

L Word Exclusive: The Woman Who Stole Helena's Heart

CURVE

EST-SELLING LESBIAN MAGAZINE

Who needs
Tila
Tequila?

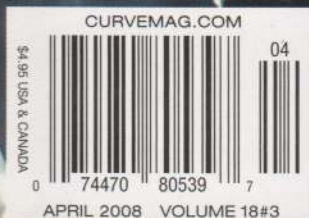
BONUS
Score Dani's
autograph on
this cover!
details inside

A Shot at Love's

Dani

Get the inside scoop

on lesbian love, instant fame
and what turns her on



own it. It has an LLC. We just need to get the clothing out there now. We're in the process of interviewing designers and stuff like that.

I think there's definitely a market there for that too.

Oh, yeah. The *New York Post* did a full-page article on me.

People are liking this idea, and I just need to run with it quick and make sure that it happens.

Have you always wanted to move into activism, the way you've wanted to move into fashion? Is that something that you always saw yourself doing before this experience?

Yeah. I've always loved children, they actually look up to me like a role model. That puts me in a good position to influence them, you know? So they'll be more apt to listening to what I'm trying to say because I'm Dani from the TV show. It's crazy. It's great, it's a great tool since I'm trying to push something.

So many viewers were compelled by the boys vs. girls nature of *Shot at Love*. Do you think your fan base broke down the same way?

I think that concept was an awesome idea. It's about time mainstream TV joined the rest of the world. My fan base is super broad, so I'm not sure how to answer that one. I think everyone enjoyed the show and that's what matters.

A lot of lesbian viewers regarded all the femme girls as "possibly bi" and you as a "real lesbian." Was that fair?

Of course it's fair. I'm comfortable enough in my own skin to do what makes me comfortable. For example, I have short hair, I dress in men's clothes, I'm in good physical shape. To some, these attributes are what makes me "look" gay. To me, it's what makes me happy. Lesbians can see this and they just assume I'm the real deal. I understand that, but my goal isn't to be masculine. It's just that I know what I like. I love purses and pumps, but I would just look ridiculous in these things. As for the other girls, people make the assumption that if you look girly, you must like guys. Wrong!

It seems like lesbians, in general, often have some very strong feelings about dating bisexual women.

I think *Shot at Love* offered a forum for us to have conversations about that. I know how it was presented to the United States like "I'm bisexual and I'm going to decide if I am going to be with a man or a woman."

But, what did you experience on the other side of that?

Just because a woman like guys and girls doesn't make me any more or less sure about the relationship. If somebody is going to leave me, they obviously don't love me, whether it is for a boy or a girl. So, I don't really see it as a problem, I mean, bisexual people, more power to them. They like both sexes. They have a bigger [selection of potential partners]. If anybody's missing out, it's me. But you know, I've dated bisexual women, and there's no difference. They just like boys and girls. Whoop-di-doo.

Lesbians were clearly rooting for you from the beginning. There was a little inference that you were the "real" lesbian. We heard that a lot here at the office.

MTV'S FAVORITE LESBIAN VIRGIN

CURVE caught up with *Shot at Love* contestant Ashli Haynes (aka Ashli the Virgin) at her coming-out bash at the O Bar in West Hollywood. Ashli's guests, including co-contestant Amanda Ireton, joined her in her private cabana or out on the dance floor. And yes, ladies, she's still a virgin.

Why a coming-out party?

The show was really my coming out. Before that my family didn't know, most of my friends didn't know. Now I'm having a coming-out party; a way to celebrate.

You go by Ashli the Virgin. Do you think your lack of sexual experience might have been one of the reasons you didn't get picked?

When Tila eliminated me, she said she respected me too much to make me feel uncomfortable and didn't want to put me in a position that maybe I couldn't handle. I think me being a virgin definitely had some influence on her.

How overdramatized was the show from what happened in your experience?

Everything you saw, as far as drama and confrontation, was true. It was not scripted at all. There was no need to overdramatize anything. You take a whole bunch of people from different life experiences, different walks of life, and you're going to get that.

Especially when you throw them all in the same bed!

Absolutely! Lesbians and straight guys—crazy shit is going to happen. People are naturally competitive and there was competition between the guys and the girls because we didn't know who she was going to choose.

Have you been hit on since the show? I'm sure that everyone wants to be the one to deflower you.

I get approached a lot. Maybe people approach me because of what I look like, or whatever, but a lot of the times people approach me because of the show. Lots of people do just want to get a chance at the fresh meat.

Have you had any romantic encounters, people that you've been interested in and seen more than once?

I've been seeing someone.

In terms of approaching the idea of having sex, are you two going slow?

The person that I'm seeing has been really honest with me in terms of why she wants to be with me and what she likes about me. She's made it perfectly clear that we can take our time, there's no rush, and I really appreciate that.

What are you working on now that the show's over?

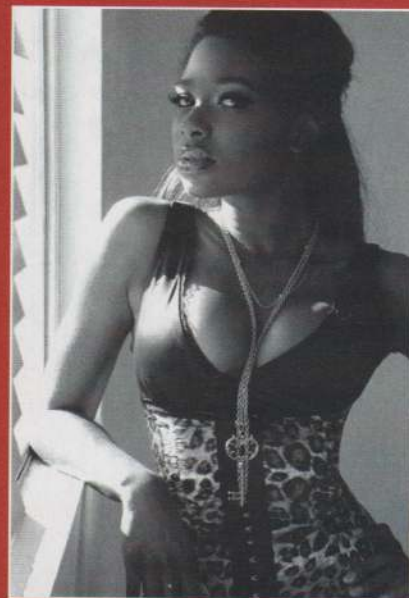
Right now I'm working on my demo. I have this one song that I completed and it's really hot, called "Reality," produced by Russell Weiner. It's like pop meets gospel meets rock.

Are you more attracted to femmes or butches? Or you don't have a preference?

Honestly, I'm more attracted to femmes. I have more masculine friends and I get it and I'm open to it. If I were to meet someone that I just clicked with like that then why the hell not?

So Dani's not your type, necessarily?

It's funny, but I actually did start to fall for Dani. She's a really charming woman. She has such a good spirit. She's very intuitive and observant and she pays attention. She got me before I even had to open my mouth. I connected with her. —By Candace Moore





THE GREAT GAY ESCAPE

As religious fundamentalist organizations continue to pummel queer Americans with their belief in reparative therapy (to turn folks from gay to straight), a number of individuals have started offering a counterpoint. It's a perspective supported by logic and science, and now three new queer-themed works.

In *Abomination: Homosexuality and the Ex-Gay Movement* (aglp.org), Alicia Salzer is an M.D. who turns her lens on conversion therapies, profiling four gay Christians who underwent them and the sometimes heartbreaking effects of everything from shock therapy and hypnosis to gender coaching, sham marriages and parental disapproval. Joining *Abomination* are two new books worthy of note: Wayne R. Besen's *Anything But Straight* and *Ex-Gay Research*, edited by Jack Drescher and Kenneth J. Zucker (haworthpress.com). — Diane Anderson-Minshall

Flaws and All

The Hottie and Butch Jamie find love right under their noses. | **By Candace Moore**



The Hottie and the Nottie

The newest Paris Hilton vehicle has something in common with Michelle Ehlen's indie *Tootsie* for dykes: Both comedies skewer cultural ideas about the importance of physical appearance.

The Hottie and the Nottie (Regent Releasing): The very language of the title seems to come from a 6-year-old who picks scabs and eats them. Lo and behold, grade school is actually where this modern fairytale of the “princess and the dragon,” as one character lovingly refers to BFFs Cristabel (Paris Hilton) and June (Christine Lakin), begins. Scab eating, or infected-toenail tasting, as the case may be, also aptly captures director Tom Putnam’s gross-out aesthetic in this *There’s Something About Mary*-ish comedy. Scrawny slacker Nate Cooper (Joel David Moore) has physically matured since the age of 6, but emotionally, not so much. He revisits his childhood crush in Los Angeles, thinking she’s the “one who got away,” and finds Cristabel Abbott’s grown up to look a lot like Paris Hilton, replete with a small cult of restraining-ordered stalkers. Now, decades later, the Barbie lookalike has the same inseparable best friend, June Figg, who wears smelly tube socks and is positioned as the “ugly” obstacle to Nate’s quest, since

Cristabel has sworn off dating until June finds her first shot at love. After shelling out thousands of dollars for spa treatment gift certificates, in hopes of "flipping" June, Nate realizes, after she's had wart, hair and tooth-grime removal, that it's June he really digs after all. Go figure. Hitting all the generic plot points of a straight romantic comedy about finding love where you least expect it, this film simultaneously guts the clichés it rides in on. However, like Hollywood clockwork, it ends up reinstating "face values" by the time the hour strikes midnight. As the moral of the story—looking past superficialities—surfaces, it becomes clearer that Nate doesn't deserve smart and sassy June; he gets the hots for her only after she's been made over. *The Hottie and the Nottie* is, indeed, a tale of unrelenting, unrequited love, but from Cristabel's perspective. She's the committed, smitten knight who sees past June's outward appearance all along and truly loves her, warts and all. Portrayed as someone who can "have anyone," Cristabel is an ice queen who deflects male attention; she's fixated on June and fixed on making her happy, whatever that means. It's only when June's paired off that she goes through the motions and hits on awkward Nate, albeit indifferently and robotically. Yes, this film is a much more en-

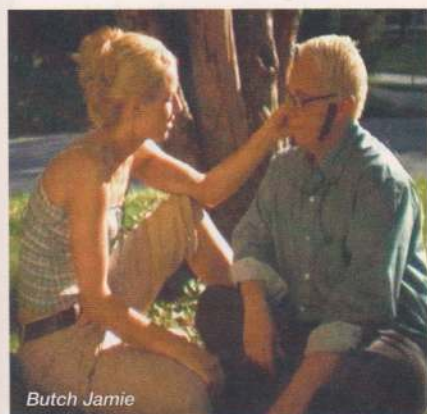
Hope Springs

These stories explore the process

joyable read as a queer love story. Imagine the plot in a queer alternate universe: Cristabel arrives out of breath before Nate and June kiss, clocks Nate in the head with one of her heels, professes her love and finally claims her damsel. (regentreleasing.com)

Butch Jamie (Ballet Diesel Films):

Jamie Klein (Michelle Ehlen) is a struggling butch actor in a Hollywood beset by traffic and strict gender norms in casting. Woefully dismayed by the fact that her roommate's cat, Howard, not only gets more callbacks, but has better PR than she does (Howard has his own choreographed hip-hop reel and head shots), Jamie tries femming it up with press-on nails and a wig, only to be shut down before she can barely mouth her monologue. Advised to "just be yourself" by her buddy David (David Au), she enters the next tryout in her customary black T-shirt, studded leather bracelets and spiky bleached hair—and to her astonishment lands the gig! But as "Steve," the quintessential straight dude. In addition, the producers don't want anyone to know that she's a woman playing a man's part. So when Jill, a sexy crew member, falls for the kind, vegetarian "male" actor, Jamie suddenly finds herself developing her character after hours. In one hilarious gag, Jill discovers



Butch Jamie

Jamie's chest binding while they're making out, and Jamie passes the bandages off as products of recent heart surgery. Full of funny, original characters, *Butch Jamie* is an irresistible mix of drag, sarcasm and slapstick. And writer-director Michelle Ehlen has found a charmer of a star: herself. (balletdiesel.com) ■

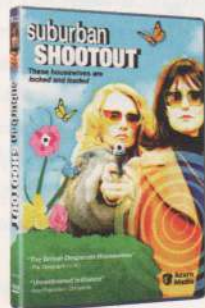
OTHER PICKS



Red Without Blue

(Sundance Channel):

This "accumulation of snapshots" tells the story of how queer twins Mark and Alex deal with transgender identity. As Alex becomes Claire, her twin Mark talks about how the transition affected his own identity. What this award-winning documentary shows is that no matter what—parental disapproval, divorce, drugs, distance, attempted suicide and rape—these siblings refuse to give up on their relationship. (redwithoutblue.com) — Katie Peoples



Suburban Shootout

(Acorn): Finally, the DVD debut of this wickedly funny British show in which a quaint English village is run by rival gangs of suburban housewives. With a rapid fire dialogue and brilliant storylines, *Suburban Shootout* plays like a *Sopranos* meets *Desperate Housewives*,

where women extort protection money from Wicker Barn and peddle black market estrogen patches at the local pub. Hilarious all around.

(acornonline.com) — Diane Anderson-Minshall



TransAmerican Love Story (Logo):

Television's newest dating show definitely isn't *A Shot at Love*. You won't find any butch-phobia or bull testicle eating contests, and the leading lady won't be gyrating on grandma's lap. Launched in February, *TransAmerican* revolves around trans actress Calpernia Addams and her sexy, bisexual best friend, Andrea James. The duo poke fun at the dating show genre while using the venue to increase trans visibility. They draw attention to the universality of dating rituals, specifically focusing on those who date trans women, proving they are just as normal and bizarre as any dating show suitor. We don't always agree with her choices, but enjoy the ride and watching Amazon-god James make the guys squirm. (Props to Logo for giving a trans guy a chance; we won't divulge who he is). (logoonline.com) — DAM

Key West's Distinctive Resort for Women

2007 Best Inn / Resort for Women
PlanetOut

Voted Best Lesbian Property by
OutTraveller Readers

"Pearl's has it all." ~ *Curve Magazine*

Guesthouse Ambience.
Resort Amenities.

www.pearlsrainbow.com
1.800.749.6696 • 525 United Street
Key West, Florida 33040

for women

to meet women

curve personals online
curvemag.com