

TALES OF TWO

It's a marriage of creativity for author Adrienne Ferreira and actor Rob Carlton.

WORDS TARA WELLS

When Adrienne Ferreira first met Rob Carlton, at the University of Sydney in her early 20s, she was unimpressed. It wasn't until returning from an overseas working holiday that she gave him a chance. They started as friends but, as Adrienne says, 'The more time I spent with him, the more intrigued I was.'

The Avoca residents have now been married 24 years.

Rob is a familiar face to many from acting in just about every popular Australian TV series, including a Logie award-winning turn as Kerry Packer in the ABC's *Paper Giants*, as well as writing, producing, directing and starring in *Chandon Pictures*.

For him, the decision to prioritise his writing and performing came early. He'd been working shifts selling telephones to make ends meet then, 'I got to the end of the week and I hadn't written any of my play. I realised that I was offering him [the employer] much more respect than I was offering myself.'

Rob's solution to create more writing time was to emcee corporate events, a more lucrative buffer against the whims of acting gigs than temping or hospitality jobs.

Early in their relationship, Rob's response to Adrienne's urging him to get a 'real job' between acting gigs was to suggest that Adrienne leave her job. Rob's single-minded prioritising of his creative endeavours encouraged Adrienne to pursue her own dreams.

'She ended up taking part-time work and getting started on her novel,' he says.

Adrienne's debut novel *Watercolours* was published in 2011.

Despite both pursuing creative careers, it's only recently the two have officially started working together. They've teamed up to present monthly, live storytelling evenings at various Central Coast venues.

With the tagline, 'True stories told well', *Bravewords Live* features six speakers, each telling a 10-minute story from their own experience. Frequently including Adrienne and Rob as two of the storytellers, speakers are both established performers and emerging writers. From heart-wrenching to laugh-out-loud, the only criteria is that the story really happened.

'It's not so much performance as a sort of sharing. It's like an ancient practice of sitting around the campfire telling stories that we don't tend to do much anymore,' says Adrienne.

The events' success – consistently booking out since its 2022 beginnings – depends in part on the creative marriage of the two.

But choosing a creative life path isn't as straightforward as it seems. Alongside a love of writing, Adrienne also experienced feelings of loneliness while working on her novel. It was the catalyst for Adrienne starting *Bravewords*, offering in-person classes on biography and memoir, telling stories drawn from real life. It was Rob's suggestion, though, to capitalise on the burgeoning storytelling community Adrienne was nurturing through *Bravewords* by turning it into a live event.

'Initially it was this idea of giving ourselves a reason to write regularly, and invite other people to share their stories,' says Adrienne, 'but now it's just growing and growing because people responded.'

The couple have found that their shared passion for storytelling events have struck a wider chord. 'It opens up deeper conversations that mean something to people. We're both interested in that.'

Bravewords Live is at Lyons Den, Gosford on the last Sunday in the month, except in March when it will be held a week earlier on 24 March because of Easter.

bravewords.com.au



Rob Carlton and Adrienne Ferreira.