

# *un Interview with* *Peter Burke*

*by Jason Maling*  
*May 2004*



*Above: Jason and Peter in front of Shelly  
Image courtesy the artist 2004*

## **Brand loyalty**

Many people may remember Shelly from her page three swimsuit appearance in the *Pedestrian Times* in March 2002, where she confessed that her big ambition was to be on billboards. If the new *Innocence*<sup>TM</sup> billboard and website campaign that has recently sprung up around Melbourne is anything to go by it seems that Shelly has come a long way since her first job as a retail in-store demonstrator. You may also be aware of artist Peter Burke who is behind the campaign and who has previously introduced Melbourne to such fine characters as Princess Incandescence, FutureX quack Dr Clarence Chan, *Pedestrian Times* mogul Hugo Pikestaff and the less flamboyant but no less relevant Pedro from the company that always delivered, Starlink Express. Peter Burke works on the frontline of consumer desire and satisfaction. I had the pleasure of putting a few brief questions to Peter and Shelly.



**Above:** Peter Burke  
'The Inner Flambe'  
Photo: Julie Hunt



**Above:** Peter Burke  
'Hugo Pikestaff'  
Photo: Irene Crusca



**Above left:** Peter Burke & Robin Hely  
'Rob and Pedro from Starlink Express'  
Photo: Tal Kochavi



**Above right:** Peter Burke  
'Professor Chan'

Photo: Denis Weymouth (courtesy Leader newspapers)

**Jason Maling:** Peter, is Shelly really the public face of *Innocence*<sup>TM</sup>, or is she just somewhere for Peter Burke to hide?

**Peter Burke:** I'm not sure. Shelly is bigger and braver than I am. Shelly and I collaborate. She gives me a place in which to invent freely and I give her public exposure.

**JM:** What came first, Shelly or *Innocence*<sup>TM</sup>?

**PB:** *Innocence*<sup>TM</sup> developed a product called *Happiness*<sup>TM</sup> we so needed a public face. We sought the best model available.

**JM:** It seems Shelly has become whole and fully realised through the campaign.

**PB:** That's true. I feel Shelly is resolved now. She has come a long way. There were big problems making Shelly, she has taken many shapes and forms. There was a time when she was going to be dropped from the project altogether. A lot of people helped with Shelly and a lot of people tried to be Shelly. Other people wanted to be up on those billboards. They would go shopping with Shelly and try to make her buy clothes to look like them. They tried to make their own Shelly modelled on themselves, but I wouldn't have it. There have been 1950s versions of Shelly, 1970s versions, silly Shellys, Savers Shellys and slick superficial Chapel Street Shellys but she's the real Shelly now. She's arrived. She's one hundred per cent

**JM:** Is Shelly just hired help? Did she have any say in the look of the campaign?

**PB:** Shelly is not like other models that might work for one company and then flip over to another one. She really believes in *Innocence*<sup>TM</sup> and endorses the products totally.

**JM:** What product do you think Shelly best epitomises?

**PB:** She endorses all the products but I've got a feeling she epitomises one of the discontinued lines, 'Destiny – it will get you in the end'.

**Shelly Innocence joins the interview.....**

**JM:** Shelly, is the *Innocence*<sup>TM</sup> campaign a major step for you?

**SI:** Hi Jason. I previously specialised in the area of aromas and accessories but I'm not into products anymore. I'm into concepts now. That's what's different about *Innocence*<sup>TM</sup>. We market concepts not products. I love to slip into a good concept in the morning.

**JM:** I agree there really isn't anything like the cool splash of concept on the cheek. Where does your commitment end? Is this a contractual arrangement?

**SI:** There is a contract but the completion date is unspecified. There is something I'd like to say here: I'm very happy to be doing the campaign and I'm getting paid, but my role as the public face of *Innocence*<sup>TM</sup> is really unresolved. It's the weakest part of the project. I'm upset over the fact that I'm treated like a blank canvas onto which other people, the team members and the public, project their own fantasies. I would like to discuss this issue with the *Innocence*<sup>TM</sup> CEO and I've even considered withdrawing from the project.

*The Innocence*<sup>TM</sup> project has its on-going melodramas posted at <[www.shelleyinnocence.com](http://www.shelleyinnocence.com)>

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