



# admits Friends star Courteney Cox

For the audition, De Palma asked Cox to dance—a problem, since, Cox says, she didn't know how. "You know that look in the video when I put my hand toward my head like, Oh, I can't believe I'm here?" she asks. "Well, that's what I did in the office. I was just *so* embarrassed."

Cox's next coup was in the late 1980s, starring opposite Michael J. Fox in the sitcom *Family Ties*. The actress recently caught a glimpse of herself on a *Ties* rerun. "I thought, This is horrible! I didn't know *what* I was doing," she says. "And I can't believe I was that heavy. I was bigger than him!"

**W**hen the series ended, she set her sights on a career in film. "What I should have done was another television series to get more experience," she admits. "Instead I had to start nowhere in films and work my way up." While she seemed to disappear from sight for years, she was actually working continually—just not on anything that was getting her noticed.

Then came a surprise: the 1994 box-office smash *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*. Considering the movie's phenomenal success, isn't Cox, who played Ace's girlfriend, Melanie, disappointed that she wasn't cast in November's sequel, *Ace Ventura: When Nature Calls?* "Jim considers his character a James Bond type who has a different woman in every single case," she explains. "We'd laugh. I'd say, 'James Bond does *not* look like you, *all right?* James Bond does *not* have a pompadour. You ought to feel lucky that you had *me* and keep me along!'" All joking aside, Cox doesn't feel the role would have furthered her career much, anyway. "If you look at a movie and there's Jim Carrey, I

don't care *who's* next to him; you are going to be looking at Jim Carrey."

She may have lost out on the *Ventura* reprise, but Cox did just sign on to star in *Commandments*, a black comedy starring Aidan Quinn that will be out later this year. Since the movie is shooting in New York City and *Friends* is filmed in Los Angeles,



**Among friends: "Courteney is selfless. She's always the one saying, 'I'll do it,'" says co-star and pal Lisa Kudrow (third from right)**

she must travel east every weekend and hiatus. "I'm a little worried about that. I need eight hours of sleep, and if I don't get it, I break out as if I were thirteen," she says, sliding her grandmother's antique diamond ring on and off different fingers.

In fact, Cox is so nervous lately that she's been waking up at four A.M. and then struggling to fall back to sleep. "I think too much. I just plan and wonder, How is it all going to work? And it's things that I can't do anything about at that hour, so I just keep saying, 'Courteney, forget it,'" she says, her brow furrowed. "I wish that worked, but it doesn't."

One thing that Cox *can* do in her sleep is play her *Friends* character, control-freak Monica. "I *am* Monica.

I moved to New York when I turned eighteen. I take care of myself and I always have."

In fact, the ever-responsible Monica has become increasingly more like Cox as the show has progressed. "I am very sarcastic, and a lot of my humor does come from anger. They've added that in," she explains.

"I'm also very direct, so they've made Monica a little more so."

Although it sounds too trite to be true, Cox and her castmates actually are friends. They eat lunch together on the set and sometimes gather to watch the show on Thursday nights. "Last season we would watch it here or at Jennifer's," she says. "But now everybody has a new house, so it will be a fight as to where we go."

Still, don't cast members ever feel a twinge of envy when someone else gets a break? "I think that there is enough for everybody. You just put the blinders on and do your own work. It looks like Dave Schwimmer is going to direct a comedy this summer. That's fantastic. And magazine covers, maybe that's one of the things I've been doing more of."

Speaking of magazines, what was it like to land on the "50 Most Beautiful People" cover? "It feels great, but it's a little bit of pressure, like . . . oh, now I've got to put makeup on when I go out," says the actress, who is not wearing even a slick of lip balm. "I got over it. You know, I'm just too tired to put makeup on, and I don't blow-dry my hair." Lately, Cox has been taking "tons of vitamins to make my hair grow" after it had to be cut for a story line, much to her chagrin. "But I definitely felt the need to try to look decent for a couple of weeks after the magazine came out."

Does she feel beautiful? "No, I don't. When the makeup artist and the hairstylist (continued on page 138)

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both work on me, I can look decent. But right now, if I walked by a mirror, I'd go, 'Oh my gosh—dog!'” says Cox, who is actually beginning to blush. “I do like my eyes,” she concedes, “if they have makeup on them.”

As she's quickly learned, having all the world's eyes focused on her own baby blues does have its price: These days she is the subject of much speculation. One reported rumor is that Cox has become anorexic. Although she does have a petite and exceptionally lean frame, her sculpted muscles say otherwise. So does her light-but-constant snacking on tortilla chips, olives and homemade bread pudding that was brought in by a crew

member one day on the *Friends* set.

“Anorexic?” She laughs. “My weight is actually up right now! I'm five-feet-five and I weigh 110, and I do go up and down. But I would *never* throw up my food—that I promise you—and I would *never* take a laxative.”

Cox thinks the rumor may have started because of her snacking on the set, most often on sweets from a container labeled *Courteney's Candy Cabinet*. “Someone must have said they see me eat candy all the time, but I'm thin. But that's only in spurts,” she says. “I know what to eat and I know how to eat. If I eat pasta for dinner, I gain weight; if I eat protein for dinner, I lose weight.”

Another rumor reported by the

tabloids was that Cox and Michael Keaton, her boyfriend of six years, got engaged. But at the time the piece was published, the couple had actually broken up (they later reunited). Cox, who usually refuses to discuss her personal life, is surprisingly candid.

“We really do need to make a decision about what to do. It's tough,” she says, sighing. “Our lifestyles are very different. It really seems like they should be the same, because we're both in the business, but it's not. Part of it is that he's got a kid [twelve-year-old son, Sean] and we just have different personalities. I don't want to tell too much about him because he's a very private person, but I'm very impulsive, and he's not quite as impulsive as (continued)

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*Continued*

I am about making decisions."

Does she feel pressured by the ticking of her biological clock? "I want to have a kid before they stick that big needle in my stomach," she says. "When my friends tell me about their amniocentesis test and they talk about that needle, I just can't even imagine it! So for no other reason than that needle, I want to have a kid before I'm thirty-five."

Is Keaton open to having more children? "Yeah," she says cautiously. "But I don't know that we're going to do this together. As we sit here today, I honestly don't know what will happen by the time this magazine comes out. I do believe in karma and why I was attracted to him and not another person. You could put fifteen guys in a room, and I would go straight to him."

[As LHJ went to press, Cox told us, "Michael and I are taking a break, but like any relationship, you never know. . . ."]

Despite their tough times, Cox says she has always found Keaton irresistible. "I don't laugh that much, and he makes me laugh," she says soberly. "I used to get worried. In high school, I used to think that there was something wrong with me. Everyone would laugh out loud over things. I don't know how to laugh out loud." An ironic admission from an actress who stars on one of the funniest sitcoms on TV. "Thank goodness I work with such funny people, because I do laugh a lot at work. But I'm very particular. I just don't think everything's that funny."

High on her not-for-laugh list is a regimen she's been dreading all day: Pilates, a strenuous stretching and strengthening exercise that is a modified form of yoga. Her instructor, David, stands by in her attic as she heads toward her wooden Pilates table, a sort of New Age rack.

"There is something called a 'Pilates Butt.' If you do it right, you get a great butt. I've never had any butt," says Cox, stopping to put her hands on her hips and offer a side view. "This is not a big butt, but for me, it's gargantuan!" What's more noticeable is the heart-and-rose tattoo on her lower leg. "Oh, you're not supposed to see that!" she says, trying to cover the spot with her other foot. "I'm getting it removed. See, I told you I'm impulsive and then conservative."

Lying on her back with her knees bent, she squeezes her trademark blue eyes shut. As David murmurs instructions, his pupil slowly, arduously uses different muscles to slide her body back and forth on the table. Her legs tremble and beads of sweat start to appear on her brow as she uses all of her mental and physical energy to move the desired few inches. Surely, this self-imposed discipline must be the hardest part of her day? "No," she says, exhaling quickly. "The hardest thing that I do is shut my mind off so I can go to sleep." ●

*Melina Gerosa is the entertainment editor of Ladies' Home Journal.*