

Most Eligible Phoenicians 2019

Written by Kiley Warren Photography by Michael Williams

Thursday, 17 January 2019 16:36 - Last Updated Tuesday, 05 February 2019 14:36



The struggle of meeting the right person and of maintaining a stable relationship in an ever-shifting society has complicated the world of dating even more. But that doesn't mean the pool of quality, available singles has disappeared. We've gathered some of the Valley's most eligible bachelors and bachelorettes to share their stories, dream dates and some of the best advice that they've ever received.



Trent Hancock

Vice president of Sales and Marketing at Camelot Homes

Age: 34

@iamjohnhancock

At only 7 years old, Hancock received his all-time favorite gift: a piano. Perhaps the gift was a token that later inspired his love for music. The once full-time musician traded in recording albums (four to be exact) and touring across the United States to serve as the vice president of Sales and Marketing for Camelot Homes.

What do you look for in a partner? I'm looking for the perfect combination of bad ass and nerdy. A dark sense of humor with a heart of gold. Must value creativity, curiosity and lifelong learning. I'm looking for someone to travel, surf, ski, bungee jump, make a fool of themselves on a dance floor and go bowling with. Also, they must love my dog, Ruby!

What is your dream date?

Fly to New York City in the springtime, go to Central Park, check out MoMA, have Billy Joel serenade us while we eat Grimaldi's Pizza at the park by the Brooklyn Bridge.

Adrienne Pilchard

Interior designer and project manager at Danielle Jacques Design

Age: 26

@a_bay_bayy

Pilchard is an interior designer and project manager who has an undeniable love for the beach, Taco Bell and margaritas (a k a she's one of the Valley's most down-to-earth bachelorettes). Above everything, she knows the value in quality time—so much so, that this past Christmas, she even gave her friends coupons for an hour of alone time with her.

What do you look for in a partner?

Humility! And humor. But I think those go hand in hand.

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What's the best present you ever received?

The best gift I have ever received was when my sister told me she was naming her daughter after me. She surprised me at her baby shower, and I was floored. I always knew I had "fun auntie" potential, but this blew that out of the water!



Anton Orlich

Asset management and U.S. Navy Reserve

Age: 42

A U.S. Navy Reserve, a doting father of two darling daughters and a dedicated employee who works in private equity, Orlich is a man of great perseverance and character. His dream date involves exquisite food, great wine and stimulating conversation. His own admiration for life is a trait he desires in a partner, too—whether provoked by a sculpture, a captivating sunset or perhaps even the perfect thunderstorm. Orlich isn't necessarily in the market for someone of similar interests, but rather someone who has a unique appreciation for beauty and profundity.

What is one thing that most people don't know about you?

I am in the Navy Reserve but have never been deployed at sea. All of my military experience has been on land, including a recent one-year deployment to Afghanistan.

What's the best present you ever gave someone? Ever received?

When my grandparents were celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary, I was too young to have a very large budget but was still aware of the gravitas that comes with 50 years. I went to the Phoenix Public Library and pulled up a cover from a long-ago Arizona Republic on microfilm, printed it out, blew it up and put it in a second-hand, but tasteful, frame. The cover was from the day of their wedding. Ever received? My two daughters worked together to make a beautiful card that said I am the "best daddy in the world" who makes "the best dinner ever—daddy's special pasta."

Ellie Trapple

Full-time student/bartender

Age: 27

@_elliecee

Amid the hustle of being a full-time dental hygiene student and a bartender, Trapple still manages to make time for some of the simpler things in life, like traveling and spending quality time with her family—she even notes her little sister, born a Christmas baby, as being the best gift that she's ever received. She is looking for someone to share these unique experiences with, ideally in the form of a date spent soaring through the skies in a hot air balloon or absorbing beautiful, desert landscapes via horseback.

What is one thing that most people don't know about you?

I love traveling and backpacked all over Europe last summer.

What does a typical day look like for you?

I am a bartender and am also a dental hygiene student. Working nights and weekends is something that makes it hard for me to date. My typical day starts out with going to the gym, meal prepping and working or spending time with friends.

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Patrick Sesty

Marketing communications manager at Desert Botanical Garden

Age: 34

@great_patsby

Sesty admires a genuine woman with a great personality, notes one of his favorite gifts as being a T-Rex that lights up in different colors and is looking for a relationship that is as "out of this world" as his dream date.

What is one thing that most people don't know about you?

I've partied at Leonardo DiCaprio's house.

What is your dream date?

We both hop on a rocket and take a day trip to the moon. Because then we both would agree that the date was out of this world.

Jamie Wray

Director of Membership and Marketing at Ancala Country Club

Age: 35

@kelseysmom4

Wray is a woman who has learned to truly appreciate the greater things in her life. Whether it's spending quality time with her daughter or building genuine connections with others through her work, she puts people first and places relationships at the center of her life. She values respect, loyalty and compassion—and as much as Wray values spontaneity, she also wants a partner who is happy to just hang out at home and watch TV.

What's the best advice someone ever gave you?

The grass is not always greener on the other side. This has taught me to appreciate what is right in front of me.

What's the best present you ever gave someone? Ever received?

Time. To me, you cannot put a price tag on time. It's something you cannot get back. I'm also a big fan of writing sweet letters letting someone know they are important. The best gift I ever received was my daughter. She is my motivation every day.

Sam Knight

Fitness influencer

Age: 26

@Samrknight

Knight is a man of great hope, passion and confidence. He sees himself as an open book and strives daily to wear his flaws profoundly—this eliminates the element of surprise and only leaves room for genuine, authentic relationships within his life. His passion for life and self-confidence plays an undeniable role in his love for his work as a fitness influencer.

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What do you look for in a partner?

I genuinely believe your significant other should be your best friend (don't confuse this with finding someone exactly like you; they are two entirely different things). I always try to formulate genuine friendships before ever considering taking things further. Humans will always fight, argue and have tough times but, if your significant other is your best friend, then no matter what happens you two can overcome.

What's the best present you ever received?

This may sound corny, but the best gift I ever received was belief in myself. My parents truly installed the belief in me that I could be unique and do whatever I wanted in my life. I do not know when it was, but there was a certain point that hit me where I realized how much I believed in myself. I genuinely think this gift has allowed me to reach new heights and continue to strive toward greatness in life.



Chelsea Lynn Pezzola

Professional golfer and golf media personality

Age: 26

@clpezzola

At just 26 years old, Pezzola is already a force to be reckoned with. And through her work as a professional golfer and media personality, no two days are ever really the same. From one day to the next, she could be playing in a celebrity pro-am tournament, filming TV segments with Fox Sports, or traveling around the world as a social media host. Did we mention that she also graduated with honors and has a business degree with a focus in sports management?

What's the best present you ever gave someone? Ever received?

The best present I've ever given someone was giving the gift of travel to my parents as I was able to take them to Dubai. It was incredible to experience this new part of the world with them and be able to share this unique experience especially through golf. For the best gift I've ever received, I'm going to have to go with my first set of golf clubs because—let's face it—without those I wouldn't be where I am today.

What is your dream date?

I love to be surprised. My dream date would be to have someone say pack a bag and surprise me with a new adventure.

Don Kriz

Manager of Aeronautics for the Arizona Department of Transportation.

Age: 61

Kriz currently manages two different, full-time positions at the Arizona Department of Transportation; he works as the acting group manager for Aeronautics as well as the state airport engineer. Despite his diverse and often hectic schedule, Kriz values the simpler things in life, like laughter, great friends and, yes, even a dirty martini. A dream date for Kriz is composed of a flavorful dinner, stimulating conversation and the faint sounds of jazz playing in the background.

What is one thing that most people don't know about you?

That although I am educated and practice as an engineer, I am an artist at heart. I believe in filling your home with art. I love color and express myself in stained glass and in how I design my home's interior. My former Tucson home was a feature in the Arizona Daily Star several years ago. That same article was later featured on the HGTV Web site. My Phoenix home is a work in progress.

What do you look for in a partner?

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A sense of humor, especially someone who understands mine. I often judge how well our date went by how much each of us has laughed during it.

Becca Booker

Owner and CEO of Homemade Social

Age: 25

@bbooks

Booker: modern social media queen. When she's not busy managing her company, Homemade Social, you might find her binge-watching "The Office," snuggling with her dogs or indulging in a cooking class—she even once gave her friend a barbecuing class for the two to take together.

What do you look for in a partner?

Ambition is probably the most important thing for me. I love seeing someone passionate about what they do and determined to make it big. Also, a great sense of humor, warm and friendly, intelligent and he must love dogs.

What is your dream date?

Nothing too crazy. We head out for pizza and wine for dinner. Take a romantic walk through the aisles of Target. We pick up a tub of Talenti gelato. We go home to our (my) future corgi, play a little fetch, and then we all snuggle up on the couch and eat some gelato before we fall asleep to "The Office."



Audra Slemmer

P.E. teacher and volleyball coach

Age: 32

@Msslem2

Slemmer is a high school P.E. teacher and volleyball coach whose love for sports and life translates into the role model who she strives to be for her students. Her love for the Lord and passion for fitness are the cornerstones of her life. Her perfect man is someone who shares similar interests and is family-oriented and tall. Having a good sense of humor doesn't hurt either!

What is one thing that most people don't know about you?

Growing up I was really into acting and had a couple big roles in plays in the Valley Youth Theater in Phoenix. I always wanted to go in to acting and broadcasting but sports took me in a different direction.

What's the best advice someone ever gave you?

The best advice I have ever received is from my dad regarding life and happiness. "Ninety percent of your joy or misery will be the result of one decision you make and that is who you marry."

Mitzi Jex

Enrollment counselor at the Arizona School of Real Estate and Business and Realtor

Age: 58

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Jex could be described as a world traveler, a real estate aficionado in both Arizona and Florida and also a quality gift giver. The thoughtful Jex is seeking a partner who exudes kindness and is business savvy.

What is one thing that most people don't know about you?

Recently, I went on a photo safari in Africa from Cape Town to Nairobi. I saw the big five and the migration in the Serengeti. Best life experience so far!

What is your dream date?

My dream date would be spending the day in Sedona. Hiking, then eating lunch at Enchantment Resort (awesome guacamole) outside surrounded by the red rocks. Spending more time outside together followed by a creekside table at L'Auberge de Sedona for an early dinner before sunset. Heaven!



Katie Cleland

Physician assistant at Mayo Clinic

Age: 31

@clelandk

Charismatic, wildly kind and confident—Cleland dreams of wine-tasting dates in Napa, prides herself on her commitment to her work and values humor, ambition and chivalry in her ideal partner. Though she loves adventures, she appreciates a good night spent on the couch watching TV, indulging in a glass of wine and takeout.

What is one thing that most people don't know about you?

I started violin when I was 3 and played through 22 years old. In that time, I was hired for weddings, taught students for beer money in college and traveled internationally with our violin group.

What's the best advice someone ever gave you? "Trust the path." This was said to me by a chef named Mhylee who I met in Tuscany while learning to make homemade pasta. A good reminder that we are all exactly where we are supposed to be in this very moment.

Alyssa Wright

Benefits account manager at Passey Bond Co.

Age: 44

@Lysjoy

An ambitious worker, a doting mother of two (including one former Junior Face of Foothills winner), music aficionado and relentless lover of life and her family, Wright's unmatched warmth and lively spirit are simply infectious.

What do you look for in a partner?

In my 12 years of being single and dating, I have found that I am looking for a good Christian man who is a good father, active, knows how to communicate, likes to be outdoors and—as an extra plus—skis or snowboards. I would love to find someone who has a love for music. I love to go to concerts! As I get older, I would love to find someone who has a desire to travel and see the world. I went to Portugal in August, and it was truly divine.

What is your dream date?

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My dream date would be going to hear an amazing concert, even to fly to an awesome destination where our favorite band is playing.



Ryan Gelb

Territory manager for ECOLAB

Age: 26

@ryan_gelb

Authenticity, sarcasm and self-motivation are all traits that Gelb admires and looks for in a partner. Whether he's on the move for his job at ECOLAB or embarking on new adventures like skydiving—which despite his fear of heights, he notes as being one of the best experiences of his life—he is looking for someone who can keep up with him, but who can also just dedicate a day to watching movies in bed with him.

What does a typical day look like for you?

A typical day for me is spent driving to whatever accounts of mine I have planned to visit and communicating with people in those accounts. I deal with people who have roles like business owner, manager, executive chef, executive housekeeper, head of operations, so on and so forth. In my line of work, it's my job to essentially come up with solutions to any problem a customer of mine might have. The best thing about my job is that I get to help people. There's nothing more satisfying than doing right by someone to help in any way you can and see the smile on that person's face.

What's the best present you ever gave someone?

The best gift I've ever given someone is a poem I wrote. I've always been a fan of poetry and tend to write a little here and there when I have free time (which is rare nowadays).

Nikki Kerns

Marketing manager for Meritage Homes

Age: 28

@nikkilea29

Kerns is a driven woman with a motivated and positive outlook on life. She loves her family, quality time, stimulating conversation and values someone who understands the importance of Diet Coke vs. Diet Pepsi. Did we mention that she knows how to drive a stick-shift, too?

What do you look for in a partner?

I'm looking for someone who is adventurous, ambitious and genuine. Now, a great catch is someone who has all these qualities, is an Iowa State fan with a Midwestern upbringing like myself (no Hawkeyes allowed) and understands the importance of Diet Coke vs. Diet Pepsi (Diet Coke fans, you get me).

What does a typical day look like for you?

I work in marketing for a homebuilder helping open communities and drive traffic to our sales offices. Not one single day is the same, and that's one of the many reasons I love my job. I'm constantly learning new things, meeting new people and traveling all over the Valley. I'm challenged. I get to be creative. I always have fun and get to work with the best people. I genuinely look forward to work every day!

Ryan Mitchell

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Co-founder of My Pie Pizza

Age: 38

@ryandotmitchell

A lover of opera, destination dates and pizza, Mitchell is a man who knows what he wants. His unparalleled passion for his work (he is the co-founder of the successful My Pie Pizza franchise restaurant concept) and life makes him one of the Valley's most eligible bachelors.

What do you look for in a partner?

In the end, what I am truly looking for is depth, someone who is truly ready to experience every facet of a true connection. Look me in the eye when I hold your hand, and close your eyes when you kiss me. If I love you, then I will always love you. Life is short, so I want someone ready to jump in and really smile and laugh with me. Oh, and I guess I'd say I always fall for that brown-eyed girl.

What's the best advice someone has ever given to you?

My brothers once told me "don't suffer." What I took from it is that your happiness is your choice. Don't dwell on past mistakes. Don't lose time beating yourself up in the present. The future doesn't mean tomorrow, it means the very second you move forward. I started living by a "say yes to life" motto, and I've been happier ever since.



Jennifer Ennesser

Brand and marketing consultant and Pilates instructor

Age: 35

@jenniferennesser

A world traveler, a marketing consultant and a Pilates instructor, Ennesser is a woman who wears many hats. Her diverse abilities and drive to pursue each one of her passions makes her one of the Valley's most unique bachelorettes. Now, Ennesser is searching for the perfect person to share life with—preferably someone who can revel in good food, great drinks and engulging conversation.

What is one thing that most people don't know about you?

I've been to four continents, visiting over 15 countries.

What's the best advice someone ever gave you?

I read in a recent business blog that the small decisions you make each day will compound over time to deliver great results. Not just running to that big, crazy goal. Usually when you get there, you are just thinking about what is next. I don't know why that stuck with me so much. I think it is the similar concept that life is a marathon, not a sprint. I'm always trying to slow down!

John Hamby

General manager at Anomalie

Age: 36

@hambymovesAZ

An introverted extrovert, a general manager for the fastest-growing wedding dress startup in the nation, a lover of thoughtful gifts and an avid NBA fan, Hamby is the complete package. Though he is an outgoing guy, he appreciates the value in quality time and maintaining genuine, honest relationships with the ones he loves.

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What do you look for in a partner?

While I admire the differences in everyone, I do tend to look for a few things. No. 1 is passion. I love passionate women. It can be your job, a nonprofit you spend time with, passionate about future dreams, traveling—anything. I also look for someone who wants to have a family and create an amazing relationship and environment to raise them in. The last thing I look for is that person that just gets me, and we can be silent together and know what each other are thinking or we can be in a crowded room and see each other and have the same thoughts. Hard to find, but worth the wait.

What is your dream date?

I'm at a time in life where I really enjoy one-on-one time. My dream date would look like us walking around the tree-lined streets in Portland to an amazing dinner at Le Pigeon, having a thoughtful conversation where we share new things about each other, maybe a slow dance in the middle of the street, and then end up listening to music all night by the fireplace. Add in some light rain and some chai tea and that would be my official dream date!



Emily Sadler

Founder of ETC. by Emily

Age: 44

@etcbymily

Kind, charismatic and a lover of one-on-one time, Sadler, who is the founder of ETC. by Emily, is used to controlling and organizing chaos as part of her job. But no woman wants chaos to find a place in her love life. Sadler dreams of a man who is the perfect mix of both strong and sweet.

What is the best present you have ever gave someone? Ever received?

Time and time. I honestly believe that the most important thing you can give someone is your undivided time and attention. I'm all about experiences rather than things.

What is your dream date?

Part of me wants to answer if I'm with someone I really like, it doesn't matter what we do. But hearing, "Babe, go pack a bag and grab your passport...we're flying to Paris" doesn't sound like such a bad gig either.

Nicky Bustamante

Personal fitness trainer and FORD/Robert Black Agency model

Age: 28

@nicky.bustamante

A personal fitness trainer, an avid jiu-jitsu fan and a model, Bustamante has a dreamy lifestyle and a refreshingly warm personality. Whether she's spending quality time with her daughter or helping women reach their full fitness potential, she's constantly on the go and looking for

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someone who can keep up with her vibrant life.

What do you look for in a partner?

I want a man of God. A fit alpha. A strong, successful sweetheart with a sense of humor, passion and loyalty.

What's the best present you ever received?

My daughter is my greatest gift of all. She has brought me so much love and happiness.



Jon Boles

Founder and CEO of Avintiv Media

Age: 30

@jonboles

Boles is a Midwest guy at heart (he is from Milwaukee) with a passion for people and values thoughtfulness in a partner. He cares about the experiences in life that you never want to forget—now, he dreams of finding a partner to enjoy those moments with.

What do you look for in a partner?

She has to be kind, caring, authentic, vulnerable but also independent where she can hold her own. Wants to be a better version of herself each and every day. Doesn't grow complacent or lazy. Someone who has their own career going. Someone that can hold a true authentic conversation about life and everything in it. Not just surface level.

What is your dream date?

Honestly, my dream date is hopping on a plane, going to Europe or an island with just the clothes on our back. No computers, bags of clothes—nothing! I'd want to experience someone for the first time at their most authentic self and just live those days or weeks on the edge and get to know each other with no distractions, walls up or barriers.

Christine Ferris (not pictured)

Marketing brand manager for True Food Kitchen

Age: 29

@christinemferris

As the brand manager for True Food Kitchen, Ferris' life is certainly busy. Some weeks she may be attending store openings across the country or coordinating photoshoots for seasonal menu rollouts, while other weeks she may be planning out marketing calendars for all 25 stores or hosting events with new team members—like Oprah. Ultimately, Ferris' life is anything but ordinary or routine. Similarly, she likes to be surprised in her dating life, as well.

What is one thing that most people don't know about you?

In elementary school, our gym teacher taught us a skill most people have never heard of: cupstacking. Yes, it's an actual "sport"—look it up! When I was 6 years old, I won the Colorado Cupstacking Championship and was the fastest cupstacker of my age group. Challenge me, I dare you!

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What do you look for in a partner?

I look for someone who is loyal, driven, has a sense of humor and a willingness to pick up and do something adventurous. Summed up: Someone who makes me want to be a better version of myself.