

'I didn't want to do it': First Dates maitre d' Fred Sirieix on becoming an unlikely TV star - despite nearly turning the directors down

- Smooth-talking maître d' has become the star of popular TV dating series
- His words of wisdom have garnered him a reputation as a love expert
- But Frenchman, 43, admits he was reluctant to sign up for show initially

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His words of wisdom when it comes to love have made him the nation's favourite dating guru - but handsome maître d' Fred Sirieix was initially reluctant to take part in hit TV show First Dates.

The 43-year-old smooth-talking Frenchman has said his starring role in the Channel 4 reality dating show nearly didn't happen after directors struggled to get him to agree to taking part.

He told Holly Willoughby and Phillip Schofield on today's This Morning that it took him a 'long time' to say yes to being the main face of the hit show, series six of which starts tonight.

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This Morning speak to First Date's Maitre D Fred Sirieix



He said: 'It was just something that happened by accident, just luck. I worked with one of the directors before and he asked me if I wanted to be part of First Dates, which I didn't want to do in the first place. You know, it took me a long time to make the decision.'

'Because what's important is to do something that's fundamentally good, and that's why people love First Dates because it's a good programme, and what we want to do is put people together and want them to find love. On paper they work, and it's up to them whether they want to make it work or not.'

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But since the first show aired in 2013, he hasn't looked back - and admitted he quite often gets fans of the show popping in to see him in his day job of 10 years as a general manager at a Michelin-starred restaurant in Park Lane, London.

And he revealed he even gets asked for his opinion on a variety of romantic situations.

'Invariably, when you talk to people the conversation just naturally falls into whatever they want to talk about. So it does happen, yeah,' he said.

Fred went on to prove exactly why his musings on love are so sought after when Phillip asked him if he was romantic himself.



FIRST DATES FRED SIRIEIX



Holly Willoughby and Phillip Schofield interviewed him in a bar down the road from the This Morning studio ahead of the sixth series of the show hitting Channel 4 tonight

He said: 'I think I am, but you know, romance is all in the mind and it's all in the timing and it's all in the anticipation, and the shared connection that you have.'

'So romanticism could really be, like, a phone call, a text or some flowers or a romantic holiday away somewhere - as long as you can share in it and it's something you can anticipate.'

In terms of advice for prospective daters, he said there were no blanket rules apart from avoiding spaghetti and getting too drunk, as well as being 'comfortable' in the surroundings.



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Coy Fred also refused to be drawn on speculation that there was chemistry between waiting staff Cici (left) and Sam (right) after Holly told him she was 'a little obsessed with them' and wanted them to get together

'Dutch courage is good, just a little bit to help you lose your inhibition. But if you have to call an ambulance to take you home at the end of the night it's not good,' he said.

But he remained modest when Holly pointed out his reputation for delivering such wisdom.

She said: 'You're very wise when it comes to love, how come you're so good at this? The pearls of wisdom you drop into the show, you're becoming quite famous for now, where does it all come from?

Fred replied: 'I don't think I am wise or an expert, by any stretch of the imagination. I just talk my mind and I think what's important is to know yourself and to be able to love yourself in the first place and that's what you want the daters to have in the programme.'

First Dates' Fred Sirieix gives top dating tips to love-seekers

The coy maître d' also remained tight-lipped when Holly asked him about the possibility of any romance between two of his waiting staff.

Holly said: 'Do you know what I want to see happen? You know the waiter and waitress, Cici and Sam - are they going to get together? Because they flirt with each other all the time. I'm slightly obsessed with them.'

When Fred responded with a smile, Holly asked: 'Have they got together? You're being very cagey.'

He responded, saying: 'I can't talk about that, I can't talk about my staff like that.'

'I knew it,' laughed Holly. 'What a professional, aye,' added Phil.

The new series of First Dates begins tonight on Channel 4 at 9pm