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High-flying, successful types around Belgravia sometimes need a helping hand fitting a love life into their packed schedules. That's where specialist elite dating agency the Rowe-Lyon Partnership comes in. Kate White reports

Lucky in life? Get lucky in love...

A girl falls over in the road and almost gets hit by a taxi. The man in the back, who just happens to be a midnight handsome Daniel Craig lookalike, jumps out and asks if he can help. Gazing into his eyes, the girl just instantly knows he's the one.

This is a familiar plot in chick-flick movies. But for those who want a more realistic way of meeting a partner, joining a dating agency is the way to go, say Harley and Natalie Dorman. The sisters founded their Belgravia-based agency, the Rowe-Lyon Partnership, 18 months ago and specialise in finding partners for the elite and successful.

Typical clients are hard-working professionals who have focused on a successful career in the City, but their main desires and haven't had time for marriage and children. Others are 50-something divorcees who simply want a companion to go on holiday with. They join Rowe-Lyon because they don't know where to look.

"It's difficult to meet a partner," explains Harley. "As you get older your social circle becomes smaller, and if you've divorced, you tend to lose half of it. Once you've exhausted friends of friends who are single, where do you go?

"It's a lot harder for men, as well. It's the nature of the world, in the modern day people want everything done quickly, and our service caps the chance of success and makes the process faster. Maybe you will get lucky in a car, and be the person that you were will end up marrying you. But when is that going to happen? Do you want to be lucky, or do you want to be proactive?"

Alison Tyler owns of Rowe-Lyon claims that a relationship of six months or longer from the database of nearly 500 clients, which consists of 40 per cent men and 60 per cent women – a slightly more than that goes against the industry's underwater monitors of lack of men. In comparison, internet dating has a stunning six per cent success rate.

The sisters say, this down to their personal touch. They meet every potential client for a coffee to discuss what their wants from a relationship and to find out about their background, lifestyle, education, career, hobbies and where they go on holiday. The more the girls get to know a client, the better they can pair them up with the best possible matches.

"Unlike internet dating, we've met every single member already face-to-face," says Natalie. "The internet is a very easy way to hide behind, and when you tell a guy that you only top the bins here, 'Some people are incredible honest on there, but the majority aren't.

"Also, we really strive to have a personal relationship and know all our clients. We don't ask people to fill in forms or do psychological tests. We match people with people rather than profiles with profiles."

Joining a dating agency means you are making sure the pool of people you could potentially meet have a lot in common with you. Has anyone fallen in love down to chemistry? "You can't buy that," says Harley. "We've seen brand-day clients end up in long-term relationships with the most unlikely person, somebody they probably would have eliminated in the initial interview stage." Many clients feel daunted when they find themselves unexpectedly single, and the agency offers a free hour with a confidence coach or image consultant to new members. "Self-esteem can often be the biggest obstacle in dating," says Natalie. "If you have someone that has been married for 20 years and suddenly finds themselves single, you can understand why they don't feel so fabulous."

Harley adds: "I've had ladies calling me up saying, 'I'm meeting him in an hour and nothing in front of my wardrobe. What should I wear?' Everyone ensures is such a certain amount of trepidation. We've got a fair of executives of international companies who will gladly stand up and chat to 300 people at a conference, but would them on a date and they're a bit of a wreck."

Meeting someone through an agency or online is no longer taboo, says Natalie. "There didn't is more taboo now to have tried online dating or joined an agency. We looked to America, going to a bit, because whatever they do, we respect, our service industries follow. In America, about 90 per cent of people met at a third-party source to find a partner.

"You can see how people who are accomplished, professional and successful is very hard to find a partner. And that's why the stigma around dating agencies is starting to fall away, because it is normal to struggle to find someone these days. We're more connected than ever but it's harder than ever to meet people. It's a strange paradox."

So have there been any wedding bells yet? "We've only been going 18 months," says Harley. "But we do have a couple who have been together for a year and have now moved in together. I'm definitely go a feeling we'll be getting one here on our year."

Dating can throw numerous challenges at us, but one of the most universal concerns is what to wear on a first date. Harley and Natalie share their tips

Men

- IRON YOUR CLOTHES. Your wouldn't turn up to a job interview with unwashed hair or a creased shirt, so take the same attitude when meeting a date for the first time. First impressions do count.
- LOOK SMART. You don't have to wear a Savile Row suit, but don't appear as if you've made no effort. Your date will have thought about her wardrobe so you should too. Dress smart casual.
- AVOID BOLD CLOTHES. These usually reflect a non-pit at the office Christmas party, the slogan T-shirt and Homer Simpson tie – all a big 'no-no'.

Women

- LOSE THE WAR PAINT. You would not believe how many of our gentlemen members like too much make-up as a major turn-off. Natural beauty is so much more attractive.
- BE COMPLIMENTARY. Your clothes should enhance your personality and character. If you dress out of your comfort zone it will show on your date.
- DON'T BARE ALL. A little that dishes the fashion or a top that shows your entire cleavage sites not create class. Think Audrey Hepburn, not Pamela Anderson.

Handsome: Harley and Natalie Dorman

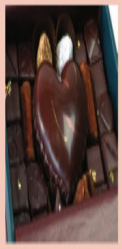
Love cushion, £15.95, from Lidl, 67 Riverside Street

So you've got a date – now what are you going to buy them for Valentine's Day? Look no further than Belgravia's boutiques for some heart-warming inspiration

Handmade Soaps, £4.95, from Bubblicious Organic, 4-8 Pimlico Road

Holding Lover in Hand by Thomas, £9.99, from Hoopes Jewellers, 19 Elizabeth Street

Wine coasters, £19.99, from www.uniqueoverstock.com



Polka dot bikini briefs, £8.95, from Hugo Pomelo, 18 Elizabeth Street

Dress Tower stands, £19, from Jamie Wood, 48 A Pimlico Road

Box of 24 matchsticks, £3.5, from Paper Dreams, 23 Lowndes Street

Valentine's gift box, £18, from William Cadby, 130 Ebury Street

Love Woman perfume, £120 for 50ml, from Amouage, 14 Lowndes Street

Heart and Birds cushion designed for Home World, £90, from www.home-world.co.uk

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