and a snake called Colin. He was brought into our London practice by some policemen as a stray snake, and he'd been run over. He's a very friendly boy - he eats mice which I freeze for him, and he lives in a little vivarium in my kitchen. It takes some people some getting used to, but Zo's a trooper with him, and she'll happily pick him up. >

BRESOLA CON RUCOLA, MANGO E PARMIGIANO

A delicious, light and simple summer starter using a popular cured and salted Italian beef.

SERVES 4

- 400g thin slices of Bresola Vahellina
- 100g rucola or rocket lettuce leaves
- 2 ripe medium mangoes
- Juice of ½ lemon
- 100g Parmesan cheese shavings
- 4 tbsps extra virgin olive oil
- Fine sea salt
- Ground black pepper

1 Squeeze the lemon into a bowl, add a pinch of salt and a pinch of ground black pepper, stir in the extra virgin olive oil for one minute so that it amalgamates. Arrange the rocket leaves at the centre of the plates. Arrange the Bresola slices around the outside of the rocket leaves.

2 To remove the stones from mangoes, place each mango on its flat side on a kitchen work surface, and run the blade of a sharp knife along the stone from top to bottom. Peel the mangoes and then slice the halves vertically.

3 Arrange the mango slices between the rocket leaves and the Bresola slices. Pour the lemon dressing on top sparingly, then add the Parmesan cheese shavings.



Facing page: Scott and Zo met on a blind date. 'We made each other laugh so much and we haven't stopped laughing since,' says Zo. Things are going so well for the couple that they're just about to move in together. Top: Scott with his pet pooch Betty



ROAST CHICKEN BREAST WITH BLUE CHEESE ON SAFFRON RISOTTO

Casque flavours get brilliantly in this eye-catching main dish.

SERVES 4

- 4 medium size chicken breasts, with the skin on
- 120g Gorgonzola cheese
- Small bunch of thyme
- Fine sea salt
- Ground black pepper
- 10g saffron stick
- 50g grated Parmesan cheese
- 25g salted butter
- 1 small onion
- 1 chicken stock cube
- 1 glass of white dry wine
- 2 tbsps sunflower cooking oil
- 400g Italian risotto rice, part cooked
- pesto and balsamic vinegar, to garnish

1 Preheat the oven to 190°C. Remove any excess fat from the chicken and season with salt, pepper and chopped thyme. Heat a tablespoon of oil in a non-stick shallow frying pan, and sear the chicken breasts for 5 minutes on each side.

2 Remove the chicken from the frying pan and set aside in a dish. Lift the skin, add extra seasoning and spread one tablespoon of Gorgonzola cheese between the skin and the meat. Place in the oven for 5 minutes, remove and sprinkle with white wine, then return to the oven for a further 5 minutes. Make sure the chicken is cooked thoroughly.

3 For the risotto, dissolve the chicken stock cube in boiling water. Chop and fry the onion in a tablespoon of sunflower oil, add the risotto rice and stir gently, then add the stock gradually as it is absorbed by the rice, following this procedure until it's cooked thoroughly (about 8 minutes). Add the saffron and carry on stirring, then add the Parmesan and a dollop of butter.

4 Arrange the risotto on each dinner plate to form a circle in the centre and sit the chicken breast on top of it. Drizzle some pesto and balsamic vinegar around the perimeter of the risotto.



They say you should never work with children or animals, but that's not an option for a TV vet! 'I was filming *Animal Roadshow* and I was feeding some baby badgers when one of them weed right down me, right on camera,' says Scott. 'Then we had a pony in the *This Morning* studio and it did a great big steaming message on the studio floor. Phillip Schofield and I just lost it completely'

Is it true that Betty has inspired you to be an author?

Yes, I've had her since she was a pup and her development has spurred me on to write a book that's coming out in October, *Puppy Powering*, and she'll be on the cover! Betty is also going to be the heroine of a series of children's novels that I'm writing. She can be a lot of trouble sometimes. At the Macmillan Dog Day she ran under Elizabeth Hurley's skirt and licked her right up the legs - I was so jealous! She also licked the lead singer of the Pussycat Dolls on the face, when they were in the *This Morning* studio.

So is Betty a bit of a babe magnet?

She is definitely a chick-puller. I've actually written a newspaper article about how you can pull girls using your dog!

Tell us how you met Zo...

We were set up on a blind date through work colleagues and we hit it off immediately. In fact, it's quite apt that we're in an Italian restaurant, because we went to Rome for our first weekend away, and had loads of fantastic food and wine. It's great to be with a girl who eats proper food and drinks red wine.

Zo, how did you find the blind date?

I asked my mate if she had a picture of Scott. Because he's on *This Morning* she said I could look on the website, so I went on it and saw him and thought, huzz, not too stubby-looking - I could work with this! And we clicked immediately.

Does a girl have to love animals to love you, Scott?

Pretty much! I think animals make people grounded, and to love an animal is to love someone else beyond you. If Zo didn't like my dog, she wouldn't be where she is today! >