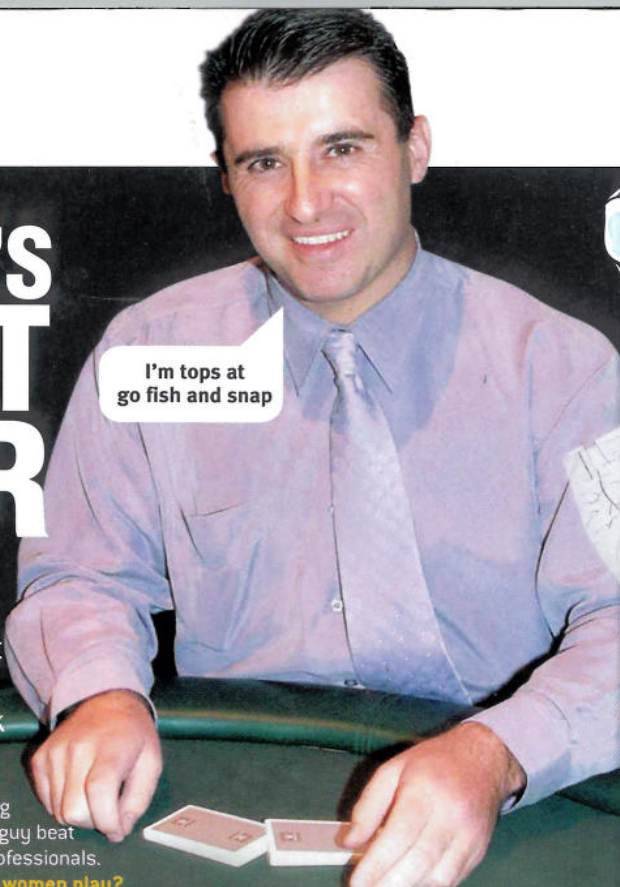


AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST DEALER

ROB HUXLEY used to deal poker at Crown Casino. Now the 30-year-old Aussie works the felt in Las Vegas with the game's biggest names – and Ben Affleck



I'm tops at go fish and snap

WHAT sort of money is thrown around at your level of poker?

In Mississippi I dealt the biggest cash game I've ever seen. Each player must have had at least \$1 million in front of him in chips. We're talking \$500,000 a hand.

What are the punters like?

Oh, 90 per cent of them are absolute wankers. They are the cream of the wanker crop.

What do they do to earn that tag?

They've got their ways of letting you know they disapprove of you. They think because they have unlimited money there's nothing you can do to push them around. But it's only cards – anyone can win. Last year at the World Series of Poker a guy named Chris Moneymaker won. He had never played in a casino in his life.

Was it like Rocky with fat dudes?

Absolutely. The poker community

was wondering how this guy beat all the professionals.

Do many women play?

Definitely.

Hot women?

Generally, no. But the better-looking the woman, the better the poker player 'cos she can distract you while she's robbing you.

How much cheating goes on?

I've probably seen cheating once or twice in 10 years at the table. Marking cards or signalling to each other at the table are the only forms when there's a dealer.

Why does everyone in poker have a stupid nickname?

They're usually given to them by other people at poker tables.

Your nickname's "The Hux".

Do you wish you had another one?

Yeah, maybe you should rename me.

Perhaps "The Penguin".

[Laughs] Pretty frightening... here comes The Penguin.

How many Las Vegas casinos are run by Italian guys with nice suits and really good offers?

The Mob? [Laughs] Not anymore.

I bet you've been told to say that.

No. I've still got all my fingers. Vegas is basically run by the Mormons now.

You've dealt to Ben Affleck, haven't you?

Yeah, Ben got into the poker scene in the last couple of years. He was taught how to play by one of the professionals.

Did you tell him to get home and have a go on J.Lo?

[Laughs] Well, at the time he had apparently split up with her.

Christ, he got fed-up with J.Lo and went to play cards?

Yeah. You can't read that mind, that's for sure.

What's the biggest mistake you've seen a dealer make?

Jump the table and take a swing at a player. He got fired – but he got his punch in.

Ivan Smith



THE BIG QUESTION



Well, she's hardly gonna break any hearts

Q CAN A WINEGLASS SHATTER WHEN SOMEONE HITS A HIGH NOTE?

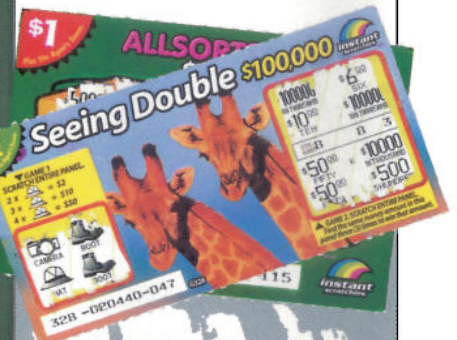
A "In principle, it's possible," says Dr John Barry from the University of Queensland. "But it has to be a high-quality crystal glass that's tuned to a specific frequency. If an opera singer can hit and hold the frequency that tunes to that glass, she could cause it to resonate and shatter. The way to find that note would be to run your finger around the glass as your diva sings. People say they can shatter windows, but I don't believe that's possible. They're in a frame and heavily damped."

A's guide to bluffing without getting bluffed

1: LEARN TO PICK THE SIGNS
Absolutely everyone shows emotion at the table. Rob reckons even players with 50 years' experience will still have giveaways – or "tells" – in their game, and that's why so many wear sunnies to hide them: "There's a procedure people go through when they're lying. They might fidget with their hair or shift their body. They might say something and immediately look away – that's a big one. Everyone's different, but once you spot it, you know."

2: DON'T GET DOUBLE-CROSSED
Some cardsharps will put on an act just to fool you. "There's definite tells and there's fake tells," Rob explains. "A good player wants you to think he's doing one thing when he's doing the opposite. The most basic tell is if they act strong, they're weak, and if they act weak, they're strong."

3: PICK THE WEAKEST PLAYER AT THE TABLE – AND DO IT QUICKLY
"There's a saying that in the first half-hour, if you don't know who the sucker is, it's usually you," Rob says.



BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW...

Darren Haake of Bateau Bay, NSW, has collected 311,362 scratchies since 1993. No, we don't know why, either



TURN TO PAGE 91 TO SEE HOW THE BIG GUNS PLAY

