

OUR STRAIGHT MATES

With Matthew Myers

SEXIEST
men alive 09



PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM CULLIS

Justin Time

Smallville's Justin Hartley speaks to Matt Myers about being a sex symbol, getting in (and out) of costume and what went on behind the scenes of the craziest soap ever made, *Passions*.

DNA: Is it fun playing the Green Arrow in Smallville? All those stunts and special effects must be exciting.

Justin Hartley: To me it's always a challenge. Not so much the special effects, but the stunts are always a challenge. Even before I started acting on TV, I could always tell when it was a stunt guy and when it was the actor. Occasionally there's a stunt that comes along and there's absolutely no way they're going to let you do it. Like the guy catches on fire or there's a car crash or something. But I love to do whatever I can get away with. So whatever they'll let me do, I'll do it!

Is there anything you draw the line at?

I have a fear of heights. I've tried everything to rid myself of it. If I had to stand ten feet up on the side of a building, I couldn't do it. But if I get a chance to do a stunt where I'm up in the air, I try to do it to conquer this fear – and I end up making a mess of myself! But I'm convinced that eventually I'll be able to crack this thing.

What about that green leather costume? Is it difficult to get into?

It's not getting into it that's difficult. I'll do my action scenes and then the tricky thing is getting it off! It's all leather and it sweats. It's like it's glued on and you've got to wring it out just to get it off. It's pretty gross.

Though it seems to fit you quite nicely.

Well, I'll tell you this... If I'm out of the costume for more than a week or two, they'll have me in for a fitting, just to make sure it's going to fit. They want to make sure I don't come back all blubbery [laughs]. But I don't think the costume has ever been altered. I've actually lost a little bit of weight since I started the job.

It would be the perfect costume for a masquerade party.

I've asked on a couple of occasions if I could take it for personal use and... well, it's not happening.

It would be cool, though? You could pretend to be a totally different person!

[Laughs] Right! I could pretend like I'm a guy pretending to be the guy from *Smallville*!

You get your shirt off quite a bit on camera.

How do you cope with the sex symbol status?

First of all, I have a hard time believing it. Pretty much all of my friends have significant others, so it's not like I'm surrounded by people that are drooling over me or anyone else. So

I really don't see it in my everyday life. It's so funny to think of anybody that I know, let alone myself, as a sex symbol. But there are worse things, too, right? It's not like being Hitler!

How do you feel about gay guys thinking you are hot?

Gay men, as far as I'm concerned, have really good taste, so if gay men think everything is cool with you, chances are they're right.

It's the Queer Eye For The Straight Guy thing.

Exactly! We have neighbours who are gay. Their house is immaculate! My gay friends are very opinionated about what they like and don't like. So you would know right away if they didn't like you. I think it's wonderful.

Do you ever get mistaken as gay?

No, but I would take it as a compliment. My wife has a dark complexion and everyone wants to claim her. If we're around Latinos, they want to claim her. Greeks and Italians want to claim her. So when someone wants you to be gay, I take that as a compliment. It's cool, man.

So you have a diverse array of fans?

Every single fan I have – whether it is a girl

“It's funny to think of myself as a sex symbol. But there are worse things, too, right? It's not like being Hitler!”

or guy, gay or straight – is so passionate about not only what I do but also myself in general. It's a huge support system and I take all the love I can get because sometimes it's slim pickings in this world. I've never been bothered by people coming up to me. They always have a smile on their face. It's a good thing and I'm very blessed.

Who was your favourite superhero as a kid?

I remember as a kid loving the show *The Incredible Hulk*, and everyone loves Superman when they're a kid. But I also had an infatuation with Batman. I thought it was cool how he didn't have any superpowers. He was just a regular guy with gadgets and some cool toys. So when the Green Arrow thing came up, I thought, “Well, this guy is kind of like Batman.” He doesn't have any special powers, either. He's completely vulnerable. If you stabbed this guy, he's going to bleed!

Who do you think makes the best Superman?

They're all different. When I think of



Superman, I think of all of those guys who have played him, especially Christopher Reeve. I admired everything he did and stood for, after the *Superman* movie and his unfortunate accident. He turned into a real life Superman and everything he was able to accomplish after something so devastating... well, you could talk about it for hours. It's absolutely inspiring on every level.

Any others?

I think our guy [Tom Welling] does a good job, too. Technically, he's not Superman, he's Clark, so Tom's got a totally different job. But I think

they all have their own take on it and that's what I love about the whole superhero genre. Directors, writers, producers, storytellers, cinematographers and actors all have different opinions of what something is supposed to look like. So we see Superman in different incarnations throughout time. The comics have changed and so have the movies and TV. It's neat to see everyone's different take on it.

You also star in the internet sci-fi series Gemini Division with Rosario Dawson. How did that come about?

One of the things that appealed to me was that I didn't quite understand it. They said it was an internet TV show and I said, “What is that?” When I found out it was a produced show released through the internet, I thought, “What a wonderful way to reach out and get your product out there.” Now everything is kind of going that way.

You also had a role in the soap opera Passions. That was a crazy show! >>



>> Yeah, it did seem like that. I think at times it was really funny and they got it spot on, then at times it got away from itself. It became something it wasn't supposed to be, and I think that kind of drove people away. It was a spoof on soap operas; it was campy, over the top and crazy. People would like that but then for a while it became so sad and dramatic. But I had three years on that show.

And you met your wife Lindsay Korman on set.

I met the lead actress, fell in love, nailed her and got her pregnant – not necessarily in that order – and then left the show! So they must have been thinking to themselves, “Who the fuck is this guy? He comes in here, knocks up our lead actress, marries her and then leaves!” They must hate me to the ends of the earth. But I had a really fun time on that show and I'll never forget it. It was definitely a great learning experience. To be able to be in a show as an awful actor... I'm forever indebted to them. I love *Passions*!

You've also appeared on *CSI: NY* and *Cold Case*. What kind of roles would you like to tackle in the future?

I enjoy *Smallville*, but I also love comedy. I've had a chance to do a couple of comedy parts and I love it to death. But I'm always looking for something different, like the part of a bad guy. I don't get a chance to play a bad guy a lot, so that's automatically appealing to me. I think sometimes what's going on in your personal life can also affect your choices for roles. But a lot of it has to do with breaking up the monotony, especially when you're on a series doing the same role all the time.

You've just finished a movie with Brittany Murphy called *Megafault*. What was that like?

We shot that in Iowa, which is Middle America. It's a movie about an earthquake, filmed in a place where they don't have earthquakes. It was in a small town about three hours from Chicago, where I grew up, so I got to go home and see my family.

Was the role something different?

It was different and fun, especially after *Smallville*, where I play the Green Arrow. That's always about being heroic, but the guy I play in this movie was kind of afraid of everything, like regular people would be. So that appealed to me. I mean, imagine what you would really do when the ground starts shaking.

Who has been the biggest influence on your career?

I would say my acting teacher, Tom Patton. I'd love to say some celebrity or whatever, but Tom's a teacher at a school in Santa Monica, and he's the best. He showed me how to tap into who I am and use that, as opposed to others who have a habit of running away from that and trying to create something out of nothing. He showed me how to act. ★

Smallville screens Fridays 7.30 on Fox8.

