

## Enthuse by name, enthused by nature

Many ambitious businessmen pursuing a career in television would be lured by the bright lights and big egos of the far north, but Moncks Bay media magnet John Mckenzie is refusing to budge.

John walks into the café all business: sunnies perched on forehead, files of important stuff under his arm, mobile phone demanding attention. He orders a latte, sets the sunnies on the table and we get down to business.

The only problem is, I am not entirely sure what the business is, who I am interviewing or why. John Mckenzie seems to be an entire corporation rolled into one.

He informs me his company, Enthuse, consists of marketing, communications, PR and media specialists. *Non the wiser, I nod politely.*

I learn that the company organises events, arranges media coverage, entertainment, speakers and an MC if

required. Quite often John does the whole lot. He is a television presenter, an actor, entertainer, marketing consultant, public speaker, event organiser, gym instructor and a former professional skier.

John likes an audience. "I've always been a bit of a performer. My first memories are of performing for my mother's friends when I was three or four years old. I used to get the Electrolux power cord and use it as a microphone."

Those early performances have paid off with increasing appearances on television on either side of the camera, and John is highly sought after at conferences as speaker, entertainer, MC, or all three.

Corporate work stifled John's creative side which then emerged as various characters at conferences. I suggest marketing consultants who



John Mckenzie and his alter-ego Austin Powers

dress up as Austin Powers or Doctor Frank-n-furter must be rare.

"I used to worry that people would not take me seriously prancing about at conferences dressed as Gandalf or Austin Powers, but I channel some of that acting into delivering a serious message."

John can be seen increasingly on television working on productions such as Le Race or this year's Coast to Coast in which he worked closely with legendary Coast to Coaster Steve Gurney.

"The first time I met Steve Gurney I punched him in the head," says John.

He was supposed to be hitting pads in the gym, but lost control.

John says he has an idea for a documentary based around the Coast to Coast event. Without giving too much away, it involves an in-depth look at long-drops and the industries that spring up around such amenities for the race. The idea has been knocked back so far but that is not likely to stop him.

John would also like a programme such as Rove Live or Sports Café. "If Sports Café hadn't already been done, I would have invented it by now."

Born in Invercargill, John moved to Christchurch in 1996. He did shows at school and university and took parts in Grease and a variety of other productions. After university, he worked in the ski industry and as a journalist, before entering the corporate world. His creative side was suppressed and Enthuse was born.

A keen multi-sporter, John claims to have found his niche by the sea in Moncks Bay.

"There is nowhere like

Christchurch, where I can wake up in the morning and go skiing and later go for a run along the beach. People say, 'you should be living in Auckland', but I don't want to leave here.

"Being based in Christchurch for television is really hard but I'll do what I have to. I gave up the corporate life to give it a go and this is my shot.

"I have a passion for media," John says. "I love to get to the end of the day and think I have done something meaningful."

It seems John Mckenzie is really going places - as long as he can get there without leaving home.