

Portraits of

Vivacious profiles some of Aucklands Top Women

AC



Erica Whineray Kelly

Breast surgeon, Dr. Erica Whineray Kelly, freely admits she has been known to shed a few tears with patients.

She explains: "You really build intimate relationships with these people during one of the worst times of their lives. I do get involved, but then I've never had a patient or family complain about that."

Erica, who is one of only three female breast surgeons in Auckland, currently works three days a week and the rest of the time is devoted to her family, James, three, Olivia, five, and husband Mark.

She admits: "I have a fantastic job but it is good to have time out. The lows can be very low but a senior colleague once told me to remind myself that patients will always do better because they have seen me - that helps."

She adds: "I remember when James was two; I came home one day upset after breaking sad news to a patient. He came up to me and said, don't cry mum, I know what will make you happy - let me pick your nose... my children provide me with the perfect balance!"

The good news is that thanks to the many advances in breast cancer diagnosis and treatment, there is now an 80% cure rate. Erica says: "People used to think of it as a death sentence but we do really well now."

"Breast Cancer is a very exciting field to be in. Conservation is the theme - the surgery is smaller, there are trials of radiation therapy given intra-operatively and a patient's cancer genetics will soon tailor their chemotherapy."

And Erica says she is constantly amazed, and inspired, by her patients' strength: "I learn a little bit from all of them."

Erica spent her high school years in Auckland before attending the Otago School of Medicine. The 36-year-old says: "I wanted to be a doctor because that was what my big brother wanted to be. He never did do it in the end!"

Erica now works as a consultant breast surgeon for the Breast Screening Waitemata Northland and WDH. She and four colleagues from North Shore Hospital have also just launched Auckland Breast Centre in Milford, a clinic offering the latest technology and treatment - all under one roof.

She is a member of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Breast Section, and is on the executive of the Auckland Breast Cancer Study Group. But with a special interest in lobular neoplasia, Erica has still found time to publish and present in her field.

What's the one quality responsible for your success? Determination.

A female YOU admire? My mother - for having four children aged under five years and still finding the time to show us how to reach our potential.

An ambition you have yet to fulfil? To speak another language.

What are you currently reading? Black Swan Green by David Mitchell

What would we find in your music collection? Hotel Costes, David Gray and Bob Dylan.

Favourite dining in Auckland? The Grove.

Favourite way to unwind? The whole weekend paper uninterrupted over two lattes.

The essential beauty product? Lancôme Juicy Tubes Lip Gloss.

Most precious possession? The first card that my daughter made for my son.



Jill Marshall

Author Jill Marshall need look no further than her own daughter Katie for inspiration for her best-selling series featuring teen spy, Jane Blonde.

For the 12-year-old has proved very adept at leading her own double life. Jill laughs: "She hasn't told anyone at school that I'm her mum, apparently. And she doesn't read my books because 'it's not cool'. It's like I do this dreadful thing!"

But Katie's schoolfriends will definitely have heard of Jill's heroine, whose sixth adventure, *Spy in the Sky*, will be released in November.

The series has proved a massive hit with the tween generation since Jane Blonde emerged in *Sensational Spylet*, back in 2006.

But the super spy and her quieter alter-ego, Janey Brown, were originally destined only for the eyes of English-born Jill.

She says: "I was still living in the UK then and I had an agent who was interested in some historical fiction I had written. That was the book I thought would finally get me published, Jane was just something I was writing for fun."

"Then, having decided to move to Auckland, I packaged up all my manuscripts and sent them to my agent. She immediately identified Jane Blonde as the best."

While Jill had always wanted to be a writer, she pursued a career in human resources, training and management after university. Then, in 2000, at the age of 35, she underwent what she calls her 'millennium moment'. She says: "I gave up the job, took an MA in Writing for Children, left the UK and let out all these stories that were caged up in my head. And I haven't stopped since."

Alongside Jane Blonde, Jill has published a 'hen lit' book (aimed at females 30+) called *The Two Miss Parsons*, while *Doghead*, her first book for boys, and a

picture book for younger readers will be published next year.

Jill also runs her own consultancy, Write Good Stuff!, offering courses, manuscript assessment and school workshops. "It's about helping people and I'm a bit of a performer so I love the training sessions," she explains.

Her passion for supporting other writers led her to finance the WGS Children's Writing Residency at The Michael King Writers' Centre in Devonport this year. From a heap of entries Jill chose two worthy winners who were each awarded five weeks living at the centre to work on their manuscripts, mentoring from Jill and potential access to an agent. Jill says: "It's been amazing, I'd love to make it an annual event."

What's the one quality responsible for your success? Tenacity.

A female YOU admire? My mum.

An ambition you have yet to fulfil? Seeing Jane Blonde at the cinema.

What are you currently reading? I tend to read non-fiction while I'm writing, so I will recycle a Bill Bryson very soon!

What would we find in your music collection? I am too ashamed to say. It's all so middle of the road, or should I say middle of the age... I love my daughter's Kooks album though, and anything with Neil Finn in/on it.

Favourite dining in Auckland? Probably Erawan Thai in Herne Bay. Great food and a gorgeous building. And White's at the Hilton.

Favourite way to unwind? Movie, glass of wine, walk the dog, coffee with friends - not necessarily in that order, and sometimes all at the same time.

The essential beauty product? Chamomile tea. It helps me sleep, which is something I struggle with occasionally.

Most precious possession? My daughter. Is she a possession?! Anyway, she's mine and she's fab.

achievement

Miriama Smith



Only a few short months ago, actress and presenter Miriama Smith waltzed her way into the hearts of judges on TV One's Dancing With The Stars.

Now Miriama is the one wielding the scores as she joins Paul Ellis and Richard Driver on the judging panel of Prime Television's, New Zealand's Got Talent.

The country-wide auditions attracted 170 diverse acts from yodellers to belly dancers. The day after we chatted, Miriama, Paul and Richard faced whittling those down to a more manageable 30 acts, which the public will vote for. The winner will walk away with a cool \$100,000.

Miriama says: "We saw a lot of dancers and singers - as you might expect - and quite a few acrobats. We had a few unexpected curve balls too, but you'll have to watch the show to find out what they are..."

Miriama and dance partner Jonny Williams were eliminated in the semi-finals of Dancing With The Stars (DWTS), following a week when her ribs were injured during rehearsal.

So will Miriama call on those tough experiences in her new role? "Well, I will certainly be able to empathise with the contestants and understand the pressure they face," she says. "But I have to respect the fact that they could win \$100,000. That's a lot of money so I owe it to everyone to be critical."

During high school, Miriama appeared on TV screens in a range of roles. But it was whilst studying Leisure Studies at Waikato University that she really hit the big time as Awhina Broughton in Shortland Street. For 21-year-old Miriama, the change from pub-going student to household name was a big adjustment and she left the show in 1998. She went on to make her mark as Dana McNichol in Mercy Peak.

Miriama said: "DWTS is the most watched show I've been in since Shortland Street - it's one of the biggest machines on TV - so I really weighed it up before

I accepted. It has proved fantastic personally and professionally though and I certainly don't regret it."

With words like actor, presenter, model and dancer on her CV, the 32-year-old has plenty of skills to choose from and she's keeping an open mind about the future. She said: "When it's a great piece there's nothing like acting - it's amazing. However, presenting allows me to really be myself. Combining that with travel would be something I would love to do. Mmmm, presenting a travel show, now that would be perfect!"

New Zealand's Got Talent can be seen on Prime at 7.30pm on Mondays.

- What's the one quality responsible for your success?** Drive.
- A female YOU admire?** Mum.
- An ambition you have yet to fulfil?** Write a film script.
- What are you currently reading?** Eat, Pray, Love by Elizabeth Gilbert.
- What would we find in your music collection?** Neo Soul, R&B, Reggae, Jazz.
- Favourite dining in Auckland?** Japanese (Soto, Nishiki)
- Favourite way to unwind?** Yoga.
- The essential beauty product?** The Environ C-Quence range is amazing! Also, Jane Iredale PurePressed Base in Latte (loving mineral make up).
- Most precious possession?** My independence.

Pippa Jinks



When Pippa Jinks launched her new cloth nappy range, Snazzipants, at the Parent and Child Show in 2003, she was nervous...very nervous.

She says: "My mum Maria and I were so passionate - we had taken out a huge bank loan and spent the last six months researching, prototyping, finding suppliers. But as we waited for those doors to open, I thought what on earth have we done?"

Pippa needn't have worried. Their little stall was soon six-people deep with customers eager to find out more. By the 2004 show, Snazzipants' stand was one of six cloth nappy stalls. Pippa says simply: "The time had come."

Snazzipants now designs, manufactures, and imports a wide range of eco-friendly reusable nappy systems, selling nationally and internationally through a thriving internet business, www.snazzipants.co.nz, and a shop in Milford's Kitchener Road.

Snazzipants was also a finalist in the North Shore Times Excellence in Sustainability section of the Westpac Enterprise North Shore Business Excellence Awards.

And Pippa has her five-year-old son Luka to thank for the amazing success of her business. She says: "Before Luka, I was a perfectly normal teacher at Takapuna Primary School, going on maternity leave to have her first baby. I was not the cloth zealot I am today!

"When he was born, I was determined to use cloth nappies for budget reasons, but I soon found the choices here to be very limited (in a leaky kind of way)."

Friends saw her struggling and urged her to turn to disposables, but Pippa was "stubborn" and kept developing and trialling new products. She discovered that overseas there had been a cloth nappy revolution and realised there must be other New Zealand mums keen to get their hands on them too. So Snazzipants was born.

She adds: "And the health and environmental information I unearthed convinced me to convert the world to cloth!"

Now, all Snazzipants' fabric is New Zealand-sourced and production takes place locally. Pippa, who is also mum to two-year-old Pearl, is keen to support other work-at-home mums and sells their 'boutique-style' cloth nappies in her shop.

In fact, Snazzipants has joined with seven leading nappy companies to form the New Zealand Nappy Alliance, promoting the cloth nappy cause and raising quality and professionalism in the industry.

Pippa says: "We nearly lost all that cloth nappy knowledge because there was a whole generation using disposables. Now nearly everyone knows someone who uses them and they're almost mainstream."

- What's the one quality responsible for your success?** You really have to believe in what you are doing and grit your teeth when things look bleak. And they will.
- A female YOU admire?** My Mum, who is also my business partner.
- An ambition you have yet to fulfil?** Building an adobe house next to a lake and spending entire days knitting.
- What are you currently reading?** Marian Keyes' latest. Also Knitting Vintage Socks.
- What would we find in your music collection?** An album by Martha Wainwright that is just divine.
- Favourite dining in Auckland?** Curry night at my house. My husband cooks. Need I say more?
- Favourite way to unwind?** Glass of wine in hand and virtual shopping on Etsy (your place to buy and sell all things handmade).
- The essential beauty product?** Sleep. As the mother of young children I cannot rate this highly enough in making one look a little less haggard.
- Most precious possession?** Ahhh...family...health...not strictly possessions. If I say my Minnie Cooper boots will I look shallow?