

sunday

SUNDAY BEST

Edited by Ceri David

On the VERGE...

JAMES GALEA

Maybe it's the tuxedo and perma-tan uniform sported by most wand-wavers, but there's something about magic that's just not cool. Or at least, that's what we thought until James Galea appeared. The 27-year-old Sydneysider's tricks are as funny as they are slick, making his show, *I Hate Rabbits*, a hit at this month's Melbourne International Comedy Festival. Later this year, he'll head to LA for talks about a new TV series. In the meantime, look out for Galea's next production, *Lying Cheating Bastards* (at NORPA in Lismore, May 28 and 29, before touring nationally next year), about the man who taught him everything. Just don't expect this magic-maker to turn up in a top hat and cape.

Q: Were you born magical, like Harry Potter? No, when I was 14, I met a magician who took me under his wing. He was also a con man. He taught me to deal four aces in a row, which he did himself to cheat in high-stakes poker.

Q: How did you decide to make it your career? I liken it to when nuns or priests talk about their calling. I just knew; it consumed me. Between the ages of 14 and 20, all I did was learn. Now, with those foundations, I can decide what would be cool for a show, and then figure out a way to do it.

Q: What makes a good magician? Anyone can learn a trick, but it's about making it entertaining. With me, people see everything, close-up. I wear jeans and a T-shirt, so I can't be hiding anything up my sleeve. My job isn't simply to blow your mind - it's to eliminate any reasoning of how it's done.

Q: Ever used your powers for evil? No, but I think about it all the time. My friends won't play poker with me. But I'm an honest person - I wouldn't cheat.

Q: Where do you see yourself in five years? I hope to be living in LA, shooting my TV series, and taking the show all around the world.

Q: Do you have a plan B, in case you lose your magic touch? Not at all.

