

LUCIRE LIVING OUR PEOPLE



Two-piece suit by **Sanford Bryant**
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PHOTOGRAPHED BY **JON MOE**
MAKE-UP BY **EMMA DUNLAVY**
STYLED BY **JAYMEE MANDEVILLE**

All about **Eva**

As Eva La Rue ascends to prime time Hollywood's "A list" via the world's number-one show (*CSI: Miami*), she brings with her the wisdom and wit shaped from her years as a working New York-based actress.

BY **ELYSE GLICKMAN**

EVA LA RUE IS HOME AT LAST, and the homecoming—even with several bumps in the road—is better than she could have imagined. Though the Southern California native had some structural problems with her newly purchased house and political entertainment industry issues to deal with ("the part that got away" among them), everything ultimately worked out for the best. So good, in fact that the part she almost effortlessly and unexpectedly ended up with instead, as DNA specialist Natalia Boa Vista on *CSI: Miami*, became the opportunity she had worked so hard for.

'The *CSI* experience has been great,' she says without hesitation. 'Although I arrived in the fourth season and was worried about the cast being tight and cliquish, and having to work just as hard behind the scenes to be included, everybody was lovely from the get-go. Although it is a very serious drama, my co-stars have wonderful personalities, a great sense of humour and made sure I felt right at home.'

'One thing I love about getting into my character is that I have learned

she not only found the time, but enjoyed every precious minute of it. She was truly queen for the day, assuming yet another role, and savouring every detail from her make-up artist Emma's attentive preparation, to stylist Jaymee Mandeville's attention to clothing and accessories to photographer Jon Moe's care in capturing just the right shots needed to introduce the world to the Eva La Rue they have yet to meet.

As Eva treats herself to a plate of the Crescent's perfectly executed breakfast crêpes and catches a "cameo" spotting of actor John Lithgow outside the suite's window, she contemplates where she has been. It's a past she can be very proud of, which includes an impressive run on *All My Children* as Dr Maria Santos-Grey, and several brushes with prime-time television's limelight, including a run on NBC's *Third Watch*, a comic turn on *The George Lopez Show*, Showtime's *Soul Food*, *A Dream Is a Wish Your Heart Makes: the Annette Funicello Story* and the mini-series *Remembrance*. On the reality side of things, in addition to *Modern Girl's Guide to Life*, she has served as weekend anchor on Extra! as well as hosted a slew of diverse programmes, from *The Miss America Pageant to The World's Funniest Videos* to *Above the Line Beauty*.

'To be really honest, there's no rhyme or reason to this business,' Eva says when she takes into account all the "professional woman" roles offered to her, right up through her current part on *CSI: Miami*. The bottom line is you take the jobs that come your way, whether it is the professional woman, housewife, maid or *femme fatale* role that is offered. What I have learned in the years I have been doing this is that the best roles suited for you allow you to stretch

as long as its in your sphere. And although many people argue about show business being business and not show art, for the actor, it is more about honing and studying your craft.'

Although up until this year Eva was best known for her enduring portrayal of the compassionate and long-suffering Dr Santos-Grey, the transition to prime-time in itself has been a challenge in the way she approaches her craft. Although she counts *Remembrance* and her portrayal of Annette Funicello as some of the most fulfilling 'stretches' she has had in her professional life, and she has much experience to draw from in her prolific résumé, she will still cheerfully admit that what the viewers don't see proves to be as rich of a learning experience.

'Before moving back out to LA permanently, I had the opportunity to play George's sister on *The George Lopez Show*,' she says. 'Not only was George and the rest of the cast a blast to work with, but the charac-

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so much about how cases are solved, especially when you get to work with technical advisers like Elizabeth Devine, a criminologist who worked on the O. J. Simpson and Menendez Brothers cases. The plots are topical and often based on how real cases are solved. Additionally, the way they shoot the show is fantastic. Although we are not as quite "ripped out of the headlines" as *Law and Order*, we reflect what is current and people all over the world are really connecting with us.'

Thanks to her newfound status in Hollywood, her dance card often fills up quickly with charity involvements, guest appearances and, yes, another "day" job as one of four hosts of the colourful Style Network magazine show *Modern Girl's Guide to Life*. However, when the opportunity was presented to this modern girl to express the more glamorous facets of her personality in our fashion shoot at the Crescent Hotel (like La Rue, a name becoming more increasingly recognizable in Hollywood),

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ter was a hoot—a woman who comes a little unglued when she learns she is Mexican after being raised to believe she is Italian by the people who adopted her.

'In contrast, before this, I played Italian-American Annette Funicello as well as an Italian princess in *Remembrance*. Playing Annette was amazing because the way her MS was portrayed in the story was done with such dignity. I had the chance to work with her family and other people who had known her through the years and learned so much about her life and times off camera as well. She is such an American icon, representing a person who came up during a more innocent time and yet was many people's first crush. Years later, when George came to me about playing the Italian sister with Latina origins, the irony couldn't have been funnier.'

Another example she provides regarding her development as an actress was the process of unlearning the "survival" skills a soap actor uses to get through long shooting days and brisk schedules, as these "tricks" don't always serve actors when they transition to prime-time projects. She explains that on a the set of a prime-time show, the objective is not to make it through the day, but to approach a character more multidimensionally and be as chameleon-like as possible when adapting to the character during the season's run. And though she is picky about the sitcoms she will watch, she's loved the notion of working on a sitcom set.

As fate had it, the prospective job that beckoned her back to LA was a role on *Freddie*, the Freddie Prinze Jr vehicle produced by George Lopez, who clearly liked the way she brought the returning sister to life. 'Although many sitcoms can be predictable, and you can see the bada-bum coming from two miles away, the sets of the really good ones are fun, creative and light-hearted,' she notes. 'I liked the idea that being a regular on a comedy series could be one of my best stretches as an actress. After my experience on *The George Lopez Show*, I was invited to test for the role of Freddie's sister. However, the theoretically should have been an easy experience—especially because I have a great working relationship with George, and Freddie and I are such good friends—the testing process was brutal and went on for weeks. And after all that work, the role went to Jaqueline Obrador, who is great on that show and deserved the job.'

Though Eva now faced the daunting prospect, even with her experience, of moving to LA without a job lined up, she soldiered forth. Then fate twisted again. While filming the "how to handle a move" segment on *Modern Girl's Guide* documenting the actual packing-up of her real-life household, *CSI: Miami* unexpectedly came calling. Time was of the essence with this opportunity, forcing her to fly back to New York immediately after completing her move to LA to film her audition video. On a Friday morning, with no rehearsal and many takes, she did her turn as Natalia, learned the tape was viewed on the following Monday and ultimately landed the role on Tuesday. Although the "It's all about who you know" cliché still abounds in Hollywood, she delights in the fact that sometimes a combination of genuine talent and having the right fit for a part does occasionally take precedence.

As Emma and Jaymee continue to fine-tune the aspects of her first all-out glam look (the dramatic Cesar de la Parra number), Eva finds herself recalling how she cultivated those talents curing her childhood in Norco, Calif. 'Starting around the time I was about three, I emerged as the one in the neighbourhood putting on improved talent shows, casting friends, putting up the curtains and creating the costumes ... the whole thing. Though the interest in acting came later, I was singing and dancing into my teens and found that triple threats like Shirley MacLaine, Rita Moreno, Ann-Margret, Liza Minnelli, Debbie Reynolds were among my inspirations.'

Eva started young, and built her résumé with television commercials, pageant competitions, modelling, voiceovers and small roles in studio films. However, it is her role on *All My Children* that established her as a name and brought her a loyal fan base. Even with her eagerness to find new roles that will broaden her appeal, she looks back at her years on



Dress by **Cesar de la Parra**
Earrings and ring by **de Grisogono**
Shoes are Eva's own



Dress by **J. Gerard**
Earrings by **Rosalina**
Necklace and ring by **Susan Foster**
Shoes are Eva's own

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the show and impact on fans with great affection. Although she looked forward to moving back to Los Angeles for personal reasons that are as important to her as the professional, she will always have fond memories of both her cultured lifestyle in New York City as well as the fans that kept her in the *AMC* family for more than 12 years.

'It will be interesting to see how the international appeal of *CSI: Miami* will have on my life, but when it comes to working on a soap and cultivating a fan base that's loyal and lovely and often allows you to have a certain anonymity when traveling to other parts of the world,' she reflects. 'That being said, however, it's amazing to see how a good role on a soap can touch so many people's lives. For example, when John (Callahan, her husband in real life until 2004) and I had an 18-month storyline on the show involving infertility, a woman who was following the story approached me at airport thanked us for bringing reality and dignity to the topic. Of course, we had a writer going through it in real life, and she put her heart into the storyline, but the result was that many viewers saw the situation played out correctly. As heartbreaking as the experience is, it was also enriching.'

'Another woman wrote me a letter describing how she quickly bonded with a neighbour when she moved to a new town after she married,' Eva continues. 'They became best friends and soulmates, raised their children together, watched *AMC* on most days and exchanged tapes when one couldn't watch the show for some reason. They were enchanted when both we and our characters were falling in love at the same time. When the friend was diagnosed with breast cancer, they would watch our storyline unfold from the hospital room. And when her friend died, the woman who wrote me inherited all the tapes that accumulated over the years. It was so moving to hear about how we were part of what these two young Moms shared.'

While Eva's fans have managed to draw her into their real lives, she has enjoyed an interesting second career playing herself as host on a multitude of shows. She enjoyed her high-profile anchor work on *Extra!* (being extra careful that she kept her reportage light and engaging, at the advice of fellow *AMC* alumus Sarah Michelle Gellar). However, even with all the opportunities to saunter down the red carpet and meet actors who inspire her, one of her most memorable hosting jobs was a Miss America pageant.

'What a rush—oh my God,' she says with awe, even as she now looks like she could outshine any of the beauty queens she profiled. 'My sister and I watched it every year religiously, wearing our tiaras from Thrifty and cheering the way boys do with sporting events. Having participated in pageants during my teens, it was an intense thing to see all the people who were there between the girls' families and all the pageant enthusiasts. The energy was unbelievable, and as they cheered you could feel a huge physical wave hit you full on.'

Although Eva is quickly becoming a fixture on the best red carpet events in LA, despite reaching heights of fabulousness in preparation for this shoot, she admits she is a little nervous of how the red-carpet inspired shoot will come out just as she is when she does the red-carpet bit for real. 'I don't consider myself glamorous, and it's easy to worry about if I really look good, if we picked the right outfit, if the lip gloss is bleeding, if a boob is about to pop out, if others look more flawless than me. While it can be fun and fabulous, in the back of your mind, you wonder if people will make fun of you later. But this, too, is a performance.'

As as we can tell by the photos, it was a brilliant one. Eva La Rue has nothing to worry about—except, perhaps, the next crime in Miami and some new plumbing issues that may arise as she and daughter Kaya McKenna settle into Southern California living. •



Dress by **Jane Boone**
Necklace by **Peace & Love**
Earrings by **Susan Foster**
Shoes are Eva's own



Dress by **Jane Booke**
Necklace and bracelet by **Safia**
Ring by **Rosalina**
Shoes by **Hype**

Additional heartfelt thanks to Primary Action, Cesar de la Parra, Dana Valenzuela, Nancy Davis, Jennifer Gross & Evolutionary Media, Harris-Sheppard Public Relations, Jaymee Mandeville, Emma, Anthony Turk, Jane Booke, Anthony Turk and Natalie Kojen & Brian Garrido.

About the location, the Crescent Hotel
Conveniently located in the Golden Triangle of Beverly Hills at 403 North Crescent Drive, the Crescent is within walking distance of Beverly Hills' finest shopping, restaurants and area amenities. The 35-room hotel caters to guests with an appreciation for design, comfort, innovation and style. Bo, the Crescent's inviting indoor-outdoor restaurant and lounge, offers a seasonally evolving, eclectic new American cuisine and a truly distinctive drink menu. For more information, please call 1 310 247-0505 or visit the Crescent's web site at www.crescentbh.com.