

Train people, not their dogs

According to the “dog trainer to the stars,” it’s not dogs that need obedience school—it’s dog owners. Inger Martens is renowned for her fun, fast and effective approach to teaching people about their pets. Her training has worked with Kevin Costner and his Labrador retriever, Wyatt, and Jim Carrey and his Jack Russell terrier, Carl. Born in Toronto, Martens has spent most of her life in California. In 1997, she was voted best dog trainer in the city by *Los Angeles* magazine. In her book *Paws for a Minute*, the 36-year-old Martens does some dishing about celebrity pet problems, which, she says, are no different from the average person’s. And she breaks down owners and dogs into simple personality types. Owners include coaxers, whiners, talkers, control freaks, smackers; dogs develop into divas, shy guys, flirty girls, macho men, big lugs or wallflowers. For Martens,



Darren Brown for Maclean's

Martens with pal Smurphy: husbands next

who has a degree in human psychology, it usually takes eight sessions to bring any combination of dog and owner to an understanding. Her book covers some common human-dog miscommunications. “Usually, people call their dog over and over without letting them know what they mean,” says Martens. “By the time the dog hits eight months old, it has learned to tune you out, similar to your spouse.” Martens explains how to use games like hide-and-seek at home, to teach dogs that when you call their name, even in a park, they should turn on a dime and “seek” you. In her next book, jokes Martens, she’ll reveal secrets for mastering a tuned-out spouse.