

The couple met 14 months ago at a dinner party, and Duncan, 50, asked Dunseath, 39, to marry him this past Valentine's Day as the couple vacationed in Oman.

"You could not find two more conventional people to enter into a civil partnership," Duncan told local media.

Dunseath told *The Daily Telegraph*: "Our friends say we are inseparable. He may be a politician, but he's great fun. We both feel it's so right and we're very lucky."

Tory leader David Cameron said he was "thrilled" to learn of the couple's engagement and plans to attend the ceremony.

In 2002, Duncan became the first Tory MP to publicly come out of the closet.

"Living in disguise as a politician in the modern world simply isn't an option," he said at the time. "The Tory view has always been, 'We don't mind, but don't say.' Well, that doesn't work anymore. The only realistic way to behave these days is to be absolutely honest and upfront, however inconvenient that may be at first."

In a new interview March 5 with the *Telegraph*, Duncan added: "I knew that one day I would have to say something, because I believed honesty to be the best policy. But I wanted to do it when I was sufficiently well-established as an MP for it not to be my only label thereafter. I didn't want to be known just as 'the gay MP Alan Duncan.' To me, I'm an MP who happens to be gay."

Duncan also noted: "This is not a wedding. You really just go into the register office and sign. There will be no Elton John-style stuff: no white suits, no John Inman, no flouncing about."

The United Kingdom's Civil Partnership Act, which took effect in December 2005, grants registered same-sex couples all rights and obligations of marriage.

### Swedish Government to Sell Dildos

Sweden's government-run Apoteket pharmacy chain will begin selling dildos because customers want them, the Stockholm English-language publication *The Local* reported March 6.

"We are aware that sex is a very important part of everyone's life. It is important to help people in this area, and there is a certain demand for the products," spokeswoman Elisabet Linge Bergman told the newspaper.

In a survey conducted last year by Apoteket and the Swedish Association for Sexuality Education, customers chose dildos and massage oils as the top items they'd like to see added to the chain's stock.

The dildos, oils and possibly other sex toys will become available in 50 of the chain's stores starting in May, for a one-year trial period, *The Local* said.

### AMERICAS

#### Venezuelan Supremes Nix Same-Sex Marriage

The constitutional arm of Venezuela's Supreme Tribunal of Justice ruled March 4 that same-sex marriages cannot be constitutionally authorized even though the constitution bans discrimination based on sexual orientation.

The court said, "If the 1999 constitutional body opted to protect monogamous matrimony between a man and a woman as the essential nucleus



**Argentines expect new President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner to support same-sex marriage.**

that gives origin to the family in the Venezuelan historic and cultural context, the extension of its [marriage's] effects to common-law unions should require, at the least, that these [unions] fulfill the same essential requirements—that they are stable and monogamous unions between a man and a woman who have no marriage impediment and that the union is based on the free consent of the parties."

But the tribunal added, "The court wants to emphasize that the constitutional norm does not prohibit or condemn common-law unions between persons of the same sex, which find constitutional cover in the fundamental right of free development of the personality; it simply does not grant them reinforced protection, which does not constitute a discriminatory act in regard to sexual orientation."


Judge Carmen Zuleta de Merchán dissented from the decision, arguing that the constitution grants implicit rights to same-sex couples and that the other justices were influenced by ingrained social and religious prejudices.

The gay group Affirmative Union of Venezuela commented: "We see this decision as an advance with respect to the previous situation in which we had no legal existence, we were invisibilized and our human condition was negated in this society. We commit ourselves to continue fighting, with all legal means within our reach, to obtain what should be common sense: the overcoming of discrimination in Venezuelan society."

#### Argentine President Said to Support Gay Marriage

New Argentine President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner supports legalization of same-sex marriage, according to the president of the National Institute Against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism (INADI).

In a Feb. 24 interview with the Buenos Aires newspaper *Clarín*, María José Lubertino was asked: "With [former President Raúl] Alfonsín the divorce law was established. Will Cristina's accomplishment be gay marriage?"

Lubertino responded: "I have no doubt. If they didn't want me to advance this issue, they wouldn't have put me in charge of INADI." 

REX WOCKNER has reported for the gay press since 1985. He has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Drake University and started his career as a radio reporter.



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