



**Armand du Plessis:
Ready to take the
Mr SA 2014 title**



Everyone always talks about what it takes to enter Miss South Africa, but what about Mr South Africa? Chantal Riley recently chatted with one of the 2014 finalists, 25-year old Armand du Plessis, to find out what makes him tick and why he is after the Mr SA title this year.

Married, involved or single. If involved, please tell our readers with whom?

Single. Are there any single female MPSAmag readers that would like to go on a late Valentines Day date? Haha! ;)

What would winning the Mr South Africa title mean to you?

A title such as Mr. South Africa has a lot to offer. Winning the title has always been a dream of mine, so not only will this be a dream come true, but the title will also give me the platform to inspire and motivate the youth of our country, a platform which I will also use to highlight social issues and problems. This title will also guide me to encourage others to reach out and make a difference in other people's lives. It's a very big title, that not a lot of people are blessed to win, so it will be a fantastic opportunity for me to use the stage to try and iron out the social problems we have in our country. It's not all about just being 'pretty'. If I should become Mr. South Africa, I will most definitely use the title to the best of my ability.

What motivated you to enter the competition?

I motivated myself to enter. I have followed many pageants and competitions around the world for many years now, and it's inspiring to see the amount of work done by people that have won or have even placed in the Top 10. I have many role models and friends, who have also indirectly motivated me. I believe it is important to have goals to work towards and I have entered Mr. South Africa 2014 with the end goal in mind: to grow, learn and inspire along this journey. Since entering the competition, I have been pushing myself harder than I have ever done before and I have also done work that I'd never imagined doing.

Have you won any other titles?

I've been fortunate enough to have won Mr. Krugersdorp (Mogale City) 2008, Mr. Roodepoort 2009, Mr. Jacaranda City 2010, Mr. Spring Show 2011 and I have represented South Africa in Thailand during 2012 at Mr. Manhunt International. All of these titles have made me grow and become the man I am today.

Tell us about Manhunt International 2012.

I have always wanted to represent our amazing country internationally and finally got the opportunity to do this in November 2012. I was approached to represent South Africa three weeks before I had to be in Bangkok, Thailand. It was a very big challenge getting everything, from national costumes to formal tuxedo's, ready in this short time but as soon as I landed in Bangkok, I realised that it was most definitely all worth it and a dream come true.

I competed against hopefuls from 52 other countries who also wanted the title of Mr. Manhunt International 2012. In the end, it was the deserving June Mac from the Philippines who walked away with the title. I am truly honoured to now have 52 new friends from around the world, who I still keep in contact with and some who are also supporting me on my Mr. South Africa 2014 journey. Throughout this competition I have not only learnt a lot about Thailand and it's culture, but also about so many different cultures from around the world! The final event was held on my sister's birthday, the 9th of November and I was extremely lucky to have my family in the audience that night to support me. It was indeed an incredible experience, but after the experience, I realised there is nothing like your own country.

What does your “day job” entail?

I've recently completed my BA Law degree at the University of Pretoria and I am currently a final year LLB student there with only a few more modules to complete before I receive this degree. I also currently attend evening classes from Mondays to Thursdays on campus and I'm doing research for my masters' degree studies, which I would like to complete at the end of 2015. Throughout the day between classes and breaks, I train with my personal trainer at Groenkloof, Pretoria and use my time wisely to focus on the Mr. South Africa competition.

What is femininity for you?

Femininity is beauty, it's independence. I believe it's something that exists in both women and men. We live in a country where we all share the same and equal rights, where women are seen in the same light as men. My wish is for this to be the case in every country around the world.

What bothers you the most about what is happening in the world today and why?

So many issues, so little time to tell you about that one thing that bothers me, but right now it is the amount of talent that is being wasted, specifically by our youth. Each of us was born with greatness within, a talent, a reason, a gift - to reach whatever our dreams might be and more. I would like to use the Mr. South Africa platform/title to inspire others to use all their given talents to the best of their abilities, to not give up on themselves and also not to waste the gifts given to them.

What is the most important lesson pageantry and modelling has taught you?

The unfortunate reality is that there'll always be someone taller, smarter, older or more experienced than you, but pageantry has also taught me to believe in myself, focus on who and what I am and to always have faith in myself. You may just be what the judges are looking for. Each and every one of us has winning qualities within us.

Who or what inspires you the most and why?

I am inspired by Dr. Michael Mol. Not only is he a former Mr. South Africa, but he is also a medical doctor, an executive television producer, presenter, international speaker and business consultant. Most importantly he is a father, husband and a man of God. He is also a Red Cross Children's Champion and a patron of SA Cares for Life. I aspire to follow in his footsteps and one day be the role model he is to me, to our society. He, to me, is someone that stands out on many levels and is in fact, a model male to our society.

If you decide to write an autobiography, what would you call it?

I would call it 'Looking Back, Looking Forward'! I think it is important not to just look at what lies ahead, but never to forget what happened in the past. I believe what happened in the past contributed to making you the person you are today. All the challenges we might have faced in the past made us stronger and ready for whatever may lie ahead. It is obviously important to have goals and dreams and it is important to keep that in mind too throughout your day!

Who is your supported charity of choice and why?

The Teddy Bear Clinic for Abused Children (TTBC) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to ensuring abused children are protected and rehabilitated. They provide therapy, counselling,

assistance, love, comfort, safety and ongoing support to children who have been abused. The Teddy Bear Clinic does not only work with children, but with parents and communities as well, empowering them with knowledge and skills so that we can all help put an end to child abuse. They also proactively approach schools to provide education to learners and training to teachers in order to prevent any abuse that may happen in their day-to-day lives.

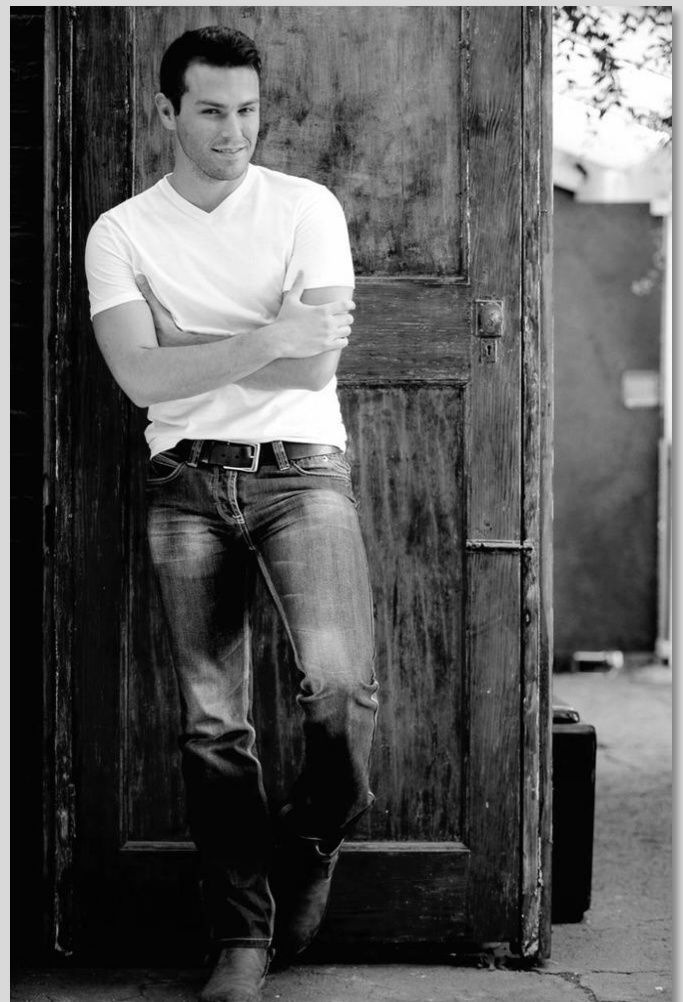
This is a cause very close to my heart, as I wrote my dissertation in Child Law and dealt with various causes, not only throughout the writing of my thesis but also throughout my studies. The Teddy Bear Clinic is facing some of the very same problems. I am looking forward to holding hands with this organisation throughout, and even after, my Mr. South Africa journey. In future, I would gladly offer my legal advice to this organisation. I am truly honoured to have this organisation as my supported charity of choice.

What would you tell a boy suffering from low self-esteem?

In short, I will tell him that he has all the reason in the world to be proud of himself and that he does have qualities that makes him stand out and be different from the 'average' guy. Low-esteem is such an unnecessary quality to have, embrace yourself.

One of the most famous beauty pageant questions is 'what is the essence of a woman?' But for you, what is the essence of a man?

A man has such an important role to play in society. The essence of a man is to embrace himself, to work hard, to have



dreams, to be successful, if he can, drive a smart car, dress well and change lives.

If you could invite five people (dead or alive) to dinner, who would it be and why would you choose them?

As a proud South African, I would only invite South Africans to my dinner. I would invite our current President, Mr. Jacob Zuma and his four predecessors namely: Kgalema Motlanthe (who served as President from 25 September 2008 to 9 May 2009), Thabo Mbeki (who served as President from 16 June 1999 to 24 September 2008), the late Nelson Mandela (who served as President from 16 June 1999 to 10 May 2004), and F.W De Klerk (South Africa's last State President). All of these men played vital roles in the change of the new South Africa, a new constitution and of course, the end of apartheid. It would make for a very interesting dinner table.

Which CD is playing in your car right now?

I am a very big Josh Groban supporter and currently it is his latest CD, 'All That Echoes', playing in my car.

What is your favourite book?

Seeing that I am reading many court reports on a daily basis for study purposes, I am unfortunately no longer an avid storybook reader. I much rather prefer to read motivational books by authors such as Joel Osteen. His book, "BREAK OUT" is my current favourite. This book has helped me break out and break free so I can believe bigger, increase productivity, improve relationships and accomplish my dreams.

What does your morning routine consist of?

Waking up way too early. Haha! ;)



If you had to pick only one, would it be beauty or brains and why?

Brains. As much as all of us would want beauty, the sad reality is that beauty will fade away over the years but brains will be with you forever. I also believe that with intellect more generations can be reached, inspired and motivated!

What advice would you give guys wanting to get rid of a beer-belly?

I never wanted to believe it when others told me that eating is much more important than training, I have learnt the hard way and can now say the best advice I have received, and that I could give guys who want to get rid of a beer-belly, is to start making small healthy changes in their eating plan that will promise big results.

How important is it to look your best at all times?

We are all human beings and some days we just want to be relaxed but being in the spotlight among our country's people, it is of extreme importance to look your best at all times. You never know who might call you and what opportunity could come your way each day. Never miss out on an opportunity, so dress accordingly.

What advice would you give to someone looking to enter the Mr SA 2015 competition?

I have been following the Mr. South Africa competition for the past few years and I have seen what it has done for some of the previous winners and what changes those winners have made in the lives of people less fortunate than us. I have taken the step to enter Mr. South Africa 2014 and even though the journey has been short to date, it has been an incredible one that will undoubtedly be a life-changing journey. Advice I would give to future entrants is to start early with their preparations and start, in the meantime, by reaching out to those in your immediate environment.

Anything else you'd like to share with our readers?

I've got a message of thanks to both the fans and readers of the Models & Pageantry SA Magazine and would hereby like to thank everyone for their unbelievable support and motivation throughout this journey. I will keep on giving it my all throughout the rest of this journey and hope that I'll make all of you proud! I can't wait to share the rest of my experiences with all of you. Please follow me on Twitter at @armandduplessis, Instagram at @armanddup and on Facebook as I'll be keeping all my loyal supporters up to date on what's happening in the search of an ambassador for our country, Mr. South Africa 2014.

In conclusion, stay true to who you are and what you stand for; you were made unique and special. Don't imitate, originate!

If you think Armand should be the next Mr South Africa, then show your support.

To vote for Armand, simply SMS 'M RSA 008' to 47439 .

VAS rates apply – R3.00 per sms.