

# AND NOW, WOMEN HAVE THEIR SAY

WE'VE HEARD FROM A BACHELOR IN THE DATING TRENCHES. NOW IT'S TIME TO HEAR FROM UNMARRIED WOMEN. YES, THEY APPRECIATE THE FREEDOM, THE FLIRTING, THE FUN. BUT THEN THERE ARE THE DATING DISAPPOINTMENTS AND DISASTERS. NOT TO MENTION THE FRUSTRATIONS AND THE LONELINESS. WE TALKED TO WOMEN FROM COLLEGE AGE TO RETIREMENT, PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT SITUATIONS AND RELATIONSHIP EXPERIENCES. WE ASKED WHAT THEY WANT, WHAT THEY LIKE AND DON'T LIKE ABOUT DATING, HOW ATLANTA RATES AS A SINGLES CITY AND MORE. HERE'S WHAT THEY SAID. . .

COMPILED BY SUSAN MITTLEMAN

## WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT MEN IN ATLANTA?

"All the straight women in town will tell you all the good men are gay or married. But all the gay men will tell you all the good men are either straight or married."

—JENNA, 25, EVENT PLANNER/SINGER, MORNINGSIDE

"In Atlanta, men say they want someone who's sensitive, smart, caring, and then they go and date shallow, money-hungry women. Men are notorious for picking the wrong women, and then they can't understand why they're disappointed."

—KELLY, 32, ACCOUNT MANAGER, VIRGINIA-HIGHLAND

"I don't think there are enough real men left. I want a man who can build a house in the woods with a butter knife and who can fix anything. I want a man who will open my door, pull out my chair, order the wine and

call me darlin'. I like tall men who will go for a run with me and who find it sexy that I can eat a 20-ounce steak."

—KATHERINE, 21, OGLETHORPE UNIVERSITY, ATLANTA

## WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR—A DATE OR A MATE?

"My sister, my best friend—they have boy-toys 10 years younger. I want a boy-toy!"

—JACKIE, 56, WIDOW

"My biggest fear is that I'll get married and then when I end up at the heavenly gate, I'll be able to tell God all about my husband . . . and know nothing about myself."

—TONJA, 28, PRODUCTION ACCOUNTANT, VININGS

"I'm a serial monogamist. I'm more comfortable in a relationship rather than dating."

—KELLY, 32, ACCOUNT MANAGER, VIRGINIA-HIGHLAND

"I want to date to potentially find a mate. I've made the conscious decision to put myself in situations where I will meet available people. I moved my church. I moved my job. Now I'm ready to move socially."

—CONDACE, 37, ASSISTANT PROGRAM DIRECTOR, MARIETTA

"I'm looking for a single straight man, which seems few and far between in Atlanta. Long-term, I'd love to get married and settle down and all that stuff. But at this point, I'd settle for a date on Friday night."

—BETH, 38, COPY DIRECTOR, EAST POINT

"I'm a little gun-shy and not looking to get in a serious relationship, just for someone to spend some time with and have fun. I was married for 32 years . . . and I didn't really date that much to begin with, so I'm really starting over."

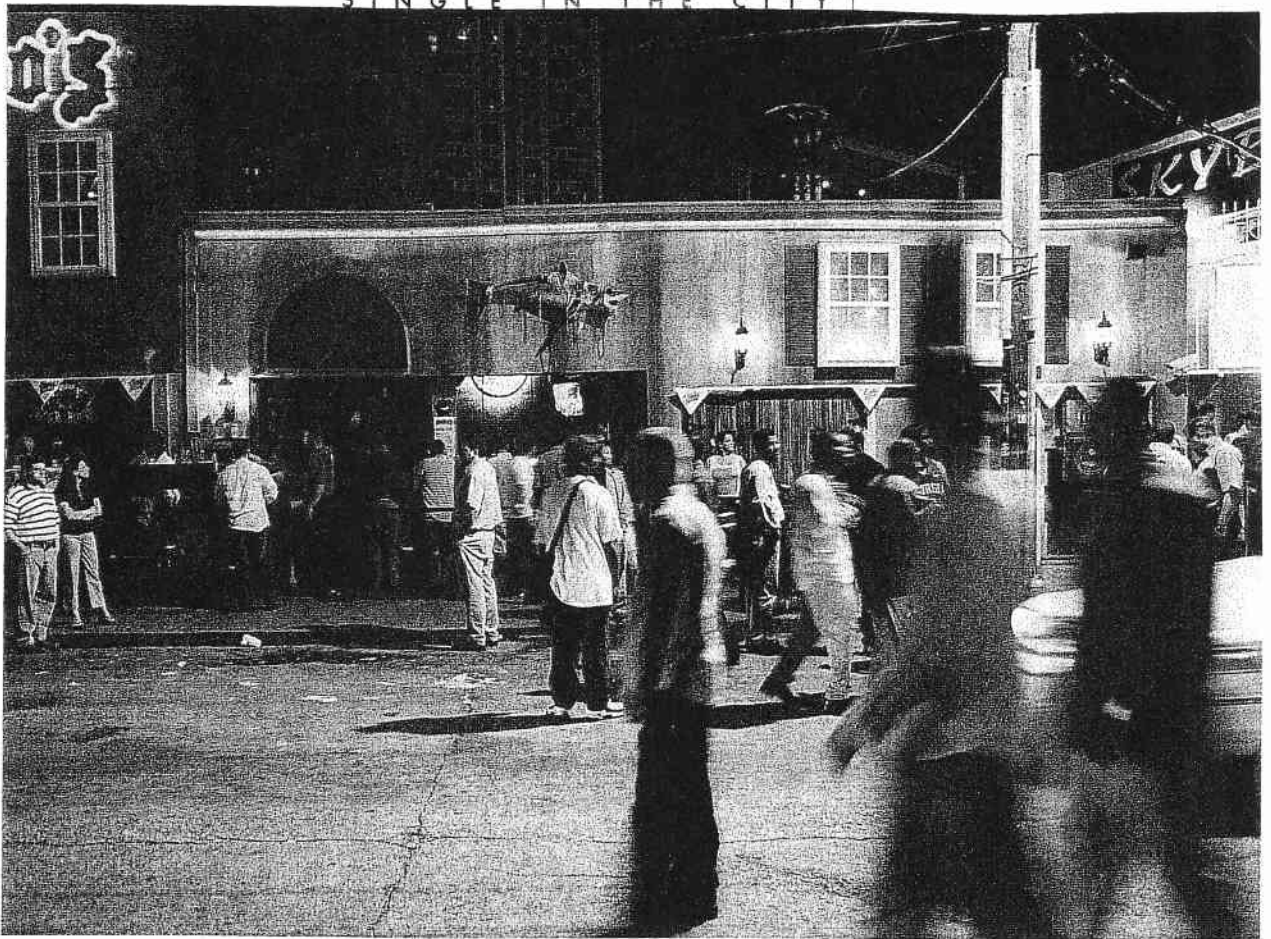
—LISA, 51, ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR, KENNESAW

## AH, THE MEMORIES

"One time a guy asked me out, and we went to a club. We went to dance and he laid down on the floor and acted like he was having a seizure. He thought he was being cute or funny. He couldn't get enough attention. I just turned and went as fast as I could out the door, into a cab and home. I call it 'the duck, dodge and dash.' If the situation is making me uncomfortable and the bad outweighs the good, I bail."

—JENNIFER, 32, "RENAISSANCE WOMAN," MORNINGSIDE

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"I dated a man who drove a bright green two-door car. The passenger seat was broken and, thus, permanently reclined. So, yes, whenever we went out, I had to lie down the entire time. For some reason, I dated him for six months, so for six months I saw a lot of that ugly car's ceiling. And to top it off, he was a chiropractor."

—KATHERINE, 21, OGLETHORPE UNIVERSITY, ATLANTA

"At the beginning, we talked about the things you're not supposed to talk about when you meet somebody. We got religion and politics out of the way. We disagreed on politics. We went out anyway. We still disagree on politics. And we're still dating."

—SHARON, 39, TECHNICAL WRITER, ATLANTA

### HOW ATLANTA RATES AS A SINGLES CITY

"There's a lot of things to do in Atlanta. It's a cosmopolitan city and a diverse crowd, and I can dabble in any or all of it. I can sleep in the mid-

dle of my bed. I can go 'Krogering' at 4 in the morning. I can go to a bar at any given moment at the drop of a dime, without any given reason. It's the freedom thing."

—JENNIFER, 32, "RENAISSANCE WOMAN," MORNINGSIDE

"Atlanta would be more interesting for out-of-town singles if they went to Little Five Points and East Atlanta, because those places offer a variety of personalities, not the same mold. But I guess you have to experience how bad Buckhead and Roswell are

first. I think it's a rite of passage."

—MALLORY, 28, SALES COORDINATOR, CANDLER PARK

"I would encourage people to move here. Everyone I meet is between the ages of 22 and 45. It's a great place to live. Most people I meet are still really young. It's a really diverse crowd, like a little New York."

—JULIE, 29, JOURNALIST, TOCO HILLS

"The most frustrating thing about being single is that Atlanta is a good town to do things in, but if you don't

### INSTANT TURN-ONS

"OLD BAGGY FADED JEANS FRAYING AT THE WAIST JUST BARELY HANGING ON HIS PELVIC BONES."

"HE WAS BOBBING HIS HEAD EVER SO SLIGHTLY TO THE RHYTHM OF THE MUSIC, SIPPING HIS DRINK, ENJOYING THE ATMOSPHERE AND APPEARING SO RELAXED. HIS CONFIDENCE WAS SEXY."

"IF YOU DON'T SEE PASSION IN SOMEBODY'S EYES, FORGET IT."

"A REAL GUY-GUY. NOT LIKE A BEER-DRINKING, BELLY-SCRATCHING GUY-GUY. MORE LIKE A TRUE-BLUE KIND OF GUY-GUY."

"I LIKE BOTTOM LIPS. FULL BOTTOM LIPS."

RUBY LASCANO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS SECTION.

have someone to share it with, it can be kind of daunting."

—BETH, 38, COPY DIRECTOR, EAST POINT

## WHAT DO YOU LIKE/ DISLIKE ABOUT BEING SINGLE IN ATLANTA?

"Ever since I grew my hair long and dyed it blond, my social life has totally taken off! I am meeting tons of men in Atlanta, and I feel like the balance is shifting in favor of there being a lot more men."

—GAIL, 33, ATTORNEY, BUCKHEAD

"A big dilemma of being single in Atlanta is married men approach me on a regular basis. That's one of the things that allows me to not have a grasp on what I conceptualize marriage as being all about. The standards of what men look for do not apply to themselves. It's like they say, 'Wow, she's got a great body. I'll take her.' And they look like the nutty professor."

—TONJA, 28, PRODUCTION ACCOUNTANT,  
VININGS

"If I met somebody, I'm not saying I wouldn't welcome it. But I'm not out there actively looking. I don't go around with a hook. I would not accept any person just to go out. It would have to be someone intelligent, reasonably attractive, a good conversationalist. Don't give me any of these big fat men! I don't feel like I'm my age, so I could handle somebody a little younger. Five or six years. I don't find myself being lonesome at night."

—MICKEY, 77, TRAVEL AGENT, DRUID HILLS

"When you're approachable, it seems all the wrong people approach you."

—GLORIA, 36, WRITER, ATLANTA

"It's uncomfortable for people who were not born and raised here, because we have different communication styles, and people don't find things funny down here that would be funny up north. Southern women don't challenge people's opinions enough."

—MALLORY, 28, SALES COORDINATOR,  
CANDLER PARK

"Do I think, being a strong indepen-

## WARNING SIGNS

"Every time he called, the operator came on and asked for more change."

"A laundry list of questions. I'm not going to answer a questionnaire."

"I should've known he was obsessive-compulsive when he asked the waitress for those little to-go ketchup samples. He said he didn't trust communal ketchup."

"We had been dating only a week when he asked me to wear the gold bracelet his grandmother gave him before she passed away."

"He tripped over something while we were talking on the phone. I asked what it was. He said he didn't know because it was dark. I asked why he didn't turn the lights on. He said he didn't want the cops to know he was home."

"He said, 'Yes, I can pick you up at 7 o'clock. My appointment with my shrink should be over by then.'"

"I ordered a rum and Coke. He ordered a pink tropical cocktail served in a pineapple with paper parasols."

"There were razors all over his bathroom. He was obsessed with body hair. Maybe it was a case of sour grapes. He was balding anyway, so why not shave everything?"

"If someone has ugly shoes, they are probably not a cool person." —RUBY LASCANO

dent black women, it's tough to find someone? I think, in respect to black men, 'yes.' I've been told all this time that being independent, being intelligent, being self-sufficient and all of those things are pluses. But from the time I entertained ideas of dating, folks would say, 'Nobody wants to go out with you. Men find [all] that intimidating. You don't need a man.' Well, no, I don't need a man. I'd like a man."

—CONDACE, 37, ASSISTANT PROGRAM  
DIRECTOR, MARIETTA

"This is the worst place I've lived for being single. I feel like all the guys here are looking for the same thing, and the same thing isn't me. The guys here are all looking for something like a blond sorority girl."

—ANAR, 24, JOURNALIST, DECATUR

"If you don't mind a bunch of soulless, personality-less men, it's great! That's probably why I'm not looking for a life partner here. There are a lot of cookie-cutter guys, with no individuality. Maybe I'm looking in the wrong places, but the men in Atlanta do not intrigue me. The dating scene really sucks."

—KRISTYN, 27, PRODUCER,  
VIRGINIA-HIGHLAND

"I haven't found anyone locally I can connect with. I find it hard to connect with Southern men. I think it's their

orientation to Southern women. It's like a weird dating ritual with Southern women, where everyone asks, 'Where did you go to school? What country club do you belong to? What supper club are you involved with?' and all that."

—KELLY, 32, ACCOUNT MANAGER,  
VIRGINIA-HIGHLAND

"In my single life in college, I never feel like I'm alone, just waiting for someone to approach. I'm always dating someone in my group of friends. It's kind of incestuous—you're practically family. But at the same time, you're not really related. It's safer this way. You're not going out with a stranger. You're already friends."

—JADE, 24, GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY,  
ATLANTA

"I do have a difficult time meeting people my age without feeling like I'm going to a senior citizens' center. The men who would be interested in me are in their 60s. I'm interested in men in their 40s."

—DIANE, 50, CFO, ROSWELL

## DATING IN CYBERSPACE

"People you meet online are more attractive because you don't get to see their warts. It's artificial intimacy that isn't real, that isn't normal interaction, and the anonymity gives a false com-

fort zone. Every relationship I've seen start that way ended up in a disaster."

—B.D., 36, PSYCHOLOGIST/ACTRESS,  
WEST COBB

"I don't feel comfortable misrepresenting my age. I'm an honest person. Don't like games. But online, in a situation like this, if you put down you're 51, you're automatically written off by people in their 40s. Most of the guys who are 45-47, they put 49-50 as a cut-off, which means they won't even look at people's profiles above that. And I don't want to limit my choices."

—LISA, 51, ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR,  
KENNESAW

"I met a guy online and we were planning to meet until he asked me how much I weighed. Now, I'm not fat. Would I like to lose a few pounds? Sure. But this guy was like, 'I'm kind of concerned about the weight issue.' The thing is, he's bald and older than I am anyway, and then he was pushing me and pushing me . . . and then said, 'First, before we meet, I want to know how much you weigh.' With that, my trial membership was up. I didn't want to pay to meet people like this."

—BETH, 38, COPY DIRECTOR, EAST POINT

"My aunt was divorced for more than 20 years and she met a wonderful man online. They have been married for five years now, so it obviously works for some."

—KATHERINE, 21, OGLETHORPE UNIVERSITY,  
ATLANTA

## WHERE/HOW DO YOU MEET SINGLES?

"Some people go to the airport, or there's the Ritz-Carlton bar, or the grocery store. Except, most people I've met at the grocery store are weird. I met the guy I'm seeing now at [Atlanta] Single Gourmet."

—ELIZABETH, 57, BUSINESS OWNER, DECATUR

"I've never gone outside the Perimeter looking for a date, but I hear there is life outside 285. I don't know."

—BETH, 38, COPY DIRECTOR,  
EAST POINT

"I've been meeting a lot of interesting people through things like church groups, the art museum, all these email chains and letters, like Atlanta Buzz. There's tons of email chains going around. I get evites constantly. I can find two to three events each weeknight. I can't do all the social events

there are in Atlanta for a single."

—GAIL, 33, ATTORNEY, BUCKHEAD

"Because I'm not the most aggressive person, bars are not my thing. I play tennis, or go hiking, or do Eight at Eight [Dinner Club]. You may not meet somebody the first time or the second time. But you might meet somebody who introduces you to somebody. It's like networking for a job."

—SHARON, 39, WRITER, ATLANTA

"Bars aren't necessarily a reliable way to find a partner if you're gay any more than if you're straight. The gay community has a system set up, ways to find each other, as we feel isolated by closets. Places such as church. Clubs like Dixie Bowling League. Gay Rodeo League."

—DEBBIE, 45, RETAIL MANAGER, EAST POINT

"I like meeting people at dark, classy places where I can just sit and drink coffee or wine. I love Café Intermezzo, the bar at Houston's, The Ritz-Carlton, Buckhead, and Rocky's Pizza, and also smaller places like the French restaurant Anis [Café and Bistro] and the newer Milan. You have to learn the names of the bartenders, frequent your favorite unique



restaurants and invite the cute new guy at work for lunch.”

—KATHERINE, 21, OGLETHORPE UNIVERSITY, ATLANTA

“A coffeehouse. Pretend you’re absorbed in a good magazine, and someone will always try to steal your attention away. The travel section of a bookstore. You can share experiences and then plan new ones. Weddings. You already look good. You don’t have to worry about food or entertainment. The mood has been created for you. Just turn on your charm.”

—RUBY, WRITER, 33, ATLANTA

## WHAT ABOUT SEX AND INTIMACY?

“A lot of trashy women are ruining the men out there, in terms of what they expect in terms of sex, which is instantaneous gratification. People have sex on the first date all the time, which I find appalling.”

—GAIL, 33, ATTORNEY, BUCKHEAD

“I was at the beginning of the Sexual Revolution. When I was dating the first time, nice girls didn’t—at least they didn’t admit it. This time around, it’s a lot different. With AIDS and all the things out there, I think it’s swinging back again to where women are being more careful and conservative. At least that’s what I’m hearing.”

—LISA, 51, ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR, KENNESAW

“There have been times when I didn’t shave my legs because I wanted to be good girl, and then I regretted it afterward because I ended up in bed with hairy legs.”

—KRISTYN, 27, PRODUCER, VIRGINIA-HIGHLAND

“I’d like to take a poll of women who slept with someone on the first date and find out if the relationship continued. Because I think that even if you really like each other, but you slept together on the first date, because of society, it probably wouldn’t work out.”

—JULIE, 29, JOURNALIST, TOCO HILLS



## WHAT MEN SAID. . . .

“In this city, the wells never run dry. If something doesn’t work out, you can just move on to other pastures.”

—MARK, 32, INVESTOR, VIRGINIA-HIGHLAND

“That first glance. That bewildered, ‘I almost forgot to breathe’ feeling. I’m just waiting for that to happen.”

—GUS, 30, BARTENDER, MIDTOWN

“The best way I like to meet someone is through a friend who says, ‘I know someone that you might like,’ because there’s less anxiety that the person is going to be completely insane.”

—BRUCE, 44, BUSINESS OWNER, ATLANTA

“When it snowed, I called this woman up and said, ‘Get your clothes on—we’re going out.’ And we went walking in the snow from 12:30 a.m. until 3 a.m.”

—DAVID, 50, MANAGEMENT, DUNWOODY

“As I get older, I love blind dates, because in blind dating, you find someone who’s ‘pre-qualified!’”

—CONN, 35, ENTREPRENEUR, BUCKHEAD

“I don’t let my friends matchmake for me anymore. I hate to disappoint them, but they always get it wrong.”

—TIM, 42, FILMMAKER/ENGINEER, VIRGINIA-HIGHLAND

“[Women are] always looking for the bigger, better deal. It seems like they’re having a sampler platter. . . . They can’t make a decision, kind of like a kid in a candy store.”

—JAMES, 40, HEALTHCARE CONSULTANT, ROSWELL

“I find it easier to meet people through my work in the theater, in general, because of the built-in social network, and people are guaranteed to have similar interests.”

—FREDDIE, 29, THEATER ARTIST, MORNINGSIDE

“I tried an Evening at Emory session for meeting people, and it was fun. However, many people there to me looked like dating professionals, in the sense they were going through the motions, trying to find a formula rather than being themselves.”

—ENRIQUE, 35, PUBLIC RELATIONS ACCOUNT MANAGER, TOCO HILLS

“I’ve been very turned off by mixers. Generally, most of the people are much older than me, in their late 30s, early 40s. It makes me a little worried, like, ‘What if I’m one of these people scrounging around at one of these things when I’m in my 40s?’”

—JERRY, 28, WEB SITE DEVELOPER, DECATUR

“How soon would I consider sleeping with someone I’m attracted to? Immediately!”

—ERIC, 37, BUSINESS OWNER, ATLANTA

“Before AIDS, we might have had physical intimacy and moved forward from there. That doesn’t happen anymore.”

—BERT, 50, SALES, LILBURN