

Dan Nicholl - TV presenter, MC, and popular public figure

 By [Evan-Lee Courie](#)

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I have a chat with Dan Nicholl of *The Dan Nicholl Show* to find out how the show started, his recipe for success and what's next for him.



■ ***You're a television presenter, MC, and popular public figure. How do you keep the balance?***

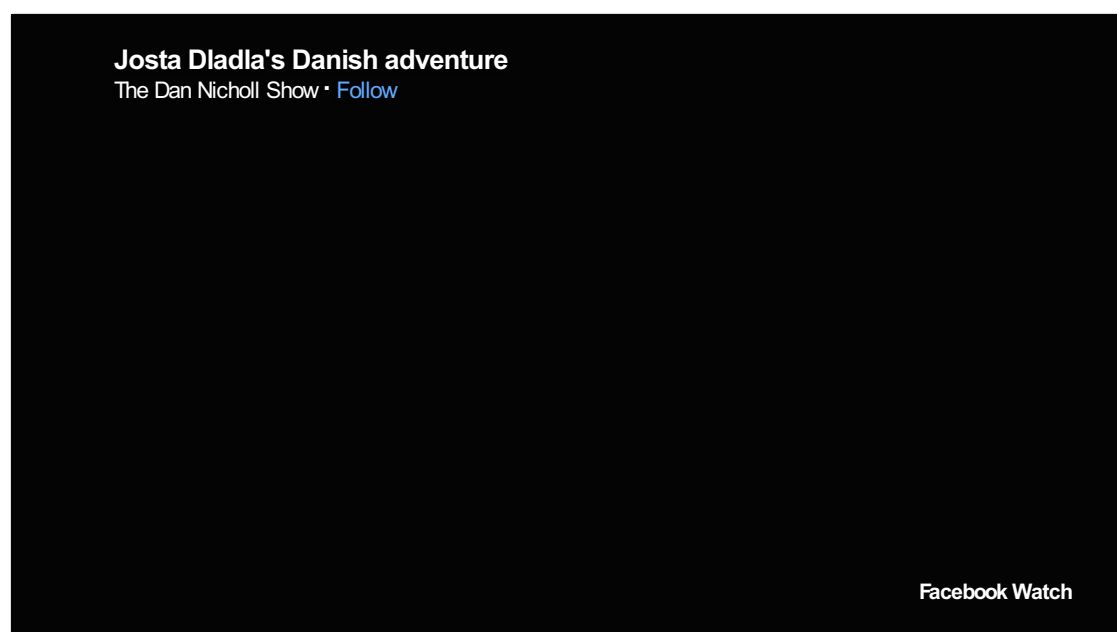
It's a very different challenge now - MC events are mostly online, as is a lot of filming, so my usual daft travel schedule has changed dramatically. And that's probably made for more balance, with afternoons spent on the trampoline or hunting for dinosaurs in the garden with the kids. But pre-Covid, I'd look to make the most of every event or travel opportunity - combining an MC assignment with filming something for one of my shows, or getting inspiration for a column.

■ ***What's really behind your mask - literally and figuratively speaking?***

Literally, three days of stubble that my daughter is demanding I get rid off (apparently it's not quite so cool with the six-year-old demographic). Figuratively, mixed feelings: the pandemic seems never-ending, and I'm missing events and travel, as well as my family in London and Northern Ireland. But we're doing fine as a family, and a lot of people are having a far tougher time, so in that sense I'm grateful. And I haven't watched all of ShowMax...yet.

■ ***Growing up, what did you want to be?***

Dolly Parton's husband, according to my mum. (I was four.) Later on, a professional cricketer, or a sports journalist. The skill didn't quite match the enthusiasm for the cricket, but I've pretty much delivered on the latter ambition.



■ ***The Dan Nicholl Show is gearing up for its 13th season. How did the idea initially start?***

I spent a year in Australia as a Rotary Youth Exchange student when I was 16, and encountered *The Footy Show*, an Australian rules football magazine show with humour and entertainment at its core. That sparked the first interest in doing something similar; throw forward to 2001, and I got talking to Bob Skinstad after the Currie Cup final, and he'd seen a show called *The Lion Red Sports Café* in New Zealand, with a similar approach. We shot a pilot for our own show with Ric Salizzo, the guy behind the show in New Zealand, and I was convinced television stardom was in the bag; took me 13 years to finally get a version of the show on television...

■ ***Did you have any idea it would be this popular when you started?***

I honestly hadn't given that aspect much thought. It had taken so long to get the show on air that I just wanted to get it to television.

“ I was pretty certain the show would work and people would enjoy it, but just getting a season out was the initial aim. ”

12 seasons done, with two more scheduled for this year? That's definitely surpassed all expectations.

■ ***What is your recipe for your success?***

In terms of the show, hard work is the cornerstone, plus patience, and determination. And having the right people around you. Kelvin Watt, my partner on the show, believed in the concept when many didn't. Suzanne Stevens, from our partners BrightRock, saw something in the show that I'm not sure even I did, and they've been the brand behind us since the start. And the people who work with me on *The Dan Nicholl Show*, especially Mias Steenberg, my producer, are fantastic. And generally, building up a strong network, delivering on the promises you make, and trying to deliver a little more than people might expect. I don't always get it right, but it's a philosophy that I try to stick to.

▣ ***What's a typical work day routine?***

Not sure there's a typical day! But through the week, I host my online wine show, *Dan Really Likes Wine*, live on Mondays and Thursdays; Mondays are also spent finalising scripts and guests for Tuesday's recording of *The Dan Nicholl Show*. Through the rest of the week there's travel, engagements with some of the brands I work with, the endless stream of social media, hopefully a round of golf, and usually some writing - plus school runs, getting to ballet lessons and swimming classes, and cooking, which is my favourite way to unwind (and experiment with new recipes, to the general dismay of my family).

▣ ***Where are you based during lockdown?***

My cellar, my cottage and my kitchen! Between filming the wine show, filming digital episodes of *The Dan Nicholl Show*, and hosting a range of other online shows - from cooking and business, to music and sport - I had three makeshift studios set up around the house. But I also had more time at home than I have in the last 20 years, and just mucking about with the kids and spending time with my wife was very precious. Although I suspect my wife might be quite happy for some of the travel to re-start...

▣ ***When you're not busy working, what do you do? How do you socialise these days?***

Like many families, we've done very little socialising over the last year - at least in person. Plenty of online gatherings, having meals or wine tastings with friends and family in different parts of the world. I try to get out onto the golf course once a week for some fresh air, go running most mornings, and have reluctantly acquired a SkillBike - at 42, staying in shape is slightly more of a challenge.

▣ ***What's your favourite meme/gif of all time?***

Can I go cartoon? Gary Larson's *Middle School For The Gifted*. Google it.

▣ ***Are you watching any series? Reading any books at the moment?***

My wife and I have discovered *The Crown*, which is costing us huge amounts of sleep. And the current Australian series of *A Farmer Wants A Wife* is weirdly addictive. As for books, I'm halfway through Barack Obama's memoir, which is an honest, uplifting account that's all the more poignant given the current political climate in America.

▣ **What is the first thing you plan to do - if and when the lockdown lifts?**

Travel. I have a nephew in London I haven't met yet, and another nephew (who's also my godson) in Belfast I've only met once, so seeing them and the rest of my family is top of the list. And my wife is Greek, so getting over for some Mediterranean sunshine and Hellenic cuisine (my wife's aunts can't speak English, so communicate by feeding me) is also a top priority.

▣ **2021 has just begun. What's next for you?**

I've got a few new television projects in various stages of production, including a women's sports talk show that I'm genuinely excited about. Keeping *The Dan Nicholl Show* fresh, relevant and fun is important, especially after 12 Seasons. I'm also very excited about building up my wine business - the industry is struggling, but we do make some of the finest wine in the world, and it's an industry that, much like sport, flies the South African flag proudly around the globe.

For more about *The Dan Nicholl Show*, go to <https://www.thedannichollshow.co.za/>

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