

944[®]

FASHION
ENTERTAINMENT
LIFESTYLE
DECEMBER 2009

giving
back
THE HOLIDAY ISSUE

men for
women
+ now.com

ATLANTA
DETROIT
LAS VEGAS
LOS ANGELES
MIAMI
ORANGE COUNTY
PHOENIX
SAN DIEGO
SAN FRANCISCO

944.COM

SMART LUXURY: OUR ANNUAL GIFT GUIDE

JASON FEGEL

LIFE OF THE PARTY

JASON SEGEL'S SUCCESS STORY GIVES EVERY GUY
A REASON TO CELEBRATE MANHOOD

by Scott T. Sterling photography by Steve Shaw

retouching by Lusso Labs grooming Cheri Keating, The Wall Group styling Miriam Sternoff, Exclusive Artists

It might sound cliché, given whom we're talking about, but it's hard not to fall head over heels in man-love with Jason Segel. His affable, nice-guy persona is somewhere between Judge Reinhold and the quietly hot college TA not-so-quietly lusted after by his female students that you were fortunate enough to befriend at school.

Many might not specifically remember when we first met Segel on the big-screen — as a stoned partygoer doing lascivious things with a piece of watermelon in one brief but memorable scene with Jennifer Love Hewitt in 1998 teen comedy *Can't Hardly Wait*. Given the endless cavalcade of young stars rampant throughout that classic coming of age film (including Breckin Meyer, Donald Faison and Seth Green), the fact that Segel has emerged as a nascent voice of a particular male generation and genuine Hollywood player is saying quite a lot.

After entering public consciousness as one of the charter members of Team Apatow on the endlessly revered and short-lived TV show *Freaks and Geeks*, Segel spent the years following its' abrupt cancellation "figuring out what just happened, and what to do next."

Eventually landing a lead role on CBS comedy *How I Met Your*

Mother, Segel took his mentor Judd Apatow's advice and began writing in earnest. Given his increased public profile after a starring role in Apatow's hit film *Knocked Up*, Segel's work paid off in the form of *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*.

The movie answers the age-old question: What would happen if the cool, nice dude actually got the girl instead of the vacuous pretty boy with the square jaw and flashy sports car? From Segel's ability to create multi-dimensional characters to dreaming up Russell Brand's brilliant Aldous Snow of the mythical rock band *Infinite Sorrow*, *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* elevated Segel to the status of an emerging John Hughes for guys, someone able to spin the very real pain, frustration and ultimate absurdity of "being a man" into something hilariously funny and more than a little touching.

Stealing a few moments from the set of *How I Met Your Mother*, Segel is happy to discuss everything from why he doesn't use Twitter to landing his dream gig to why he avidly supports the Noreen Fraser Foundation Men For Women Now charity.

Jason Segel might not be my new BFF in real life, but a guy can certainly dream ...

A man with short, dark hair and a light beard is smiling broadly, showing his teeth. He is wearing a black t-shirt. The background is a light-colored, textured wall, possibly brick or stone. The logo on the t-shirt features a blue male symbol (♂) with a white arrow pointing up and to the right, followed by the word 'for' in white. Below that, the word 'women' is written in a gold, sans-serif font, with a white female symbol (♀) positioned below the 'o'. Finally, the word 'now' is written in a white, sans-serif font, followed by '.com' in a smaller white font.

♂ for
women
♀ now .com

944: Your list of credits is impressive, but for a lot of guys you became like a hero with *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*. Peter Brenner is an inspiration for creative writer-types who can really relate to his albeit hilarious struggles throughout the movie. Was that the culmination of many personal experiences, or just one really good idea you expanded upon?

JASON SEGEL: Aw, thanks, man. It really all got started when Judd (Apatow) said one very particular thing to me. He said, "Listen, you're kind of a weird dude. If you ever want to be a leading man, you're going to have to write your own material. No one will ever cast you in that role, so just do it yourself." That stuck in my head, you know? When I finally got the motivation to be that dude, my only option really was to write the material. So I did.

"KERMIT, TO ME, WAS THE ORIGINAL TOM HANKS. THAT'S WHO I WANTED TO BE, AS SILLY AS THAT SOUNDS."

944: You mention Judd Apatow. For a lot of us, *Freaks and Geeks* was a really important TV show, and with everything you two have done together since, you'll always be linked. How did you guys first come together, and what's the relationship like now?

JS: I simply auditioned for *Freaks and Geeks*. I had turned down the audition at first, because just from the title it sounded like a Nickelodeon show or something (laughs). But my agent made me read the script. He swore up and down that this Apatow guy knew what he was doing. When I did, it was just so beautiful. I went in and auditioned and got the part. Right from moment one, Judd and I really hit it off. There was a fair amount of improv on the show, and I guess I was kind of good at

it. So was Seth (Rogen). That's when he kind of took us under his wing and started mentoring us. I think, to some extent, he felt a little bit of responsibility towards us. He knew he had taken some kids out of high school and college to do the show, and when it was canceled, he looked out for us. We had all kind of given something up for him, so he did the same for us.

944: Does Apatow still hold that mentor-like role for you?

JS: He will be for the rest of my career, absolutely.

944: I find it interesting and kind of cool that you're one of the few people in Hollywood that completely avoids using social networking sites like Twitter.

JS: There are fake Jason Segels, though. A few, I hear. It almost makes want to Twitter just so there's a real me. But I just don't have

anything interesting to say on a moment-to-moment basis.

944: I find that hard to believe.

JS: Well, I'm also worried that I'd use it for the wrong purposes. You know, I'd be sending out stuff like "Hey, down at the bar, kind of lonely. Here's where I am." Next thing you know, flooded bar.

944: Tell us a little about your work on the new Muppet movie. It's obviously a major deal for you, being such a major fan of Jim Henson and his work.

JS: It's my dream come true. You have adult dreams, like winning the Oscar. And then you have childhood dreams, like making *The Muppet Movie*. Those dreams are more deeply rooted. Being my first comic influence, Kermit, to me, was the original Tom Hanks. That's who I

wanted to be, as silly as that sounds. Even just getting to write for those characters is such a thrill.

944: I'm hearing more about Jason Segel, the rock star, opening shows for bands like Maroon 5. What are those gigs like?

JS: I just get up there in a tuxedo with a keyboard and sing like five songs. It's really fun. I'm doing it again with Maroon 5 on New Year's Eve at the Palms Casino Resort. I'm trying to keep things interesting, you know?

944: With so much going on, do you feel like a workaholic? Or is that just your natural pace?

JS: Right after *Freaks and Geeks*, I had a moment that felt like it was all going to happen. Maybe it was because I was young and naïve. But then it didn't quite happen. Now, when I feel the same sort of sensation, I do everything to make sure it doesn't go away again.

944: Which must make the fact that *How I Met Your Mother* is quickly approaching the vaunted 100th episode a proud accomplishment.

JS: In a lot of ways, the show is the first time I really had commercial success. I'm super-proud of *Freaks and Geeks*, obviously. It's still in my mind probably the best thing I've ever done. But it wasn't until *How I Met Your Mother* that I got to see what it meant to be part of a real success. I've been very lucky since then, with *Knocked Up* and *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* and *I Love You, Man*. But I don't think I've ever been involved in anything, career or otherwise, that's lasted as long as *How I Met Your Mother*. I've never been in a relationship or gone to school for as long.

944: One of the most memorable aspects of *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* is Russell Brand as Aldous Snow, who is one of the best movie characters in years.

JS: That's Russell. The part was originally written to be a British author, like a Hugh Grant type. Russell walked in to audition, and was so charismatic and good. It was a different choice, but made perfect sense. He

“THERE ARE FAKE JASON SEGELS, THOUGH. A FEW, I HEAR. IT ALMOST MAKES WANT TO TWITTER JUST SO THERE’S A REAL ME.”



captured that guy you totally hate and is dating your ex-girlfriend. The idea was someone who was smarter, cooler and more successful than you at the very endeavor that you're after. He was perfect. He's a consummate gentleman and a pleasure to act with.

944: Next summer he performs as Aldous Snow again in the spin-off movie *Get Him to the Greek*.

JS: It's hilarious, but Russell digs into his past personal life in terms of tapping the demons of Aldous. It's powerful and more than just funny. I hope it's similar to *Sarah Marshall* in that it's funny, but there's heart, too. Russell's going to be a huge star, you know.

944: With this being the charity issue of 944, you were adamant about supporting the Noreen Fraser Foundation Men For Women Now. How did you come to choose them?

It's men encouraging women to get screened for cancer, which I find to be a really interesting angle to begin with. I learned that Jack Black was involved, and he's a friend. It was a no-brainer.

944: Now that you're working on your dream project with the Muppets, what's left for Jason Segel to achieve?

JS: I don't know. Well, that's not true. As much as I love starring in these R-rated comedies, I really want to make my equivalent to *Being There*. Or *Forrest Gump*. I want to make the big, dramatic comedy that touches on everything — a little bit more sprawling and meaningful to everybody.

944.COM/

SEE MORE FROM THIS SHOOT @ 944.COM/JASONSEGEL