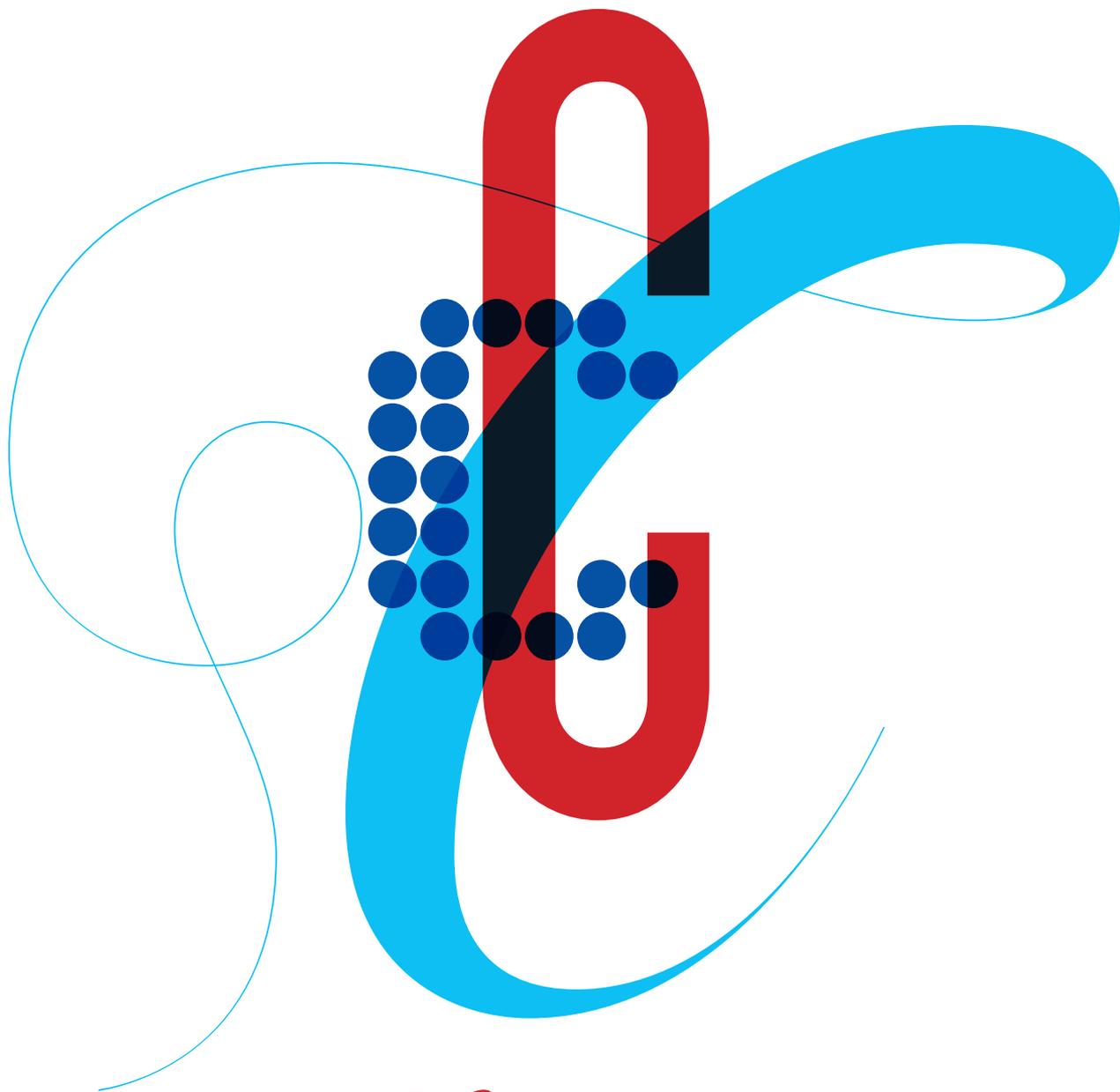






BLIPP THIS PAGE

to see—and hear—Cox
behind the scenes of the
More shoot.

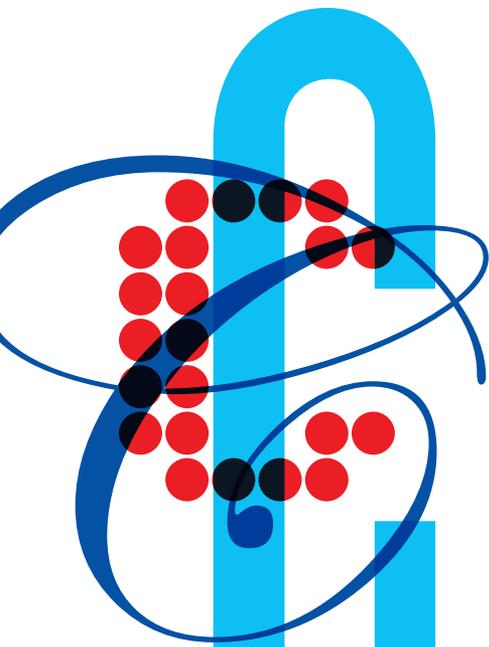


WELCOME TO *Courtney* TOWN

IT'S A PLACE WHERE DIVORCE CAN BE AMICABLE, WORK IS COLLABORATIVE AND FRIENDSHIPS ARE LIFELONG. HOW COURTENY COX, THE INSPIRINGLY GROUNDED STAR OF *COUGAR TOWN*, CULTIVATES CLOSENESS BOTH ONSCREEN AND OFF | BY MARGOT DOUGHERTY

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SIMON EMMETT

STYLED BY JONNY LICHTENSTEIN



COURTENAY COX makes an unexpected stop en route to her table at the Polo Lounge in Beverly Hills. Dressed down in black jeans and a gray long-sleeve T-shirt, she's nonetheless spotted by a diner who jumps from his seat to offer his services as a branding agent—presumably promising to make her more famous than she already is. Cox, gracious, listens to the pitch, accepts a business card and finally takes her seat. “That was weird,” she says.

But it's probably not the most intrusive moment the actress has experienced. Having played Michael J. Fox's girlfriend on *Family Ties*, the obsessively organized Monica on *Friends* and the ambitious reporter in the *Scream* movies, Cox is unlikely to ever go unnoticed. The Alabama-born star, 49, has had decades to absorb the vagaries of fame and takes them in stride, arriving without an assistant, let alone a retinue, and

seeming utterly relaxed as she orders a glass of Cabernet.

Cox is currently entertaining audiences on *Cougar Town*, the TBS sitcom she stars in, produces and occasionally directs. Her character, Jules, is the leader of a pack of friends who live on a Florida cul-de-sac. She began the show as the recently divorced mother of an 18-year-old, dating again after 20 years of marriage. Now, five seasons in, Jules is married to her former neighbor and surrounded by hilarious, idiosyncratic sidekicks played by, among others, Busy Philipps and Christa Miller, whose husband, Bill Lawrence, is the show's cocreator.

After the 2008 cancellation of *Dirt*, the FX series in which Cox played a hard-bitten tabloid-magazine editor, she was looking for another show to produce as well as star in. “I've been doing this too long and have too strong an opinion not to be a producer,” she says. She zeroed in on Lawrence, creator of *Scrubs*, a cocreator of *Spin City* and a writer on *Friends*. “I really wanted to work with him,” she says. “But I don't think he was that interested in the beginning.” He wasn't. “Sometimes when you work with a big-name actor or actress, they become your boss in a way,” says Lawrence. “I liked Courteney, and I didn't want to wreck our friendship.”

Lawrence, who already had the idea for *Cougar Town*, asked Cox to do an arc on *Scrubs*, giving her a role as a soulless chief of medicine who loses interest in patients when their insurance runs out. “That went well,” says Cox.

“I think he got the idea that I'm not a pain in the ass and am actually fun to work with.” Shortly thereafter, Lawrence invited Cox and Coquette, the production company she owns with her ex-husband, David Arquette, onto the *Cougar Town* bus.

To create Jules, Lawrence spent time observing Cox, attending the Sunday-night dinners she has hosted for friends and family for about 25 years. “He was getting to know the weird parts of me that he could write about,” she says. “He said he came to my house one time and I poured the wineglass so full, he could barely walk to the table.” So Jules is prone to drinking red wine from a goblet the size of a child's head. “Part of a comedy writer's job is to write edgy, snarky people giving each other shit,” says Lawrence, who, with Miller, has become close friends with Cox. “But if you're doing a show for Courteney, the characters have to inherently love and want to kill or die for each other. Mean and vindictive don't wear well on her.”

SHE WASN'T the kind of girl anyone predicted would be a TV star—or even an actress, for that matter. “Out of all 21 first cousins,” she says, “I was the one who just sat with my grandmother and played with her elbow skin. I was really shy.” The youngest of four (after her parents divorced and remarried, she gained nine stepsiblings), she grew up in a suburb of Birmingham and was, by her assessment, a good kid: “I was so open, I'd tell my mom everything.

HAIR: ADRI ABERGEL AT STARWORKSARTISTS.COM; MAKEUP: GENEVIEVE AT SALLY HARLOR FOR LANCÔME; MANICURIST: DEBBIE LEAVITT FOR SHESWAI AT NAILING HOLLYWOOD; PROP STYLIST: JULIET JERNIGAN AT CLM; TAILOR: DAVID HERSBERGER AT LARS NORD STUDIO; PRODUCER: TRICIA SHERMAN FOR BAUERFEIND PRODUCTIONS-WEST

1984



“DANCING IN THE DARK” video
“I was petrified. Brian de Palma and Bruce Springsteen had the flu. But that's not why I was scared. I liked Bruce, but I was more into Earth, Wind & Fire.”

1987–89



FAMILY TIES
“I'm reminded of how funny Michael J. Fox is. He could turn one joke into three separate laughs just by his pauses.”

1994



ACE VENTURA: PET DETECTIVE
“I went on location for the first time. It felt like the beginning of me becoming my own person. Jim Carrey was amazing.”

She'd say, 'That's too much information. I don't want to know!' But I didn't want to sneak. My whole thing is that I don't want to not tell the truth. So if I was going to smoke cigarettes, I did it in front of her."

Cox went to Mount Vernon College to study architecture. "It was the only school I could get into—my mom's school," she says with characteristic frankness. "Testing is not my forte. Those ACTs were a real bummer. But I love architecture and I love design. So that's what I thought I was going to do."

The summer after her first year, she went to New York to try to make some money by modeling and wound up on the covers of *Tiger Beat* and *Young Miss*. "I thought, Well, this is great. I'll go back to college after I do this for a little bit," she says. Instead, she got commercials, including one for Tampax in which she became the first person to say "period" (in that context) in a TV ad. Brian de Palma cast her as the girl pulled from the crowd by Bruce Springsteen in his 1984 "Dancing in the Dark" video. *Family Ties* and a few movies—including *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*, opposite Jim Carrey—led to *Friends*, the juggernaut that launched in 1994.

When the sitcom was cast, "Courteney was the only one of us who was famous," remembers Lisa Kudrow, who recently had Cox do an improv bit as a psychic on her offbeat comedy *Web Therapy*. "She was the one who said,

'Listen, you guys, I did a guest thing on *Seinfeld*, and over there they all help each other. They say, "Hey, try this. It may be funnier." So if you think of anything that could make it funnier for me, let me know.' This was so rabidly watched ensemble shows on television; its finale in 2004, at which point the stars were making \$1 million an episode, drew more than 52.5 million viewers. The cast—Matthew Perry (who will appear on *Cougar Town* this season), David Schwimmer and Matt LeBlanc, along with Jennifer Aniston, Kudrow and Cox—was as tight off camera as on. "There was nothing but

boyfriend and girlfriend?' I thought, Really? It seems a little soon." Maybe not: In 1999, between *Scream 2* and *3*, they married. Cox, who has been candid about her miscarriages and in vitro fertilization, gave birth to their daughter, Coco, five years later. "She has my eyebrows," Cox says, "although I think David's dad has them, too, kind of arched. She has David's color eyes but my mouth. She's got David's feet—little flat feet with cute Barney Rubble toes. She's a good combination."

Last May, Cox and Arquette, who has been open about his alcoholism, divorced. (He is now expecting a child with his girlfriend, Christina McLarty,

"I THINK SUCCESS IS DEFINED BY DOING WHAT YOU LOVE TO DO. IF YOU'RE HAPPY DOING IT, I THINK YOU'RE SUCCESSFUL. I'M DEFINITELY HAPPY DOING WHAT I'M DOING."

goodwill," says Kudrow. "There was never any competition from anybody. And I really think Courteney set that tone of 'We're all in this together.'"

IT WAS ON the set of 1996's *Scream* that Cox, inaugurating her recurring role as Gale Weathers, met Arquette, who played the goofy Deputy Dewey. "I had such a crush on him," she says. "David came out of the womb wanting to be in a relationship, and pretty much right away he was like, 'You want to be

an entertainment reporter.) Asked how they managed to stay friends, Cox pauses and her eyes fill. "Because we love each other," she says. "And when you love someone, you want them to be happy, even if it's not with you. You can love somebody so much, but it's not the life you should be living together. I think David and I are supposed to be the way we are now." Still, she reflects, "in divorce you always have regrets. We were married for a long time, so it's not like we didn't try." »

1994–2004



FRIENDS
The six cast members bonded immediately. As Cox remembers it, "We were friends right off the bat."

2000



SCREAM 3
Cox says of the first movie in this series (which opened in 1996), "I met David. We had the best time."

2007–08



DIRT
"The television series was salacious. We were pushing the limits. I like pushing limits."

By all accounts, the parting was without rancor and done with remarkable grace. Cox was about Coco's age (nine) when her own parents divorced, and she and Arquette have made a priority of keeping their daughter's life as unchanged as possible. Cox bought a condo "50 seconds" away from Arquette's home in Beverly Hills; he has a place "four minutes" from her house in Malibu, and they continue to do things together as a family. "They say it's harder for children when their lifestyle

MORE QUESTIONS FOR *Courtney Cox*

WHAT DO YOU CHERISH MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE?

My daughter, Coco. My family, from my immediate family to my dogs, Hopper and Harley; my friends.

THE WORLD COULD USE A LITTLE MORE...

Empathy.

WHAT'S MORE IMPORTANT TO YOU TODAY THAN IT WAS 20 YEARS AGO?

The beauty of nature. I just didn't appreciate things like I do now. I didn't appreciate flowers when I was in my twenties—thought they were a waste of money. I'd buy a shirt instead.

WHAT'S MORE TERRIFYING THAN FAILURE?

Not trying.

MORE WOMEN SEEK TO AGE GRACEFULLY. WHAT'S YOUR ADVICE?

Buck up. It ain't easy. Go to the doctor. Drink water. Sleep as much as you can. Exercise. I get massages—anything for your circulation. Stretch. It's all about keeping that body moving.

DESCRIBE A MOMENT IN YOUR PAST THAT YOU WISH YOU COULD RELIVE ONE MORE TIME.

Once I've done it, I don't need to relive it. I love the memory of it.

changes," Cox says. "For Coco, nothing changed. I already had a house at the beach, and we had a house in town. Obviously, kids always want their parents to be together, but as divorces go, this is the best one we could provide."

"I joke that if I get divorced, I want Courtney to be my ex-wife," says Philipps, who plays Jules's verbally uncensored assistant in *Cougar Town*. "I've seen David at Courtney's; it's beyond amicable. It's a really loving way they've managed to separate their

lives." Arquette and Cox, who is now the spokeswoman for Pantene's AgeDefy line ("It really works!"), continue to do business together under the Coquette banner. He's in *Just Before I Go*, an independent movie Cox directed during her summer hiatus. ("I like working under pressure," she says. "It suits my personality.") Starring Seann William Scott and Olivia Thirlby, the dramatic comedy follows a man who, on the verge of giving up on life, attempts to tie up loose ends. Arquette prompted writer David Flebotte to show Cox his script, and she was determined to make it. When Flebotte's agents said they wanted to shop it first, Cox said to him, "Look, you can sit around, have it go into development and wait for the rest of your life to get this made. But cross my heart, I will make it during my hiatus." Flebotte hesitated. "I called him and said, 'Stop being a pussy,'" says Cox. "I'm making this movie." As Kudrow points out, "When Courtney wants to do something, she does it, no matter if there are hurdles or resistance or it's going to be hard."

"DIRECTING is something I want to do forever," says Cox, who was also behind the camera for the 2012 Lifetime movie

TalhotBlond, about virtual romance gone very wrong. "You get to go to work and be a part of everything you love, except you don't have to put on makeup."

She has always been a director of sorts. Despite abandoning formal architecture studies, Cox, a smart businesswoman, has been buying, restoring, decorating and selling homes for years. She's lived in houses designed by modernist architect A. Quincy Jones and the legendary Richard Neutra (who also designed her office building).

"I've been obsessed with design since I shared a room with my sister," she says. "I was always changing the furniture around. I would get so bored with the twin beds facing the same way, so I'd do an L-shape and then have them facing the corners." Each house she's done has been completely different in taste, she says. "Once you've been in it for a while, you've had fun, you're done, you sell it, and you have a whole new thing. It's part of my restlessness. I like change."

But as a friend, she's a constant. "There's no agenda," says Kudrow. "There's no guile. There's no game. You can trust her completely and fully. Whether I see Courtney every week or once a year, it doesn't matter. I know who she is, and I know where I stand."

Jane Pratt, founding editor of *Sassy* and *Jane* magazines and now editor-in-chief of xoJane.com, remembers a dinner with Cox and other friends in New York. Pratt was on the heels of a miscarriage and breakup. "I was trying to keep it together," she says, "but Courtney could see that something was wrong, and she called me later and said, 'If you're ever going through something hard and you think you can't tell anybody, I want to be the friend you tell.'" Pratt opened up and at Cox's urging stayed with her and Arquette in L.A. "for many, many, many weeks."

"There's absolutely no judgment in Court," says Aniston, who talks with Cox daily and sees her once or twice a week. "You'll never feel scolded. She's extremely fair, ridiculously loyal and



DONNA KARAN parchment silk dress; donnakaran.com for stores. **HEARTS ON FIRE** 18k white-gold and diamond studs; heartsonfire.com. PAGE 66: **BOTTEGA VENETA** lace-embroidered cotton poplin dress; bottegaveneta.com.

guests hold hands for grace, which, says Aniston, consists of Cox “pretty much thanking everyone.”

“The Sunday blessing is something I do,” says Cox. “I think faith is so important. I don’t care what you believe as long as you have something.” Lawrence is less sanguine about the touchy-feely setup (“It’s not the Connecticut way,” he deadpans) and notes that Miller and his children teasingly scatter to ensure he’s clasping hands “with someone I’ve known for five minutes.” But, he says, “the cool thing is that at the end of the day, Courteney is someone who’s not remotely entitled and hasn’t for one second forgotten how lucky she is to be where she is. And that’s disarmingly charming.”

Asked if she’s changed over the years or if her focus has shifted, Cox thinks for a bit. “You know what’s funny?” she says. “I don’t think I have.

fiercely loving.” She, too, has leaned on Cox in tough times. “I’ve slept in her guest bedroom a lot,” she says. “Without giving away too much of my private stuff, all I can say is she’s been there for me through thick and thin.”

Jennifer Meyer, the owner-designer of an eponymous jewelry line (Cox wears a piece in every *Cougar Town* episode, and each one sells out), has known Cox for years; her father, Ron Meyer, vice chairman of NBC/Universal, was Michael Keaton’s agent when Keaton and Cox dated in the early 1990s. When Jennifer, who is

married to Tobey Maguire, was pregnant with their first child, “it was high risk,” she says. “Someone said Courteney had been through similar things. So we called Courteney and David on speaker. We weren’t really best friends, but we sat on the phone for an hour and a half talking about everything I’d been through. I knew she wouldn’t tell anyone. It was that day that she became one of my best friends.”

For Cox’s Sunday dinners, “there’s no invitation, no phone call,” says Jennifer. “You know it’s happening and you’re invited.” Before the meal,

I’ve always had a through-line of who I am and what’s important to me: honesty and integrity. Friends say, ‘Oh, I was so different back in high school’ or ‘I was so different in college.’ I think I’ve always been the same. Different circumstances, different opportunities, but I’m not different. What was important to me at 20 is what’s important to me now.” *

MARGOT DOUGHERTY’S last *More* cover story was about Julia Louis-Dreyfus.



Learn how to re-create Courteney Cox’s shiny waves at more.com/courteney.