

Silk nylon bodysuit with glass beads by Dolce & Gabbana. Leather shoes by Marc Jacobs. Makeup colors: Glam'Eyes Quad Eye Shadow in Smokey Noir, Lasting Finish Blendable Powder Blush in Santa Rose, and Moisture Renew Lipcolour in Summer Angel by Rimmel London. These pages: Hair, Ken O'Rourke; makeup, Pati Dubroff; manicure, Tom Bachik. Prop stylist: Ali Gallagher. Fashion editor: Paul Cavaco. Details, see Shopping Guide.



The Showgirl

Zoey Deschanel is more than a hairstyle, a ukulele, and a Twitter account. The actress talks about her image—and why it drives some people bonkers.

By Brooke Hauser

I'm bangs and eyes," says Zoey Deschanel. "It's who I am." Sitting in the shade on a hotel patio in Los Angeles, her blue eyes framed by a mop of long hair, Deschanel takes out her iPhone and starts searching for evidence to prove her point. "Here we go—this is me in kindergarten," she says, showing a photo of herself as a little girl wearing heavy bangs and a mischievous expression. "There have been periods when I've grown my bangs out, but I always cut them back, so it's like, why go through the trouble?"

Deschanel knows that her bangs are to her what the golden arches are to McDonald's: They are her branding, how people recognize her from afar, a hair hashtag identifying her to those seeking a kindred indie soul. For a long time, she was best known for playing an assortment of edgy, sardonic characters in such films as *Almost Famous* and *The Good Girl*. (In the latter, she was the cashier who sent customers on their way by saying, with mock innocence, "Here's your change, and fuck you very much.") More recently, she starred as a Smiths-loving heartbreaker in *(500) Days of Summer*. A regular at the Sundance Film Festival and one half of the folk-pop band She & Him, the 32-year-old has been pegged as an indie darling so many times that the label is as much a part of her identity as her hairstyle. But until now, she hadn't exactly been pegged

as the type who would land her own prime-time sitcom (10 million viewers tuned in for the first episode of *New Girl*), or who would sing the national anthem at the World Series. "I've always straddled a weird line—there's a lot of mainstream stuff that I love," Deschanel says. At the same time, she says, "I still feel like an outsider. I'm the outsider who's on the inside."

Deschanel's inner outcast made her the perfect match for *New Girl*'s Jess, a socially awkward woman in her 20s who moves in with a bunch of dudes after breaking up with her boyfriend. "She really reminds me of myself before I learned how to interact with people," the actress says, adding that her friends and family enjoy seeing her play a character who is much more like the real Zoey. "Because I have brown hair and a low voice, I would get cast as dry, sarcastic, ironic people, which I can do, but it's not my sense of humor. I'm a very positive person. I get excited easily, and I like to jump around."

Indeed, Deschanel comes across as earnest, with an undercurrent of nervous energy. When a waitress comes over to take our order, she declines anything more than sparkling water, explaining in her husky voice, "I learned never to eat during an interview. The worst is if you're actually meeting somebody for a potential job. I'm always like, Don't let yourself be too hungry." Normally something of a clothes-horse—she loves vintage—today she wears her "set clothes,"

PHOTOGRAPHED BY NORMAN JEAN ROY

a comfy sweater and leggings, having come directly from work. She is professional, but not unshakable. Deschanel is in the midst of expressing a thought when another restaurant patron trills in a loud, high-pitched voice: “I need more honey! Milk and honey!” The actress abruptly stops talking, bites her lip, and teeters on the edge of a full-scale giggle attack. “I wonder if that’s going to be my new favorite quote,” Deschanel says. “I don’t remember what I was saying.”

In fact, Deschanel was about to start talking about hellogiggles.com, the website she cofounded with a couple of friends. Geared toward women and girls, it features posts about sticker collections, recipes, and crafts projects. In one post, “Crafternoon With Zooeey D,” Deschanel herself provides a step-by-step guide to creating your own fabric drawstring bag—think of her as Martha Stewart for hipsters. She even has her own Hello Kitty Janome sewing machine.

Adorkable” is the word the Fox network uses to describe her TV alter ego, but it could be applied to Deschanel just as easily, and her quirky persona has earned her a strong base of both worshipful fans and snarky critics. (*Vanity Fair* has a running blog feature titled, “Zooeey Deschanel on *New Girl*: Adorkable or Tweepulsive?”) On the one hand, there are the legions of Zoettes—girls who cut their bangs and wear vintage and play the ukulele just like their indie idol. “It’s so cute. I’m flattered,” says the actress-singer, who has met some of her followers during past tours with She & Him. “I tend to become friends with people who kind of look like me.”

On the other hand, there are those who take issue with Deschanel’s relentless cuteness. The blog Jezebel published an angry rant by comedian Julie Klausner about women who dress and behave like little girls, featuring a tweet by Deschanel: “I wish everyone looked like a kitten.” Klausner called for an end to the kind of girlishness Deschanel often embodies, arguing that it disempowers women.

Deschanel isn’t persuaded by that theory. “If you feel like dressing like a girl, there’s nothing wrong with that. I don’t know why femininity should be associated with weakness. Women should be free to express who they are without thinking, I need to act like a man, or I need to tone it down to be successful. That’s a very good way to keep women down,” she says. “Part of the reason why my friends and I started HelloGiggles is because we wanted a community of women that was more positive.”

She adds that since becoming famous, she has learned to be vigilant about protecting herself from online gossip and mean comments. “I can’t go on Gawker. I actually think the writing is really funny, but there is a chance that somebody is undercutting me,” says Deschanel, who recently separated from her husband of two years, Ben Gibbard, lead singer of the indie band Death Cab for Cutie. (Within hours of the announcement, the blogosphere was abuzz with commenters lamenting the end of an indie “It” couple.)

Deschanel seems to have spent a lot of time thinking about her image. For the most part, she has come to terms with the reality that some people love her for the same qualities that other people find annoying. “I think to be able to work as an actor, you have to accept your persona. If you don’t, you suffer, because you’re always trying to step outside of the thing that people first see in you,” she says. Still, the actress is often misunderstood. Despite her quirky image, she was raised among the Hollywood elite. She and her older sister, Emily Deschanel (the star of *Bones*), grew up around filmmakers: Their parents are Caleb and Mary Jo Deschanel, the Oscar-nominated cinematographer and the actress best known for her role in *Twin Peaks*. Along with Kate Hudson and Jake Gyllenhaal, Zooeey attended the Santa Monica prep school Crossroads. Even during school, Deschanel says, she felt like an outsider, but perhaps never more so than in middle school, when she was at her most awkward—a chubby kid with a penchant for overalls. “Girls spit in my face,” she says. “People were so mean to me, I’d cry every day.” (continued on page 167)





Silk pointelle T-shirt and stretch wool shorts by Jason Wu. Silk-brocade-and-leather shoes by Dolce & Gabbana. Makeup colors: Glam'Eyes Quad Eyeshadow in Smokey Noir and Moisture Renew Lipcolour in Dreamy by Rimmel London. Details, see Shopping Guide.



Tablet Extra:
To watch an exclusive video with Zooey Deschanel, download *Allure* to your tablet.



1994

SEVENTH-GRADE YEARBOOK "I had just been really chubby. I had lost, like, ten pounds, and I was trying to grow out my bangs because I was trying to do a new look."

WITH DAN CORTESE IN VERONICA'S CLOSET "Oh, that's so funny. OK, so this was my first job ever. I was a guest star. I was terrified I would be fired—that was my big fear. I was still in high school. That was my SAG-card role."



1998

WITH JENNIFER ANISTON IN THE GOOD GIRL "This was one of the most fun, weird roles I've ever gotten to play. I was only on this [movie] for five days or something. I like playing sort-of-crazy people. There's something really fun about that."



2002



AT THE PREMIERE FOR ABANDON IN HOLLYWOOD "I would wake up and see blonde hair, and I'd be like, Who am I?! When I got my hair back to brown, my sister said, 'Thank God you're back.'"



2003 WITH EX-BOYFRIEND JASON SCHWARTZMAN AT THE ELF PREMIERE IN NEW YORK CITY "He's a friend. He's married with a baby. That [premiere] was really fun. I liked the makeup. I wear a lot of black."

WITH WILL FERRELL IN ELF "Love Will Ferrell. This made him a movie star, and it opened up a lot of doors for me. This movie I loved. It did so well, and people keep seeing it every year."



2003



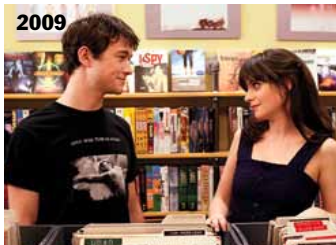
2006

WITH SARAH JESSICA PARKER AND ROB CORDDRY IN FAILURE TO LAUNCH "I know she's a fashion icon, but I do my thing, and she does her thing. She's got a really good figure. She's very ladylike, old-school. I don't know if I've ever met someone so polite, especially on a set. I never saw her drop her politeness."

WITH KATY PERRY AT A BENEFIT FOR P.S. ARTS IN LOS ANGELES "I don't think we look exactly alike, but I understand the comparison, and I'm not insulted by it. She's really pretty."



2006



2009 WITH JOSEPH GORDON-LEVITT IN (500) DAYS OF SUMMER "We worked together on another movie, *Manic*, [about] ten years ago. He's a great actor, but he's also great fun. We were kindred spirits. I work very easily with him. We would love to do another movie together."

2009



2011

WITH JAMES FRANCO IN YOUR HIGHNESS "He's hilarious. I don't know if anyone knows what a unique guy he is because he's obviously very good-looking. Great actor."



2011 WITH BEN GIBBARD AT A BAFTA EVENT IN LOS ANGELES "I really liked that Oscar de la Renta dress. It was fun getting to wear it. Very sparkly."

WITH JAKE JOHNSON IN NEW GIRL "For this scene, I ate 14 bowls of ice cream. I mean, fake ice cream, because I can't have dairy. Every time I eat on the show it's, like, cookies or ice cream."



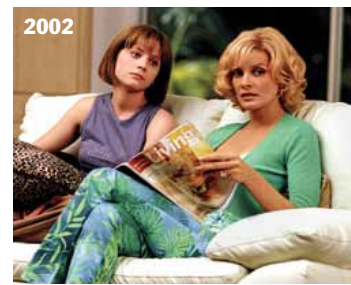
2011



2000

WITH FRANCES McDORMAND AND PATRICK FUGIT IN ALMOST FAMOUS "The stewardesses had a code for hair, makeup, and wardrobe. That was eyelash glue [making the curls stick] to my face. Back then, I overplucked my eyebrows. I was like, Oh, people pluck their eyebrows. I just thought it meant, like, pluck them all out."

WITH RENE RUSSO IN BIG TROUBLE "This movie was four months of nights shooting in Miami in the summer. I was so tired and confused. I ate pasta in my spare time. That was my fun activity. They made me dye [my hair]. Actually, that was the first dye job."



2002

Beauty Call

The New Girl's old standbys.

Hair:

"I like Oribe shampoo and conditioner, and they have really great hair spray."

Skin:

"I use an organic cleansing oil by Laventine. Clark's Botanicals—I like their stuff. And John Masters Organics makes a nice pomegranate [facial] oil. John Masters makes a good sunblock, and so does Josie Maran."

Makeup:

"Well, I have a Rimmel contract. They have really good liquid eyeliner. I don't wear a ton of makeup."

Diet:

"I used to try to be a vegetarian while also dealing with a lot of food allergies, and it was impossible. So I eat meat, vegetables, and rice...very balanced. I'm all for eating. My vice is BabyCakes, a bakery. It's gluten-free and vegan."

Nails:

"I'm always like, Where's my buffer? [She whips out a nail buffer from her purse.] I have nail art on my toes. Blue toes with white bows. That rhymes."



Ivory silk organza dress by Louis Vuitton. Details, see Shopping Guide.

THE SHOWGIRL

(Continued from page 162)

It wasn't until later that she embraced her outsider status and let it define her. During her freshman year at Northwestern University, she seemed to make a point of standing out. "My best friend and I would wear velvet gowns and put on lashes and lipstick," the actress says. "I refused to wear jeans. 'That's not who I am. I will not wear jeans.' It was a weird rebellion to just go for it every day."

Deschanel left college after the first year. She laughs, recalling what she was thinking at the time: "I went to Northwestern because I had gone to a really nontraditional high school. I was like, 'It'd be cool to have a traditional college experience.' Then I was like, 'Oh, but none of these people understand what's cool about me. My specialness is not appreciated in this place.'" As for the frat guys, "they did not get me at all," she says. "I actually remember a guy saying to me, 'You're weird.'"

These days, Deschanel seems to take "weird" as a compliment. In fact, "weird" must be one of her favorite words; during our interview, she uses it approximately 25 times. No doubt, she is weird in the sense that she is different, a poster girl for all the adorkable outcasts out there. She is revered in artsy enclaves from Portland to Brooklyn; in a recent *New York* profile, she was even touted as "The Pinup of Williamsburg," despite the fact that, she says, "I've only been to Williamsburg once. We were shooting part of *Our Idiot Brother* there."

Still, Deschanel doesn't have much in common with the typical Los Angeles actress. Specifically, she doesn't understand the starlets who overorder at restaurants just to prove a point: "How is it that I order a salad, and I'm a normal-size actress, and other actresses are emaciated and they're like, 'Pancakes and...'" While she watches her weight by sticking to a diet of vegetables, grains, and proteins, Deschanel isn't obsessed. "Some people around me, they're like 89 pounds," she says, scoping the hotel pool, where string-bikini-clad girls regularly lounge. "I'm not going to say I'm a big girl. I'm a very small person, but I'm a healthy weight. That might be a little weird for Hollywood."

Deschanel often speaks about Hollywood from the perspective of someone who is in it yet not completely of it. She clearly had the chance to form herself in private before creating her public image. Her parents refused to let her go on auditions until she was old enough to drive. But almost as soon as she got her license, Deschanel earned her SAG card with a guest role on the TV show *Veronica's Closet*. In 2000, she was cast as the stewardess sister of a budding *Rolling Stone* reporter in *Almost Famous*, starring her former Crossroads classmate Hudson. She had another mini high-school reunion with Gyllenhaal in *The Good Girl*. However, it wasn't until 2003 that Deschanel herself became more than almost famous, playing a department-store elf opposite Will Ferrell in the holiday movie *Elf*. "I had no idea at the time what kind of impact that film would have on my life," she says.

The role proved that Deschanel could hold her own in a blockbuster. And yet "indie" is the label that has stuck. "It sort of follows me around," says Deschanel, who dated actor Jason Schwartzman before she met Gibbard. Another frequent label: "It" girl, which she finds ironic. "It" girl is supposed to be something that only lasts a certain amount of time," Deschanel says. "They keep calling me an 'It' girl, and at this point it makes me laugh, because I've done that so many times: 'You're it'; 'you're not it.' What is 'it'?"

If "it" involves receiving the attention that comes with being in a prime-time sitcom, Deschanel isn't fazed. But then again, she is seasoned enough to know how to tune out the noise. "When people are excited about what you're doing, it's very obvious in the Hollywood community. [But] the first time you start to go off the radar, people aren't as nice. I've been in both situations," Deschanel says matter-of-factly. "You definitely have to find your own self-worth."

The day after those comments, the news broke of her split from Gibbard. Before that announcement, she spoke about her character's postbreakup comforts on *New Girl*—Jess sobs while watching *Dirty Dancing* on loop—and revealed what might help her through a time of heartache, saying, "I'd probably just go get out of my house. If I'm sad, I listen to happy music." ♦