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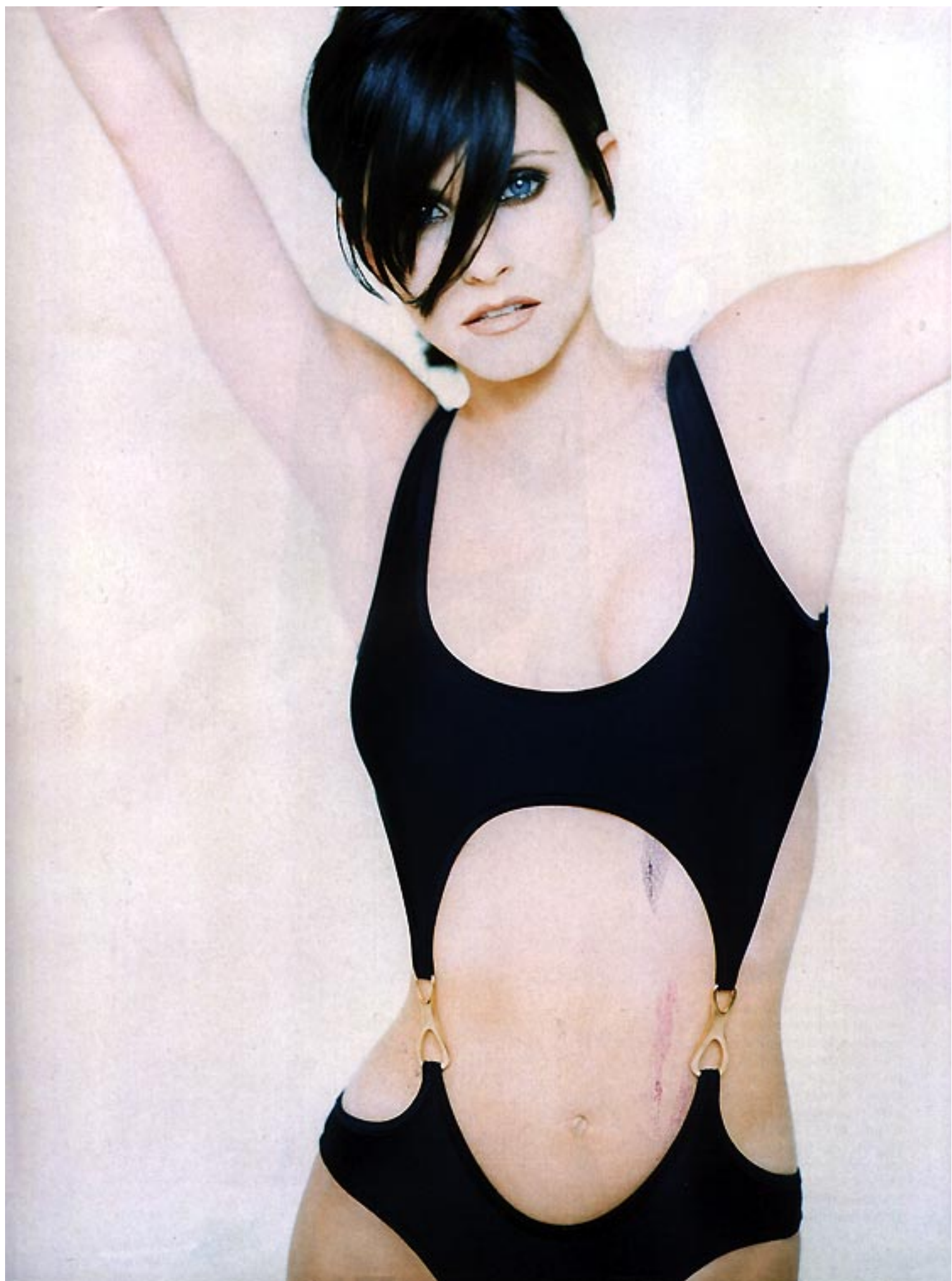


COURTENEY

act

Most of us know her as the sensible dark-haired one in Friends, but the real Courtney Cox is more foxy chick than mother hen. America's latest sex symbol shares with Tina Gaudoin. Styled by Leslie Sungail. Photographed by Matthew Rolston

Opposite page, Courtney Cox wears black cut-away swimsuit, £130, at GUCCI, 33 Old Bond Street, W1





This page, Courteney wears neck cord, to order; top, £370; pinstripe bikini, £195, all at GUCCI, 33 Old Bond Street, W1. Shoes, £270, at Manolo Blahnik, 43 Old Church Street, SW3. Opposite page, bikini, to order, by LA PERLA MARE (ring 0171 436 5864 for stockists). Jumper, to order, at Gucci, 33 Old Bond Street, W1. Scarf, £250, at Chanel, 26 Old Bond Street, W1





This page, Courteney wears bikini, £139, at SALVATORE FERRAGAMO, 24 Old Bond Street, W1. Styled by Leslie Sungail for Cloutier. Hair and make-up by Beth Katz for Cloutier, using products by Yves Saint Laurent: Hydrolight Day Lotion moisturiser, Oil-Free Foundation No. 1, Eyeliner Noir, No. 2 Mocha Eyeshadow, Mascara Moiné in Black, Natural No. 6 lipliner, Rouge Pur No. 15 lipstick. Props, Darren Ransdell for Cloutier

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ourteney Cox says she still sees Bruce Springsteen from time to time – ‘Yeah, we have mutual friends, but when I see the video now I think: “Woah, was that me?” It’s kinda wild.’ Cox is reminiscing about her

first collision with fame when, as a teenager, she played the starstruck fan hauled on stage by Springsteen in his 1984 *Dancing in the Dark* video. Given Cox’s current phenomenal success, born of her role in the American sitcom *Friends*, where she plays the ‘anally retentive’ Monica, one could be forgiven for thinking that since Springsteen, Cox’s career has been on a steady ascent. But even Cox, who is now 32, admits it hasn’t been that easy.

‘I used to think that work breeds work, so after *Family Ties* [Cox’s other big TV hit, in which she starred as Michael J. Fox’s girlfriend] I worked on one project after another – I learned a lot,’ she says, defying the suggestion that she was ‘lost in space’ for a decade where the American public was concerned. Cox’s work included a mini-series with Hugh Grant – ‘We played brother and sister in that one.’ (Does another petite but perfectly formed brunette whom Grant often refers to as ‘his sister’ come to mind?) Her finest role during the fallow years was that of Michael Keaton’s girlfriend. ‘Mostly I was proud for him. Where I come from in the South, women look up to the husband as the provider,’ she says, claiming that Batman’s fame (Keaton did the first two) didn’t bother her. For someone who has been called one of America’s sexiest women, surely the attention Keaton received must have been a little unsettling? Cox pauses and laughs riotously: ‘When we were together I just didn’t get noticed – I could have been naked or grown antlers and it still wouldn’t have made any difference.’

It took the bizarrely named but hugely successful *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* to re-ignite Cox’s career. The film also launched Jim Carrey on to an unsuspecting public. Cox seems nonplussed by the attention the film garnered, but she admits that the pilot she did post-*Pet Detective* ‘probably got me the part on *Friends*’. Cox, like the other cast members, can’t say enough about the sitcom which had assimilated itself into the American consciousness before you could say ‘Kennedy’. ‘I mean, the writing is so brilliant and the whole thing is so fun,’ she coos. The American public thrills with

monotonous regularity to off-set tales of the *Friends* crew, whether they be taking on the Hollywood studios to effect a massive pay hike or indulging in a little ‘friendly’ squabbling. Cox initially read to play Rachel (now played by Jennifer Aniston) but lobbied harder to play Monica. ‘In retrospect, everyone’s glad Jennifer’s playing Rachel – she’s perfect,’ she says generously of her glossy-maned co-star, who is to hair what *Charlie’s Angels* were to lip-gloss.

Unlike most celebs, Cox will admit to her own insecurities. ‘It’s impossible not to compare your career with the others, but everyone has their moment; it’s so out of your control.’ Arguably it’s Cox and Aniston who have successfully broken free of their cookie-cutter flatmate roles; the other *Friends* haven’t been so lucky – all have starred in other vehicles that failed to rouse the critics’ enthusiasm.

Cox has received rave reviews for her new movie, the cult horror flick *Scream*, directed by Wes Craven. ‘I’m so proud of it: it’s incredibly well written – my character is very different from anything I’ve played before,’ she raves. She has just finished filming *Commandments*, a black comedy, in which she stars alongside Aidan Quinn. Playing against type is top of the Cox agenda. ‘That’s key,’ she says enthusiastically, explaining that success in TV and movies – simultaneously – is her goal.

The vast swell of publicity surrounding *Friends* is something to be embraced and repelled. ‘Most of the time I don’t mind,’ says Cox calmly, ‘but there’s parts of it that I can’t stand.’ Specifically, Cox is referring to stories about her relationship with her cousin (‘He wasn’t a blood cousin and that was such a long time ago’), pictures of her locked in deep embraces with men – particularly Adam Duritz, the lead singer of Counting Crows who is, by all accounts, her latest squeeze (‘You can’t even say goodbye to a friend at the airport without them taking 50 frames to make it look like the longest kiss in the world’), and a *People* magazine article that portrayed Cox as suffering from a serious eating disorder (‘When I saw the article I literally got down on my knees and cried’).

For the record, the small but perfectly formed Cox does not have an eating disorder. ‘Am I obsessed with working-out? By no means. Do I have an eating disorder? Not at all. Do I eat a lot of candy? Yeah.’ Reports of Cox’s on-set candy binges are rife, but she says she’s put a stop to that recently. ‘I haven’t had sugar now in almost three months – I got a little crazy with certain foods.’ It’s impossible not to draw a parallel between this outburst and a typical ‘Monicaesque’ frenzy. So how much does Cox identify with her character? ‘I guess I am a controlling person too, as far as knowing what I want and living my life,’ she concedes, ‘but I think Monica is a lot spookier than I am.’ □