

THE MATCHMAKER

*Ruth Claramunt: Professional Cupid,
Bookshelf Scrutinizer, Diehard Romantic*

"Everyone goes to a specialist now for everything in their lives. If you want to buy a home, you go to a real-estate agent who has all the available listings. Well, for dating, I have all the available listings. This is what I do: I match people. And my clients trust me. They pay a thousand dollars for an unlimited membership that covers them until they're happy with their match. And I keep matching them until they find that person.

"I have staff to do everything else at my business, but there are two things that I still do myself: all the interviewing and all the matchmaking. I interview everyone in their homes to get an idea of what their goals and interests are. If the person doesn't want me to go to their home, I figure it means that they're either married or live in a hovel. In either case, I don't want them.

"When I get there, I look around, see what kind of books they have, what kind of music they listen to. We talk about religion and race. Are they a smoker or a non-smoker? Have they ever been convicted of a criminal violation? Have they ever had an STD? Are looks important to them?

"I believe that there's someone out there for everyone. But people have to do something about it. A guy on a white horse is not going to come and bang on the door and say, 'Here I am!' I once went to interview a woman and the first thing she said to me was, 'You'll never find anybody for me.' I wasn't even in the house. I had just stepped out of the car and was standing in the driveway when she opened the door and said, 'Oh, you'll never find anybody for me.' And I thought, 'You know, you're right.' Because you have to be ready." ■

Ruth Claramunt is the president of Hearts, an introduction service based in Toronto that matches up clients in locations around the world, including New York, Vancouver, Ireland, and Dominica. Claramunt doesn't know the exact number of matches arranged by Hearts since the company was founded in 1984, but she estimates the number to be "several hundred."

PHOTOGRAPHED BY GUNTAR KRAVIS IN TORONTO, AUGUST 9, 11:40 A.M.