



The Bachelor

Model Didier Cohen is well-known as the face of Industrie. He tells Matt Myers why he loves Australia, his work and his gay mates.

PHOTOGRAPHY MICHAEL BECK

DNA: You've modelled for DNA in the past. Obviously you have no problem with posing for a gay magazine?

Didier Cohen: No way. Some people ask why I do it, but I say, "Why wouldn't I?" Unfortunately, there are a lot of arrogant people out there, and it's just ridiculous.

How do you find working in Australia compared to the United States?

I find that working in Australia, people are a lot more genuine and not as fake. They're real. It's a pretty fake world out there and Australia is just a better and more positive environment.

You once said that Ruby Rose is 'you in woman form'.

Well, she's my best friend. Out of everyone, she's the same as me in everything, like with the way we think... just everything! She's basically me in a girl form.

There was a story last year that you were dating her.

I know, it's ridiculous. Why can't they, in this day and age, accept that some people are just really good friends? They think, "Why is Didier dating a lesbian?" Can't we just be good friends? But it kind of backfired on them.

There's a theory that once you start hearing rumours about yourself in the media, it means you've made the big-time.

Well, I certainly haven't made anything [laughing]. I'm still new and fresh from LA to Australia and I haven't even really started yet.

"I know other straight guys who freak out when gay men hit on them, but it's not like they'll jump your bones!"

Have there been any gay rumours about you?

Yeah, I've actually heard a lot of rumours about me being gay. They obviously don't know me, and it's not a bad thing anyway.

Is that something that comes with being in the modelling industry?

I don't think it's so much the modelling aspect, but more the private aspect. Like you don't read about me in the papers dating this girl or that girl, or sleeping around with a bunch of girls. I just don't do it, because I was raised differently. And because I'm never really seen with a girl, people just assume that I'm gay. And it's seen as a negative thing, which doesn't make any sense.

Do you have gay mates?

Yeah, I have tonnes, especially in Australia. To me there's no difference. They're all my friends. I don't care if you're gay, I don't care if you're straight. My aunt is a lesbian and one of the closest people in the world to me. My mum was an artist when she was younger and all these gay people have been in my life, for like... ever! I have a lot of gay people around me.

You were nominated for Cleo Bachelor Of The Year. How did that feel?

It was cool, but it kind of took me by surprise. I only moved to Australia last year, so it was cool to be considered for that. It was like being accepted here, to be living and working in Australia. So I was flattered on that part.

You look after your body. What kind of fitness regime do you use?

Well, I eat really well and really clean, like fish, chicken and vegies, and my fitness regime is to run a lot. I run six days a week and the stuff I do for my body is like what gymnasts do.

Gymnasts are in amazing shape all of the time, and all they do is pull-ups and push-ups and work with their own body weight. If you think about it, there were no weights when people first started training. It was all with your own body weight and that's how I like to train.

Are there any stories behind your tattoos?

Every single tattoo on my body has some meaning. For instance, on my arm is a whole story about how I was when I was 18 coming into being a man and realising that the way I grew up wasn't going to work anymore. It's about how there are two sides to everything, to remember the evils that are always there and to think positively.

You appeared in videos for Mariah Carey and Natalie Bassingthwaite. What were they like to work with?

It was great. I worked with Mariah and Spike Lee very early, right after I was discovered.

Spike Lee produced and directed this whole thing for her world tour video and they wanted me involved with that. Working with Nat was amazing, too. We have the same manager, so we all get on really well. Shooting the video was a blast. You can get crazy working with people for 16 hours in one day, but there wasn't one second of that.

Is modelling as competitive as it seems?

It is. I don't really do the whole modelling thing anymore. I've kind of given it a break. But modelling is definitely competitive, especially for the girls. It's pretty crazy. I was discovered off the street, so it wasn't a passion of mine. It's a pretty cut-throat industry. I was in New York for about a year and it was really insane. For every casting out there, there is about 200 models just waiting to get one little pay cheque. It's kind of extreme and they come from everywhere in the world for it.

You were in a film called Deep In The Valley. What was that all about?

It was one of my first films, a long time ago. It was a comedy with Tracy Morgan about this

weird fantasy porn world, but I was only in it for about five seconds.

On that note, what is your porn name? (Your first pet and the street you grew up in).

It would be a girl, because my first dog's name was Sonia and the street I grew up in was Lindero. So my name would be Sonia Lindero. I'd be a trannie! A drag queen porn star!

You're a pretty hot-looking guy. Do you ever get hit on by gay men?

Yeah, all the time. But just as much as I get hit on by women. Girls like to play the eye games and stuff, but guys like to let you know right away. I know other straight guys who freak out, but what's the difference? They don't get it. It's not like they'll jump your bones and not let you go!

Who would you turn gay for?

Well, growing up I admired guys like Brad Pitt and George Clooney. But I'd have to say Beckham or Brad Pitt. They're pretty good-looking guys.

Kylie, Madonna, Britney, Lady Gaga or Pink?

Oh, Pink! She's great. I'm also really good friends with her husband Carey Hart. She's the truth man! Lady Gaga is very talented, but I think it's too early to say if she'll be a legend or not. Pink has been around for years and reinvented herself.

What is the campest song on your iPod?

God, I've got some guilty pleasures! I just put on my iPod thinking I have some hard hip-hop stuff, and then Gaga's *Telephone* comes on!

What has been the most surreal experience you've had so far in your career?

Australia! Australia saved my life, man. It changed my life and opened my eyes to so many things. Growing up in LA can be stale and you get bored. When I moved here I started to grow up. I moved here completely by myself and it saved my life career-wise, friend-wise and... in everything. It's the biggest eye-opener in the world.

If you could have a beer with any famous person, living or dead, who would it be?

Well, people might think I'm crazy, but I'd seriously love to have a beer with Kanye West. If someone can be that passionate and arrogant, I'd want to know why.

What is the next big thing for you in 2011?

I have a lot coming up. I've been working with James Dimitri, who actually shot me for the DNA shoot and became a good friend of mine. He got into film and I've shot two short films for him, that should be coming out soon. Another thing that I'm really excited about is that my best friend Townsend, who is a well-known DJ, and I are getting together to do a DJ gig here. It's called TEN-D.M.C, and it's going to be fun. I've been around music my whole life, so it's kind of a no-brainer.

Didier was shot in a swimwear story (Cabana Capers) for DNA #85 (February 2005) by James Dimitri. Visit DNA online for images.