

Peace, quiet & pin

PAUL'S LIVING TH

Work? Who needs it?! The media star has a new life

When Paul Henry flew into Los Angeles Airport last month, fellow travellers might have noticed the broadcasting legend chuckling as he filled in his customs forms. For the first time ever, he proudly penned the word "retiree" in the occupation box.

"It really made me laugh," the 56-year-old tells us over the phone from his holiday home in the US desert resort of Palm Springs.

"I'm quite a young retiree, but I'm embracing everything about it. I've always joked about myself being somewhat elderly, so it definitely feels pretty comfortable. I think getting older is a mixture of something that requires congratulations and a certain relief."

Speaking to *Woman's Day* to promote his latest wine release, Paul sounds relaxed and happy with his dreamy new reality. It's understandable given he's been largely work-free for five months, coming and going between his Auckland and American homes at his leisure. He insists he doesn't miss life at Three, where he hosted the *Paul Henry* breakfast show, and has zero regrets about calling it quits.

"It was a nightmare," he says about his years of 2.30am starts. "I loved doing the shows, but I will never, ever go back to full-time work. I do not want to die working."

Work might be on the back burner, but Paul has plenty to be excited about with the launch of his second red wine. In a partnership with Invivo, he's created Paul Henry's Own Pinot Noir and he's typically

unabashed about its merits. "It's extremely good – people are blown away by it. A good wine should still be entertaining you long after you've stopped drinking it and this is what mine does. I'm on my third crate of it already."

The broadcasting legend admits he knows nothing about tilling the land or growing grapes, but as an "expert drinker", he insists he's well qualified to create his own drop. He has no time for naysayers.

"Someone read out a tweet to me from some mealy-mouthed person saying something like, 'What would he know about blending wine?'"

"People love to criticise me because they see me as an arrogant, rich a***hole. But the truth is, I am a very, very highly qualified drinker and that's what you need to be to blend wine. I sat there with test tubes and came up with the very best wine possible. It's not rocket science. It was easy. But I've put in decades of work drinking wine for this."

Paul, who's been known to have his first wine before noon some days, tells us that

while he rarely gets "totally blotto", he's trying to have an alcohol-free day at least once a fortnight. But in Palm Springs, he doesn't often manage it.

"I'd promised myself I wouldn't have a drink today, but here I am sitting by the pool with a glass of red wine," confesses Paul, who's dad to Lucy, 28, Sophie, 26, and Bella, 23.

Just chillin'

Paul's days start at a leisurely 8.30am. He wakes up and checks his emails – "which doesn't take long because there's nothing there usually" – before heading down the road for his morning coffee. For the first time in his life, he's taken up exercise.

"I've started going to the gym!" he says, erupting into his famous giggles. "I walk for a quarter of a mile on the



The cheeky retiree is taking R&R to a whole new level in his Palm Springs pool.

ot noir

THE DREAM

treadmill. That's about 400m – it's nothing! I even take my coffee on with me. Now I'm considering playing tennis. The problem is, I don't know how, but I don't want a coach because then it would become like a job and that's the last thing I want."

After the gym, Paul has his first of many swims in the pool, before going out for lunch or spending the afternoon viewing the news on CNN. He'll then sit on his balcony watching "someone else doing the gardens" while he has a glass of his pinot noir, of course, then he goes out for dinner or to a movie.

"It's wonderful," he says, although he admits he hasn't made a slew of new pals. "I'm not really a friends type of person. It's mostly just about living ... I'm quite a solitary person."

In fact, the best thing about Paul's new life is the anonymity, he tells us. He adores strolling around the supermarket or going to a restaurant without being recognised.

"It was fine when I was on TV because it was part of the job. Most of the time people were lovely, and I was well and truly compensated for it. But now I love not being seen by people. It's wonderful to be anonymous."

While there's a chance he'll take on a short-term TV project in the future, this year will continue to be devoted to rest and relaxation.

"I'm just going to live between Auckland and Palm Springs, and take it easy," Paul tells us. "My daughters are coming over soon and I'll take them on some road trips, but that's about all I've got planned. It's perfect. I'm living the dream."

And with that, he empties his glass and heads off for another dip in the pool. **WD**

