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PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK LIDDELL

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# Opposites Attract

{ As different as they might be, Julianne Moore and Pierce Brosnan come together perfectly in this month's Laws of Attraction. by Deborah Baer }

**H**e lives in Malibu; she's a die-hard New Yorker. He's the debonair 50-year-old Irish star of the Bond franchise; she's a redheaded, freckled 43-year-old American character actor who has shone as tormented women in films such as *The Hours* and *Far from Heaven*. Pierce Brosnan and Julianne Moore are very different people—very different kinds of actors—but when they joined to star in *Laws of Attraction*—a riotous romance produced by Brosnan's production company, Irish Dream Time—they realized they have one major thing in common: They're both incredibly devoted to their families (Brosnan is married to Keely Shaye Smith and has five children ranging in age from 3 to 20; Moore is married to director Bart Freundlich and they have two children, Liv, 2, and Cal, 6). That bond helped create the chemistry that makes this movie work—an old-fashioned romantic comedy about two diametrically opposed Manhattan divorce attorneys who accidentally get married in a drunken stupor.

**GOTHAM:** Pierce, how did you get Julianne involved in the film?

**PIERCE BROSNAN:** I wanted to do a romantic comedy, and I wanted to do it with Julianne Moore. There were lots of beautiful ladies' names on the list, but one day I looked down and Julianne's name was there. She's one of America's finest actors—in just about everything she's touched, whether it's been in *Vanya on 42nd Street* to *Far from Heaven* to *Boogie Nights*. She has worked extremely hard on her craft and, consequently, it's paying off in spades. And she'd never done a romantic comedy.

**JULIANNE MOORE:** It was kind of a big surprise for me, frankly, because it's not generally the kind of thing that I do. But you don't want to do the same thing all the time. This was something I thought was really delightful and very funny and sweet.

**G:** Chemistry is obviously so important in a romantic comedy. When was



**BOSS** Hugo Boss jacket. **Giorgio Armani** button-down shirt.



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**Roberto Cavalli** pink crystal detailing. **Northern Exposure** Collection platinum necklace.

the first time you met and did it click right away?

**PB:** The first night we met was in New York, and we went to have dinner at Da Silvano. It's kind of showbizzy and popular and there's paparazzi there. I was with about five friends, and we were in a big limousine because we were going out on the town, hopping around. And she just showed up in her cargo pedal-pusher pants, Birkenstocks, and T-shirt. I almost walked right past her. She said, "It's me! Julianne!" I was immediately bewitched by her. She has great warmth and a wonderful femininity and yet she's just gorgeous. That red hair, that smile.

**JM:** I was working these really long hours on the movie *Marie and Bruce* in Queens. So I showed up at Da Silvano sort of all dirty. He was looking fantastic and had just come from Uptown. But we had actually met one time at a cocktail party in LA when we were working the deal out. And he came by this party to say hello to me, which I thought was incredibly gracious. Not a lot of actors do that. That's really rare. But that's the thing about Pierce—his manners are impeccable.

**G:** What were you most surprised to learn about each other once you started working?

**PB:** She loves to chat, that's her way of relaxing. I, on the other hand, before a take, like to be calm and not talk. So she'd be blabbing away to me while I'd be getting ready for a five- or six-page scene. I'd just say, "Will you be quiet, please? I'm trying to learn my lines here." And she'd just keep talking. That's her way of doing it.

**JM:** [Laughs] I never stop. I think that was really hard for him. I talk all the way up to "Action." Sometimes I'll keep doing it after action, continue my thought and then I'll start the scene, which drove him nuts—absolutely nuts. There were times he would say, "Please, please just be quiet for a minute, let me think! Just one second!" This is not unusual. This happens to me on dramas, on everything. If you talk to other actors I've worked with, they'll say that, too. But I say, "C'mon, if Ralph Fiennes can take it, why can't you [laughs]?"

**G:** What about Pierce, Julianne?

**JM:** He's just so accessible. I always had an image of him being so sophisticated. He's really incredibly sweet and normal and a real family man. He's always talking about his wife, his children. That's sort of what my orientation is, too, so it was nice. For some unknown reason my son calls him "Pierce the Hippo." My daughter learned how to talk on the set of this movie, and she called him "The Hippo," too.

**PB:** Julianne had her whole family with her while we shot in Dublin. I, sadly, did not, although, I had my son Sean on the film with me. He's just completing his second year at one of the finest acting academies in London and he got a job on the movie as my stand-in. It was really so fun to see his charming face across the stage. And to see how he acquitted himself so grandly, running around to get the tea and take care of people.

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**G:** You filmed in Dublin and New York. When you shot in Manhattan, did Julianne turn you on to any great local spots?

**PB:** She said, "Where do you stay?" And I said, "I usually stay at the Plaza Athénée." And she said, "Oh, fancy pants. You should be Downtown." I tried it for a while, but I went back up to the East Side. I've kind of gotten used to it up there.

**G:** Julianne, what are your favorite things to do in the city?

**JM:** On the West Side, we have a new water park, right on the river opposite Horatio Street. It's a kids' playground, and in the summertime, they turn the water on. It's fantastic. Pastis is also one of our favorite places to go for dinner. We take our kids early. They're great with children.

**G:** You both play lawyers in the film. Did you do any research to play your parts?

**JM:** No, I don't prepare. We're very, very different in terms of how we approach our work. I think he's probably much more systematic and thorough. I'd say I'm pretty instinctual and relaxed.

**PB:** I sat in a couple days on divorce proceedings. I met one of New York's top divorce attorneys, Michael McCarthy. You really see the animal in the man and the way his mind works. Here he is, trying to take care of and patch up sad lives. How do you do that every day of your life and not get cynical and jaded? But he wasn't. He was still at the top of his game. The best advice he gave me was about playing to the crowd, playing to the judge, playing to the clients, and having that sense of drama. But this is a light piece. My character is rather disheveled. He's kind of schlubby, like an unmade bed.

**G:** I have a hard time believing you could ever look like an unmade bed.

**PB:** Probably not enough, but I did my best. I've been blessed with some kind of good Irish genes.

**JM:** It's very difficult to make him look bad. Let me tell you, it really is. He would walk on set and he was supposed to be ruffled, and I'm like, "That's not ruffled! You gotta work harder at that, dude."

**G:** Were your spouses jealous at all of your sexy costars?

**PB:** Oh, we don't talk about it. But she just wants the best for me. She wants me to work with the best actors, whether it's Halle Berry in a Bond movie or Rene Russo in a thriller. I play these romantic leading-role guys,

and we figure I may as well do it as long as it lasts. What can I say—my wife is very supportive. I'm the luckiest guy alive.

**JM:** Nobody's husband likes it. Nobody's husband likes when you're doing something romantic with some guy in a movie. No matter how many times you say to them, "I'm just acting, it's not a big deal, it doesn't matter, I don't care," they just don't love it. But Bart really liked Pierce, and I don't think he felt threatened or anything like that. But if it were up to him, I would make only "girl movies."

**G:** Pierce, are you going to do the next Bond?

**PB:** This one is probably it. I don't know what's happening with it. I've done my four; I've done my contract. If they want to go again, they know where to find me.

**G:** Is it true you met Bill Clinton and asked him to make a cameo in the next one?

**PB:** Uh, no. We have mutual friends and we've always tried to get together. We met at a Rolling Stones concert and talked about golf. Bond is always a circus, like the rumors about Britney Spears. Can you imagine Britney and myself? I don't think so. Bless her cotton socks, I do love her, but I think I would be howled out of the theater.

**G:** You met Sean Connery for the first time at the Oscars.

**PB:** I met Sean for the first time at the New Line party. He was ordering a good whiskey, and I was standing beside him but he didn't see me. The barman said, "What are you having, sir?" And I said, "I'll have what he's having." I thought it was a rather good line, if I do say so myself. We kind of greeted each other and it was documented. Sean is someone I've got the greatest admiration for. He's certainly a hero. But I never wanted to be James Bond and never thought of being James Bond when I became an actor.

**G:** But *Goldfinger* was the first film you ever saw.

**PB:** In '64, my mother and father took me to the pictures, as we call it in Ireland, and it was *Goldfinger*. The next weekend I saw *Lawrence of Arabia*. It really was the seed of my love affair with the movies. The Bond movies were always captivating, but the ones I really wanted to be like were Clint Eastwood, Warren Beatty, and Steve McQueen—the cool guys.

**JM:** At one point when I was a kid, we lived in Alaska, and there was only one movie theater in town. And every single weekend the movie changed. So my sister and I would see *Escape from Witch Mountain*, then the next weekend it'd be *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. But at that point, I was not interested in movies. I was just going because it was Saturday

afternoon and that's what you did. I was a big reader. I came to acting because of the stories. I read a lot of Louisa May Alcott; I read all of Pearl Buck when I was a kid. I liked to read by author, like Edith Wharton and Faulkner. I'd choose one and read everything.

**PB:** I wanted to be up there in those movies and tell those stories about people falling in love. When I saw a movie that touched my heart, broke my heart, elevated my spirits, and made me feel good about myself—that was always so powerful to me. I thought that was such an incredible gift.

**G:** You're a very romantic guy.

**JM:** He's like Cary Grant.

**PB:** I am a romantic guy. I love romantic films. There aren't enough of them. This is about two grown-ups. There's not enough films about grown-ups. When I did *The Thomas Crown Affair*, they said, "Do you want to go for a younger woman?" It's nuts. This is about a man in his forties and he meets a woman in her forties and they fall in love. And it's sexy and it's hot. I'm definitely older than Ms. Moore, but I think we fit; we kinda look good together. That's where the chemistry comes from, hopefully.

**JM:** It's a very old-fashioned plot. It's really classic romantic-comedy stuff. And it's rare that you encounter that these days. It is kind of reminiscent of an old movie, which is what I liked about it. I like any kind of relationship movie. For the most part, in our lives, we're doing things like figuring out if we're gonna marry some guy. That happens more often than thinking about how you're going to get out of a ship that overturned. So for me, anything that involves a kind of relationship, whether it's a romantic one or a family one, those are always much more interesting for me to do, because it's truer.

**G:** Is *Laws* a dream role?

**JM:** There are no dream roles. I'm not one of those people who says "I'm dying to do this, I'm dying to do that." I've never operated my career that way. My feeling is that you just sort of work and that things present themselves. And you know what you're excited about when you see it. This came out of thin air. Things kind of happen like that to me. I don't want to plan it.

**PB:** I'm at a very happy place in my life and my career, which is a bit nerve-racking. Sometimes it's not good to be too happy! You've got to keep a little edge going because it's such an old game. You have to be as tough as old boots to be an actor. **[G]**

The complete article appears on pages 128-135 in the April 2004 issue of *Gotham*. **SUBSCRIBE NOW** and get *Gotham* delivered directly to your door every month.

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