

Pam Ann

By Duncan Hall

10:00am Sunday 17th February 2013 in Stage

Brighton holds a special place in Caroline Reid's heart.

Not only is it where she used to play shows as her alter ego – bitchy air stewardess Pam Ann – in bars and clubs along Marine Parade, but it is also where she gets a high concentration of audience members from Gatwick airport.

"They are the best to take the p*** out of," the Australian-born comic laughs from her New York home. "You can say they're not really crew and it's not a real airport – just a big field. They go to Heathrow to look at real flight attendants and planes going out over oceans.

"I've been going to Brighton since 2000 – I started in Revenge years ago and used to play the corner bar in Legends.	"I used to stay there above Legends getting s***-faced with the drag queens. Everyone drinks so much in Brighton – I don't even remember performing.
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It's my kind of town – everyone is either drinking or eating something fried.

"The beach isn't the same as Bondi though – I'm not used to sitting on rocks like a seagull."

Reid is heading back to the city for her new Around The World 2013 tour, which sees the return of the fearsome trolley dolly and a few favourite characters, including Chinese air stewardess Lily from Singapore Airlines.

"Lily is the polar opposite of Pam Ann," she says. "She's a bit softer and more approachable, and very girly. Everyone thinks Pam is a man anyway!"

Reid was inspired to create Pam through the long flights familiar to anyone living in the Antipodes and still gets material direct from the source as she travels the world.

"I'm a good listener, and I've got a good memory," she says. "Crews Facebook me or write me stories which help with the show."

"I still get excited every time I board a 747 to Australia. I love a long-haul flight."

"I don't even need to get out in Australia, I'll just sit there drinking their wine, eating their food and talking to the crew and captain. They get sick of me!"

She's currently working on a new character, inspired by a terrifying flight on LOT Polish Airlines.

"There is nothing worse than when you hear a Polish accent speaking broken English and saying there is a technical problem," she says.

"Then five minutes later they were saying they had fixed the problem – you knew they were winging this one!"

"I haven't mastered the accent for the LOT Polish Airlines flight attendant yet, but I think she's a big girl."

"I want to develop some additional characters in the next year – I would like to do a Global Alliance tour again with all the different characters [from different airlines] coming back again."

She is also planning a Pam Ann movie, although she admits it is early days.

"I'm giving myself a good couple of years, maybe five, to get it made," she says. "It's a long process and I want it to be right. There are so many ideas – whether it's going to be scripted or Borat-style."

Fans should be warned that onstage Reid admits to a similar prejudice to most flight attendants preparing for take-off – electronic devices.

"My pet hate is people not turning their f***ing mobile phones off," she says. "I can't stand it – if there's a guy sitting in the front row texting when I come out I get the phone and throw it across the floor!"

"I have become ruthless – if I was in the audience I would be scared of me."

- **Theatre Royal Brighton, New Road, Sunday, February 17.**
Starts 8pm, tickets from £20. Call 0844 8717650