



Starlet – Emmanuel Vaugier steps into the spotlight

iStyle, Winter 2003

I devour sufficient magazines and spend enough rainy evenings hibernating with my DVD player that when the call came asking me to interview Emmanuelle Vaugier, I was already well versed on the Vancouver-born LA-based actor. But would someone with a social life be familiar with this new Hollywood player?

I consulted a friend. Vaugier's name rang bells for him all right – with a Pavlovian effect. "You mean have I seen her," came the testosterone-tainted reply as he exuded a low, purr-like noise indicating extreme approval. "She's one of Maxim's 100 hottest women of 2003." I called in another opinion. "Emmanuelle Vaugier is totally hot," came the response. "You should see her sex scene with Josh Hartnett. It's so steamy." This is from a woman.

It's true, Emmanuelle Vaugier is hot. You might say she's on fire. Yet a glimpse through the French-Italian beauty's filmography reveals that, like many celebrities, it's taken Vaugier years of effort to become an overnight success. The one-time teen model has already survived (despite that her characters never do) enough B-movie horror films to scare anyone from entering the industry. Lowlights include *Wishmaster 3* in which she plays a promiscuous student who (in the grand tradition of all attractive women in horror movies) is snuffed by a demon; *Ripper* where her character's death demonstrates the downside of hanging out alone in a morgue late at night and *Return to the Cabin by the Lake* where, in a toxic plot twist, cast mate Judd Nelson lethally drugs Vaugier.

Some of the facts on their own-sex kitten, horror Queen and Miss Maxim-make you wonder if Vaugier graduated from the Pamela Anderson School of Drama then moved to LA to pursue a Master's of Debauchery. But Vaugier's demonstrated cunning in her career plan, choosing carefully parts from the teen comedy circuit that haven't blighted her credibility and balancing them with roles that have propelled her onto the list of respected up-and-comers.

She recently shared the spotlight with veteran Oscar winners Robert Duvall and Michael Caine in fall's blockbuster *Secondhand Lions*. In it, Vaugier plays not a doomed licentious wench but a beautiful princess named Jasmine. As to whether she prefers playing virtuous damsel or vixen, Vaugier is undecided. "There's appeal to both, you know? Being bad is a lot more fun, but nothing beats running around in princess stuff. It's like your childhood fantasy come true and it's recorded for the rest of time," she says.

Weekly, Vaugier lights up the small screen in the role of Dr. Helen Bryce, Lex Luthor's wife on Warner Brothers' *Smallville*. Of the show's super success, she is still somewhat overwhelmed. "They had this premiere-opener for the show and there was a huge fan turnout. It was a little freaky. The energy of it is so weird, seeing all those people screaming... But I'm sure they're not screaming so much for me as for (my costar) Tom Welling."

Maybe the screams weren't for her on that occasion, but Vaugier's definitely got a fan club to call her own. A starring role in *My Guide To Becoming A Rock Star* earned her the first glint of fame, but since steaming of the screen in her first nude scene in *40 Days and 40 Nights* (the same one that ended with Josh Hartnett faking an orgasm) her va-va-voom factor has skyrocketed to the tune of over 300,000 hits per month on her web site (emmanuellevaugier.com). You'd think being a gorgeous, sexual icon (Vaugier cracks up at this description) who





was specifically cast in *Secondhand Lions* as “the most beautiful girl in the world” could go to a girl’s head, but Vaugier seems pretty grounded.

“I just figure some stuff’s work and it’s fun but its just part of what I do. Then I have my normal life with my dogs, my family and my friends where I go about my business. The Maxim Hot 100 list is a fun thing and it was flattering to be on it, but it changes every year and it’s all about who’s doing what at the time. There are a lot beautiful women out there. At the end of the day if you can’s see yourself for who you really are and you start to buy into what everybody says you are then you lose your focus.”

Talk to her for a couple minutes and it’s obvious you can take the girl out of Vancouver, but you can’t take Vancouver out of the girl. When I asked her about life in the limelight, she’s tactful. “Forming a group of friends (in LA) was a little more difficult than it would have been maybe in another town. Not everybody is who they appear to be and there’s a lot of, sort-of, bullshit to sift through.” She’s reportedly formed several high-profile friendships with A-list celebs since moving to LA but inquire about them and her demurral is polite but clear, she’ll divulge no details.

To compliment her Canadian sense of discretion, Vaugier’s got a BC bred discipline in the physical health department. She earns her svelte form spending a lot of time at the gym “blowing off steam” and there’s a trace of guilt in her voice when she admits that daily walks with her two miniature poodles, Lily and Isabelle, have been shorter lately thanks to her hectic schedule.



The morning of our interviews, she’s sporting Vancouver-label Lululemon’s pants and a basic tank but when an occasion warrants haute couture Vaugier’s part of the vanguard, not a victim. She flaunted a sexy Claire Pettibone custom dress (originally a piece of lingerie that Vaugier had lined) to the premiere of *Secondhand Lions*, and pays court to reigning style-kings Dolce & Gabbana because she loves their line and it “fits like a glove.”

True to the dichotomy between good girl and bad girl roles, in the future Vaugier would love to test her vocal chords in a musical (Annie was a favourite as a child) or flex her muscles Matrix-style for the camera. But you’ll, likely catch her before that on CBS’s *The Handler* in which she plays a coked-out FBI informant named Angelica, or as Heidi Fleiss’ mentor Lauren in the movie *Going Down: The Rise and Fall of Heidi Fleiss*.

By the end of our interview, punctuated in its entirety by Vaugier’s easy laughter, we’re happily discussing music. The new Jason Mraz CD is currently pulling rank in her car stereo, but she just picked up Duran Duran’s greatest hits and she’s “lovin’ all the ‘80s music. I just can’t get enough of it.” This last bit sends us both into a chorus of Depeche Mode’s “Just Can’t Get Enough” before we hang up.

Emmanuelle Vaugier may be hot, but she’s also pretty cool.

Written by Kate MacKlennan