



**Bra with scarf by Agent Provocateur available  
at Bloomingdale's, Lenox Square.**

58 **Atlanta Peach** November 2008

# HIGH SCHOOL SWEETHEART

*Atlanta's own AnnaLynne McCord trades zip codes for a juicy starring role as the Queen Bee of 90210*

BY E.C. GLADSTONE    PORTRAITS BY DANIELA FEDERICI

**T**alk about living up to expectations! If you've seen AnnaLynne McCord on TV—in the new *90210* and last year's *Nip/Tuck*—or maybe flicks like *The Haunting of Molly Hartley* and *Day of the Dead*—you know this isn't the type of girl to meet over a sedate cup of coffee. Oh no. "I'm a crazy girl," AnnaLynne admits with a sexy Southern laugh. "I love action, speed, guns..."

So we challenged the prime time pouter to a heat at MB2's indoor kart track, outside Los Angeles in suburban Sylmar. Well, not only did 21-year-old AnnaLynne show up dressed like Olivia Newton-John circa '79—wife-beater T-shirt, skintight designer denim and scrunchy white leather boots—she also brought along her gum-popping older sis Angel for extra intimidation. Holy smokes! But McCord, who likes to zip around in her four-on-the-floor MINI Cooper (and has a Ducati motorcycle coming for Christmas), turns out to be the kind of girl who would win either side of a Truth or Dare game. For an emerging starlet, she seems to have little interest in image-making, and the picture the Atlanta native paints of her offscreen life couldn't be more surprising.

"We look at a person and see the person we want to see," says AnnaLynne, shaking her head at the difference between her career, full of manipulative, over-sexed girls, and her reality. "I've had to deal with that my whole life, walking in a room and girls thinking I'm going to steal their boyfriends!"

In fact, McCord is more likely to be recruiting them for a charity project. "Growing up, it was always the way my sisters and I were," she says of her "very

conservative" childhood. At 11, for example, AnnaLynne, along with Angel and Rachel, organized one of WorldVision's "30 Hour Famines" in their church gym, to raise money and awareness about African starvation. "Living in Atlanta, I remember a couple evenings where we put together a hundred peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and brought them downtown with my dad to the homeless. It was something we thought was normal."

Charity, believe it or not, is what led AnnaLynne to *90210*, too—specifically the stanchion it would provide The Blind Trust, for which she is official spokesperson. McCord, who prefers a Dr. Pepper to a beer any day, also agrees to promotional club appearances when the venue agrees to a donation. But the idea of a full run on *90210* leads her to admit, "I have a little F.O.C. problem, a little fear of commitment." A six-year contract, she says, "scared the hell out of me."

But there was more to it than that. Sure, McCord says she prefers the "unpredictability" of film, but, she reveals, "I was on my way out." Before we barely knew who she was, AnnaLynne McCord wanted to retire. "I was saying to my agent, 'I'm gonna move back to New York and find something I'm passionate about besides this.' It's funny how you can want something for such a long time. And then, the more I worked, the more I hated what people make this industry about—this money-hungry, greedy, egotistical world about the next big thing and who gets to play God. So I quickly started to realize that I had to do this not just for the sake of doing it, but for something that meant more than this does."

Fame is also something she's stopped craving. "Already having paparazzi chase me for three hours,

**This isn't the type of girl to meet over a sedate cup of coffee.**

## COVER GIRL

I understand why people go crazy!" She laughs about an article in *Us Weekly* a few weeks earlier, that talked about her current guy, but mistakenly showed a picture of her with her ex! "And they hate each other! Now I'm just like, 'I hate everybody, and I'm pregnant with three different people's kids.'" McCord laughs as well at all the muttering that she and her co-stars are unhealthily skinny. All of the McCords—including her 6'5" father—are naturally thin, she insists, and the kind of food AnnaLynne likes to cook proves it: meatloaf, mashed potatoes, glazed carrots, mac 'n' cheese. "Butter and sugar on everything!" And when it comes to fast food, her special order at In-N-Out Burger is a "3x3." That's three patties, three cheese slices, on one bun. Ouch! Moreover, she says, "I was on *Nip/Tuck* for a year and a half, practically naked, and nobody said a thing about how skinny I was."

Though it's *90210* that should make McCord a household name, history will probably look back on *Nip/Tuck* as her true breakout. AnnaLynne recalls knowing from the moment she walked in the door ("I had to masturbate during the audition, practically") that she would get the edgy part. "Because in my life, I'm black and white, I'm 0 to 100," she says, "it's either one or the other. So a role like Eden is the best thing for me, because most people won't go all the way there, and I can't do anything but that. Sometimes what I do is too much, because I just go there. It's who I am."

Of course, it wasn't easy telling her parents about the edgy, sexually-charged role she'd be playing at 19, but AnnaLynne had already been independent for four years, having accelerated through her home

## Charity, believe it or not, is what led AnnaLynne to *90210*.

schooling (after her mother told her she could do what she wanted after graduation), finishing with a 4.0 average. "I would erase my end-of-the-course tests if I didn't get 100-percent," she insists. "Home schooling opened our minds up to learn," McCord adds in a strong endorsement.

While AnnaLynne grew up with very traditional values, her childhood was otherwise quite untraditional. "We moved around quite a bit," she says, including time in Monroe and other parts of Walton County. Today, the McCords have family all around Gwinnett County as well as in Savannah and Tybee Island. "Lots of small-town drama," she giggles.

In her tweener years, says AnnaLynne, "I was always the girl who wore the mismatching socks, frizzy hair, ponytail I wouldn't take out for a week, and cutoff





Opposite page: Sheer ruffle blouse by **Thrive** available at Inago, Los Angeles. Lingerie by **Elle Macpherson** available at Neiman Marcus, Lenox Square.

This page: Vintage necklace available at The Paper Bag Princess, Los Angeles.

## COVER GIRL



**This page: Bra and panties by Agent Provocateur available at Bloomingdale's, Lenox Square.**

**Opposite page: Fringe corset by Felja available at Saks Fifth Avenue, Phipps Plaza. Panties by Agent Provocateur available at Bloomingdale's, Lenox Square.**

**Styled by Emma Trask/  
Photogenics Media.  
Hair by Clyde Haygood for L'Oréal  
Professionnel.  
Makeup by Melissa Rogers-Park  
for Dermalogica.**

**62 Atlanta Peach November 2008**



jean shorts that were at my knees." In contrast to her *90210* character, AnnaLynne and her sisters were perfectly comfortable with their parents' divorce. Angel and AnnaLynne would go to sleep listening to motivational speaker Anthony Robbins' tapes. "Everything that happened to me, I was just like, Anthony Robbins said I could close the gap from where I am to where I wanted to be, so I'm just going to do it!" She decided to overcome a phobia of snakes by spending a day at an exhibit where she could hold the creatures until they didn't bother her anymore. "Now I'm completely fascinated."

AnnaLynne had already been to a modeling convention in Orlando, having saved gift money from several birthdays and Christmases to get there. At 15 she signed on with the Wilhelmina agency (because acting was always her goal, and they had a media division) and moved to Miami. "I didn't see it as a risk, I saw it as the best thing I could do at the time. Now, thinking about it, I had some serious guardian angels on my shoulder!" Being still too young to legally work, the agency gave her office duties which, after a spell in New York ("that's where I feel most at home"), turned into a full time accounting job—while modeling on location during the weekends.

Things moved just as quickly after she made the shift to Hollywood, even after making a regrettable

## History will probably look back on *Nip/Tuck* as her true breakout.

commitment to a *telenovela* soap opera (*American Heiress*)—an experience she still managed to make lemonade with. "It was the best actor boot camp I could've done," she says now. "Twenty page days, six days a week for four months straight. You have to be on your stuff—two takes and you're done." McCord also moonlighted at the Sunset Strip tourist trap Saddle Ranch Chophouse, wearing a black wig, as if to prevent TMZ from ever getting their hands on pictures of her riding the mechanical bull.

Speaking of which, there's racing to be done, so after we pick out our race names, put on our head socks and helmets, we strap into Italian formula-style karts and take off around the track at something like 50 miles per hour. True enough, AnnaLynne ("Domino") has no problem dusting me, ending up with a faster single lap time, but I get a slight edge on her average according to the clock (though it's Angel—bumping my car more than once—who beats us both).

As she pulls off her helmet, AnnaLynne makes it clear that despite the hurdles and potholes of fame, she's having fun. This is one girl who won't be settling down soon—in fact, she doesn't even allow her current "hang out buddy" to call himself her boyfriend. "Men love those independent women, don't they?" says McCord, adding—with wisdom beyond her years—"just about as much as they hate us!"