



Peaceful man: Russell Crowe at the premiere of his new film, *Body of Lies*.

REUTERS

# Method in his madness

RUSSELL CROWE would like the world to know he is not an angry man. Sure, three years ago he threw a phone at a New York concierge, was arrested and spent a few hours in a New York police cell. In another infamous outburst, the Oscar winner confronted and delivered a verbal blast to the English TV producer responsible for cutting Crowe's speech short at the 2002 British Academy of Film and Television Arts awards in London. But, again, that incident was

many moons ago. Crowe has been on his best behaviour in recent years and is eager to shed the bad boy image. "I assure you I'm not an angry man," the New Zealand-born, Australian resident and onetime Hollywood wild man, said during an interview in Los Angeles. When you meet Crowe, it is understandable why some are intimidated. He's an Aussie larrikin and physically imposing, standing about 182cm, and thanks to his role in the new spy thriller, *Body of Lies*, the actor packed on almost 30kg,

although he has shed two-thirds of that, leaving him today at a solid 95kg. When Crowe talks to you, his eyes lock on and do not let go until he is finished his sentences, which are often long, well thought out answers. Today, the 44-year-old is wearing his hair in a long ponytail that falls well below his shoulder blades. He's tired of the references to his colourful past and says his words, dripped in Aussie sarcasm, are often lost in translation. "It is so convenient to take my sense of humour and pretend that it's anger," Crowe explained.

"Because in black and white, my kind of level of dry humour does not go across well. "Sarcasm doesn't work on the page." Crowe's home life in Sydney appears to have calmed the beast that once lived inside him. In April he celebrated his fifth wedding anniversary to Danielle Spencer and the couple has two sons, Charles, 4, and Tennyson, 2. Despite a film career where he reportedly receives \$20 million per movie and his role as co-owner of his beloved Rabbitohs rugby league team, it is his wife and children that

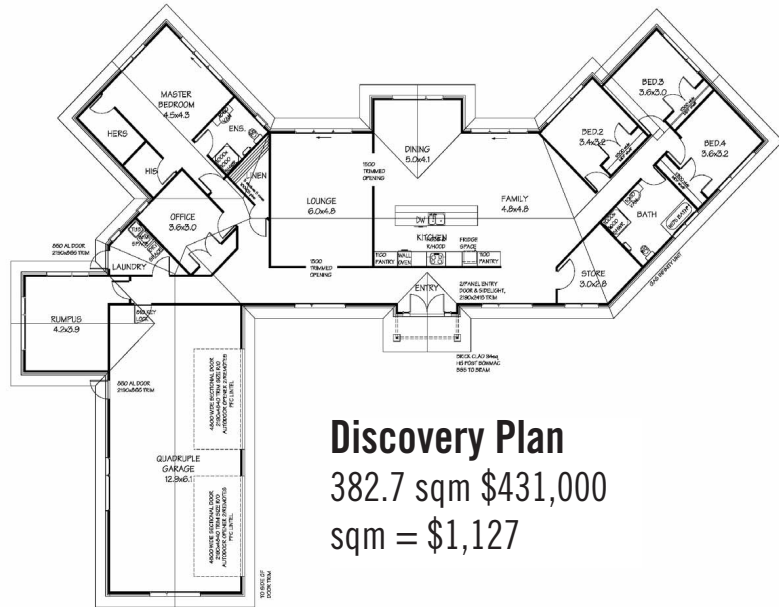
are number one. "I think I'm beyond caring about misconceptions," Crowe says of the bad press. "I will just get on with my day, get on with my life and prioritise my life as I see the needs are." Crowe has also found a way to avoid butting heads with directors. He largely limits himself to directors he knows and has worked with in the past. Five of his last eight films were with Ridley Scott (*Body of Lies*, *American Gangster*, *A Good Year*) or Ron Howard (*A Beautiful Mind* and *Cinderella Man*). Toss in Crowe's Oscar-winning

performance in Scott's 2000 epic, *Gladiator*, and their upcoming film, *Nottingham*, where Crowe will play the Sheriff of Nottingham in the new take on Robin Hood, and Crowe and Scott will have collaborated five times in eight years.

While fair and justifiable given some of the treatment dished out in the bad old days, in this rush to celebrate a new found equality we seem to have forgotten we are in fact different. It seems a little extreme to eliminate all points of difference between what are after all two fundamentally different sexes. I think we need to celebrate the genetic differences we have been given and embrace the uniqueness of our sexes. God forbid in 50 years all we are left with is men in eyeliner and women in pants.

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