

BLANK PAGE: DON'T USE IT



Photographed by Michael Muller

gettingBig

with ERIC DANE

Written by Drew Tewksbury

DOUG & GABRIAN
MADE IN ITALY



Opposite: Suit, cotton button-down shirt, and silk tie by Dolce & Gabbana. This page: Wool striped sweater and hat by John Varvatos. Wool coat by Corpus. Watch by IWC.





Cotton T-shirt by Orthodox. Cotton button-down shirt by Dior Homme. Plaid pants by Dries Van Noten. Trench coat by Alexander McQueen.



Cotton T-shirt by Orthodox.

i was sitting there in an anonymous Little League jersey, dangling my legs from the cold metal bench behind the chain-link backstop, when I heard my father tell one of the other team dads about me: "I think he'd be a little better if he spent as much time practicing his throw as he did ironing his uniform."

Nearly fifteen years later, athletics and working out still aren't exactly my thing. My body has never been a priority of mine; I feel more like a squatter in a warehouse of flesh than Bob Vila in a fixer-upper body.

Until last week, that is.

It was then that I found myself reclined on an oversized ball—both the shape and color of a clown's nose—while Eric Dane, the actor and purported "hottie" of the TV show *Grey's Anatomy*, uttered encouraging words as I attempted to use a contraption that looked like it should be used only for drawing and quartering, not developing super-rad pecs.

"You're doing great, you're gonna feel better than you've ever felt after this," says Dane, as I participated in a portion of his workout routine at Gold's Gym in Hollywood, trying to understand the body and the man.

After all, Eric Dane's business is bodies, both as Dr. Mark Sloan—that's McSteamy to you—the plastic surgeon of the successful medically themed show, and as a heartthrob whose physique reportedly makes more than a few housewives and co-eds purr.

Whereas my body resembles the Wild West, complete with rolling hills of chub, craggy clavicle cliffs, and tumbleweed tufts of body hair sprouting in uncharted locales, DANE IS THE ARCTIC. REGIONS OF

HIS BODY WOULD HAVE THE NAMES OF HIGH-LATITUDE

OUTPOSTS: THE PECTORAL SHELF, SIX-PACK CREVASSE,

MELTED GLACIER EYES. Notably missing a marsupial pouch like the one under my Metallica shirt, Dane's white cotton T-shirt hangs loosely over his abs and tight around the biceps. Like Radiohead says—everything in its right place.

But for a man with the corporeal landscape of a model and the resumé of an up-and-coming actor, he certainly doesn't have the haughty attitude of one.

"I don't wake up and look in the mirror and see the things other people see," he says of his instant recognizability. "I'm kind of new to this. I've been acting for awhile, but I've only really done work that has been noticeable with *Grey's Anatomy*."

As *Grey's Anatomy* moves into its fourth season, airs internationally, and celebrates both Emmy and Golden Globe nods, Dane is at a comfortable place to make important decisions about his acting career. He is known for his debut on the show, in which he sauntered out of a shower. Lesser writers call this a "watercooler moment," but for Dane, this was a career maker, crystallizing his body—and identity—as a veritable logo, looping endlessly on commercials for the show.

His role as the hot doc has come after a long road of struggling in Hollywood. Dane left his childhood home in San Francisco at 19, to try acting in Los Angeles. He landed parts in *Saved by the Bell* and an episode of *The Wonder Years*, in which Kevin's friend Ricky's new girlfriend, Hayley, has a big nose that Kev and the gang can't resist from commenting on repeatedly.

"I didn't know what I was doing or where I was going for the first eight to ten years I was in Los Angeles," says Dane. "I didn't really have any definitive direction in my career." Over the next decade he played various television parts, until *Grey's Anatomy* put him on the world stage. He was recently featured as Multiple Man in the hugely successful *X-Men: The Last Stand*, but, unlike his character, Dane can't be everywhere at the same time. For now, his intense work schedule for the show restricts his availability to work on films, but it shouldn't be long before he makes more time for the silver screen.

He's content with life and his career, but he doesn't look too excited about our final set. "You're going to hate this," Dane jokes, before I hit the Nautilus Nitro Vert chest press, which I do hate and, I think, so does he. After all,

my pale arms are like T. rex's front legs: feeble and essentially useless.

Between sets, we chat about eating ham hocks at Medieval Times, Nitro the American Gladiator, his meeting with Prince Albert II of Monaco, and regular guy stuff. So it seems that if Dane respects being treated like a "normal guy," it's because despite his rising fame and the accoutrements of money (including a shark-diving excursion off the coast of South Africa), he really does seem to be just a normal, and, dare I say, nice guy.

He drives a black Yukon ("Sorry for the mess," he says, although the car is immaculate), he knows a great place to get Moroccan-style mint iced tea only a two-minute drive from the gym, he has quarters readily available for the meter ("You gotta pay homage to 'the Man'"), periodically checks his text messages, sings quietly along to Talking Heads songs, politely chats up the hostess and the bartender, and sometimes wonders whether *Top Gun* would have been worse if Scott Baio was cast as Maverick. It's just a casting rumor he heard, but "there's no way it could have been as good" he laughs.

Dane loves to travel and wishes he had more time to do it. He dreams of a great American road trip on his motorcycle. He thinks it's a cliché, but he says that Paris is one of his favorite cities in the world. When I tell him the sun turns me into a lobster, he says that after an hour in the sun, you need to prepare a vinegar bath in the burn ward for him (a doctor joke, refreshingly nerdy, and not unexpected from a guy who spends ten months out of the year and long hours in a simulated hospital). He's more of a mountain guy, he says, but his girl loves to stay on the beach and read all day.

His girl, as he so often calls her, is Rebecca Gayheart, the effervescent and beautiful actress recognizable from Beverly Hills, 90210 and as the "Noxzema Girl," whom he married two years and 362 days before our interview. She's Dane's girl. But he speaks of her with his brand of nonchalance, even when it comes to their early dating life.

"It's probably one of the least interesting stories in the world," he says. "It went basically like this: 'Hi.'

"Hi."

"You wanna go out?"

"Yeah, sure." Ten months later, we were married."

He speaks of his wife with a hint of tenderness (as much as you can while standing near a hip abductor) and the casual comfort of their companionship. They're both busy, he says, so they make the most of their time together. They hang around the house on weekends, which famous men with excruciatingly attractive wives tend to prefer.

But Dane seems to play the role of dedicated husband genuinely well, especially when she is in need of support. Last summer, the couple hosted the sixth annual Chrysalis Butterfly Ball, a very high-profile, star-packed event benefiting the Los Angeles nonprofit organization that aims to help people who are homeless, or experiencing economic hardship, to become self-sufficient through job opportunities. Gayheart was instrumental in organizing the event, but Dane says his role was a little different.

"You know, all I could do was just be there for her. She'd be running around and nervous, and I was just there to tell her, 'Don't worry, you're doing great. Everything's going to be fine.' Sometimes, you just got to be there," he says.

You've probably met Eric Dane before, or someone like him. He's the guy who got the girl. He's confident but self-effacing. He's handsome but secretly a homebody. He's the guy at the gym everyone knows.

That's also probably because he's McSteamy.

I'm just McSweaty, and, after the quick regimen of dips, pulls, and jumping jacks, our truncated workout is over.

"Wait, you should wash your hands," Dane says urgently when we prepare to leave the gym. It is doctor talk again, spoken in Dane's brooding, deep voice, with what even seems like a bit of sincere concern. Soon after, we stand, one sink apart, near the stalls and hand dryers of the locker room, washing our hands in a moment of near silence. x



Wool striped sweater and hat by John Varvatos. Jeans by A.P.C. Wool coat by Corpus.



Styling: Annie Jagger Grooming: Maital Sabban