

PostCARDS from HOLLYWOOD

A heart-to-heart with entertainment industry stars and insiders who are citizens of Cardinal Nation

From his St. Louis upbringing through his rise as a producer for CBS' "This Morning" and "48 Hours" to his breakthrough as a Bravo network superstar, Clayton High School graduate Andy Cohen has proudly worn his passion for the Cardinals like a well-tailored suit.

Even as he's launched such Bravo megahits as "Top Chef" and the "Real Housewives" franchise, the 43-year-old River City expat – he moved to New York in his 20s – has kept close tabs on his beloved Redbirds. The peripatetic producer – his official title for the cable-TV network is "Executive Vice President of Development and Talent" – catches the occasional game in Gotham when the Cardinals are in town, and follows the team online when he's on the go.

Voted "most talkative" in high school, Cohen has made good use of both the phrase – it's the title of his recently released memoir – and the reputation, in his role as host of the popular weeknight gabfest "Watch What Happens: Live" on Bravo.

So what do you get when you combine loyal citizen of Cardinal Nation with celebrity denizen of the entertainment industry? Someone who's just as familiar with Sandra Bullock as Cardinals baseball, and is eager to talk about both – as *Cardinals Magazine* learned when Jessica Radloff, a St. Louis native herself who covers entertainment for *Glamour* magazine, sat down with Cohen for the dish on his Redbird-fan roots.

Let's start from the beginning: How did you get hooked as a Cardinals fan?

Cohen: It's in your blood when you're from St. Louis. There's a reason your blood is red!

How often did you attend Cardinals games growing up?

Cohen: We had season tickets, so I went



Andy Cohen

as much as I could. We shared them with my cousins, aunt, uncle – basically my whole family. It was always a fun, special-occasion.

It's easier than it has ever been to follow the Cardinals if you don't live in St. Louis, thanks to TV packages and social media. Considering your crazy schedule, how often do you get a chance to follow the team?

Cohen: A big chunk of it actually is through Twitter, because the Cardinals' Twitter feed updates the game quite frequently. Twitter is my main source of information because I'm always running around, and it's a way to have it always with me. I follow the official "@Cardinals," and I follow David Freese (@dfreese23), too.

Speaking of Freese, you've said that the 1982 Cardinals are responsible

for some of your favorite memories. Care to amend that after last season?

Cohen: Well, no. (laughs) I'm a really nostalgic guy, so I won't amend it because I was there when they won that (1982) Series, and that was the Series where "Celebration" was their theme song. It was just a very cool time in St. Louis. I remember that well and fondly, and with a smile. But last year ... even if you're not an actual Cardinals fan, you would have to be dead not to get carried away at what happened at Game 6 and just how incredible that entire Series was. It is still monumental. It's impossible to look back at Game 6 and not be amazed. I bought the (official World Series) movie that Jon Hamm narrated.

In terms of Freese, what would you most want to ask him?

Cohen: I don't know. Truthfully, I just want to give him props. I feel like,

at this point, he has morphed into this crazy, heroic figure in baseball from what happened at that game, so I'd want to (congratulate him for how he's handled it).

During the championship run, were there instances where you put work on hold so you could watch the games?

Cohen: It's funny, because the worst thing happened to me during Game 6 of the World Series. I was hosting a big AMFAR (American Foundation for AIDS Research) charity event in Los Angeles, and I was constantly running back and forth to my hotel room during the event to catch the game.

My room was close by, but here I'm emceeding this black-tie gala, running back and forth, and everyone was texting me, saying what was going on (in the game). I had the door to my room open and the TV on, and it was just incredible. I kept updating the crowd on the score of the game, and it was a tepid response, because nobody was as into it as I was. Sandra Bullock was there, and since she's a Texan – and I think a Rangers fan – she seemed to be maybe the only other one who was into it. But what an incredible night.

I know you're friends with Matthew Broderick and (actor and former "All My Children" star) Mark Consuelos, and they're big baseball fans.

Cohen: Right! Matthew was awesome during the Series. Matthew and Jerry Seinfeld, who is also a good friend of mine, were at Game 7 of the NLCS when the Cardinals beat the Mets in 2006 at Shea. I was there with Jerry, who is a legendary Mets fan. He picked me up to go to the game, and I was wearing a Cardinals hat, of course, and he was wearing a Mets hat.

He looked at me and simply said, "Oh." I said, "Look, you can't expect me to not be wearing this hat, right?" and he said, "No,

no, it's fine, it's fine." Then he said, "It's going to be a really long ride home for one of us." It turned out the Cardinals won, and I was one of the only ones at Shea Stadium cheering and going nuts. It was awkward considering it was Game 7.

Do you guys ever get into it over your respective teams?

Cohen: Not really. I have to say, Matthew is such a baseball enthusiast, and so is Jerry. They love the game and just from talking to them, I think both of them really respect that the Cardinals are such a legendary baseball institution. If you love baseball, it's hard not to at least appreciate the Cardinals' history and heritage.

How often do you get to the Mets' Citi Field to see the Cardinals when they're in town?

Cohen: Not often. I actually looked at the calendar today to see when they were coming. I try to (see the Cardinals in New York) once a year, but it's very complicated. They're always here on a weekend when I'm out of town, or giving a speech. It's always some nightmare.

Do you have better luck getting to St. Louis and Busch Stadium, then?

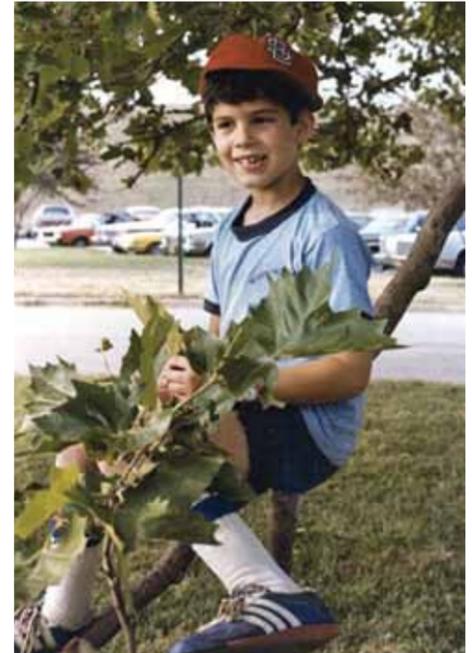
Cohen: I got to throw out a first pitch a few years ago, which was incredible. I write about it in my new book in detail. It's a pretty funny story of what happened that day.

Do you have any relationships with current or former players?

Cohen: No. I met Lou Brock at the playoffs and his wife is a big "Housewives" fan, but that's kind of where it begins and ends.

What's your go-to Cardinals gear when you attend a game?

Cohen: There's no screwing up clothes at



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a Cardinal game, because you just wear red and you're good.

You'd be fabulous as a part of Team Fredbird if this Bravo hosting thing doesn't work out. Would you be up for it?

Cohen: I am part of Team Fredbird! And by the way, growing up, my nickname was "Bird," which was short, of course, for Fredbird. I used to love Fredbird so much. And it turns out that the person who plays Fredbird is a huge "Housewives" fan, so the last couple of times that I've been to Cardinals games, I've met all the Cardinals girls and I get my picture taken with Fredbird. He loves all the Housewives. Isn't that hilarious?

If you could have dinner with one current and one former Cardinal, who would it be and why?

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Cohen: Wow. Interesting. I think, again, I would have to say Mr. Freese, just because I would want to talk to him about that night, and that Series and the whole thing. I just need to break that all down. And then in terms of past Cardinals, probably Ozzie (Smith).

And then he could teach you how to do a backflip!

Cohen: I'd like to think he could teach me how to do a backflip, but that will never happen. No one can teach me how to do that.

Who are you going to miss the most this year – based on their presence alone – Tony La Russa, Albert Pujols or Nick Punto as The Shredder?

Cohen: I am going to miss Tony because he's such a genius and the guy could take whatever he has and figure out what to do with it. So even with Pujols gone, I think everybody had faith, that he could ... I mean, he's incredibly skillful and smart and the best at what he does. I'm excited to see what (Mike) Matheny does, though.

Let's end on this note – on "Watch What Happens: Live," you awarded your "2011 Mazel of the Year" to the Cardinals. Any early favorites this year?

Cohen: I am hoping they do it again. They'll always get my mazels. That's the thing about the Cardinals, and the great thing about St. Louis and St. Louis fans ... they will always be with the Cardinals, no matter what kind of season they have. The Cardinals will always get it.

