

VOGUE

AUGUST
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The new
Hollywood
heroine

**EMMA
STONE**

Cool, funny
and smart

Ultra violet
*The colour
of now*

**BOLD
MOVE**
How to wear
checks

12

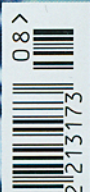
*great looks
to inspire*

**The trouser
suit takes
centre stage**

**Buffed and
beautiful**
*Barefoot
perfection*

LOL
*(That's
late-onset
lesbianism)*

**AUTUMN
FASHION**





Emma Stone carved her name as a comic actress. Now she's getting serious with *Spider-Man*. She talks to *Alexa Chung* about sex scenes, her morbid imagination and being fashion's funniest It-girl. Photographs by *Patrick Demarchelier*

The crazy cool of *Emma Stone*

W

e teach a class on anthropomorphic mouse taxidermy, which is *really* exciting,” an animated, fast-talking Joanna Ebenstein is telling me in the back room of the Morbid Anatomy Library and Cabinet in deepest darkest Brooklyn.

It's April, it's raining, it's 5pm, and I am waiting for Emma Stone to arrive and tell me why on earth we are here. In the meantime, Ebenstein, the gallery's curator, has kindly offered to talk me through her vast personal collection of curious artefacts. She is casually pointing out a giant hairy fist clutching a small wooden doll – “That's a gorilla's foot... Do you want some cheap red wine?” – when Stone appears, looking faux confused.

Stone, 23, is petite and pretty; sparkly, neat and very blonde. She is wearing the classic off-duty actress garb: a boyish grey wool sweater, dark blue skinny jeans and some flesh-coloured shiny jazz shoes that sound disgusting but look great. Relaxed and polite, she says yes to a glass of wine and turns to me, her half-Disney princess/half-cat-eyes wide. “I heard they have human-skin lamps here,” she deadpans, in her characteristic Southern drawl.

Immediately, I am obsessed. Emma Stone is the quirky, cool girl from school; the one you'd want to sit next to in class, hoping you'd become cooler via osmosis. Today, we are here to learn more about death, and it was all her idea.

Visiting this museum – along with learning to bake the perfect cupcake, and promotional duties for her first big-budget blockbuster, *The Amazing Spider-Man* – has been high on Stone's agenda since she read about it in a magazine. As anticipated, the gallery is awash with dead things. It's a celebration of the weird. We're encouraged to look around among skeleton posters, cabinets of animal teeth, religious relics hanging on the wall and a tiny soldier injured in miniature trenches; every nook and cranny is occupied by a snarling beast. Both of us decide this is how we want our new homes to be decorated (Stone recently moved into a New York apartment with Andrew Garfield, her boyfriend and *Spider-Man* co-star).

Guiding us around, Ebenstein gestures to a wax anatomical Venus. “I travelled round the world looking at stuff like this,” she says. “And I did this photo project, and when I

came back I spent a month by myself just looking at these collections. I was literally dreaming of babies in jars every night.”

“As you do,” Stone responds in her signature husky tone, a smile on her face. A committed non-smoker, Stone's rasp is actually the result of whooping cough as a child, but it now acts as the perfect complement to her comic timing.

Comedy is the thing that got Stone noticed, it's also the first thing you notice about her: she's a natural ham and a great physical comic. Her conversation is accompanied by deft sideways glances, nudges, eye rolls and witty asides; when I play the interview tape back it sounds like I'm providing a one-person laughter track. Her jolly attitude is infectious.

Armed also with saucy looks and a girl-next-door demeanour, she's more than able to hold her own alongside big comic actors such as Steve Carell, Michael Cera or Jonah Hill, who co-starred with her in her first film, *Superbad* (she played the girl the geeks are desperate to woo). “Emma makes everyone better,” says Hill. “Personally and professionally.” She's a total babe, too, but at the beginning of Stone's career her agent would scrub out descriptions of characters if they mentioned “sexy” or “beautiful”, as Stone simply “did not identify with those words” and would refuse to audition. She first got noticed in *Easy A*, a post-modern take on *The Scarlet Letter*, in which she played a high-school student parading around in a basque in order to wrong-foot the school gossips. The film was the perfect showcase for Stone's natural comedic talent, and has become a cult hit among twentysomething girls, but Stone herself has never watched it because her character is in every scene. I assure her it's very funny, but she insists watching herself back is the last thing she'd enjoy. “Would you watch yourself for an hour and a half?” she asks, raising an eyebrow. I think I probably would if I was as good at acting as she is.

“She has the uncanny ability to play six or seven emotions at the same time,” says *Easy A* director Will Gluck, who also cast her in a smaller role in last year's rom-com *Friends with Benefits*. “She loses herself in characters and gives an incredibly specific, rich and nuanced performance.

She will be a giant star for many, many years to come.”

Back in the curiosity gallery, Stone has found a book about the *Titanic*. “I've been following Titanic Real Time on Twitter,” she says of the site dedicated to describing every detail of the ship's fateful voyage 100 years ago. “They're sinking in three days,” she says with glee. I wonder whether she's one of those people who are addicted to disaster TV shows about plane crashes. “Yeah, I like all disasters. It's oddly soothing.”

Stone has exhibited an unusually developed interest in the macabre since childhood; it's arguably what set her on her current career path. It's post-museum, and Stone is discussing her fatalistic nature over some delicious food and some slightly more expensive wine at Marlow & Sons, an unassuming restaurant in Brooklyn's Williamsburg that is big on “sharing”.

“What really drew me to comedy was just my being anxious,” she says, while throwing back an impressive number of oysters. What does she worry about? “Everything!” she laughs. “It's horrible.” I wonder whether she has a short attention span? “No, my attention span is good, but my anxiety is bad.”

It was anxiety that led her, at the age of 11, to join an improvisation drama class, after being told that it could help her to control fears which, at that time, could be set off by the simplest things: “I had a panic attack when I was eight. I couldn't go to friends' houses. My mum couldn't put notes in my lunch because I would be reminded that she existed throughout the day and I would want to go home. And I was sick all the time. And then, when I went through therapy, I tried improv for the first time, and I think there was some, like, cathartic element to it.”

In fact, she enjoyed herself so much that, at 15, she put together a Power Point presentation to persuade her parents to up sticks in Scottsdale, Arizona, and head to Los Angeles to help her become an actress. She says she was in the middle of a history class when the idea to give acting a proper go just “washed over” her. “In that moment, it was, like, move to LA, do it tonight.”

It actually took three months more for her mother to agree to relocate. When things didn't immediately take off, Stone found work at a local dog bakery > 148

*Stone is the
quirky, cool
girl from
school; the
one you'd sit
next to,
hoping you'd
become
cooler via
osmosis*

making “pup cakes and pup tarts” to earn money. “It’s the only real job I’ve ever held,” she says unapologetically. A spot on the TV remake of *The Partridge Family* rescued Stone from the bakery and, once she started working, the offers came flooding. Drive, determination and natural talent have seen Stone’s star rise quickly, but what sets her apart from other actors her age is that, as well as possessing star quality, she also seems approachable and genuinely quirky. “I admire how original [Emma] is, just being who she is,” emails her BFF, the country-singing star Taylor Swift, whom Stone befriended after they met at an awards ceremony. “She doesn’t *do* anything to be different from everyone else on the planet. Somehow she just is.”

Stone still loves comedy – she describes her stint as a host on *Saturday Night Live* as “the most fun two weeks of my life, I have never had that much fun on a film set, ever” – but she’s also moving towards more serious roles. Last year’s turn as Skeeter, in the much-lauded film of Kathryn Stockett’s blockbuster *The Help*, introduced her to a new audience, and next year will see her in the mafia thriller *Gangster Squad* with Sean Penn and Ryan Gosling, as well as a comedy with Chloë Moretz. She’s a very appealing screen presence. “Emma is loved by both men and women,” says Anna Faris, who worked with Stone on *The House Bunny*. “It’s something we all want, but few actresses can achieve, because you have to be fearless in your acting – willing to make a fool of yourself in the most endearing way, but also maintaining a very sexy confidence. It’s not easy! I love it that Emma is truly unafraid to be herself, she is quirky and that makes her so cool.”

Even so, nothing can have prepared her for her latest role, her biggest and most commercial to date, playing Gwen Stacy opposite Andrew Garfield in the rebooted *Spider-Man* franchise. “Why did I cast Emma?” asks Marc Webb, the film’s director. “She’s funny, beautiful, usually on time. She doesn’t rely on beauty and batting eyelashes. She could. Have you seen her? My God. She works hard and she makes the actors around her better – partly, I think, ‘cause they want to impress her. She’s also good to people; somewhere along the line she learnt to put people at ease, and this gift has also served her well.”

In many ways the film seems to be the antithesis of everything she’s about, but Stone took the part not because she’s a

comic-book geek, but because she was drawn to the dark storyline. “I’m not saying it happens in this movie, but Gwen Stacy is most famous for her death,” she says. (Spoiler alert: Stone’s character falls off the Brooklyn Bridge during a battle between Spider-Man and his nemesis the Green Goblin when, in a bid to save her life, Spider-Man shoots a web that catches her by her ankle and deals her fatal whiplash in the process.) Having spent an afternoon watching Stone pore over books about tragedy, I can see why this character appealed. But it probably didn’t hurt that her co-star was set to be fellow hot young thing Andrew Garfield, whom she has been dating ever since.

Which reminds me, has she ever done a sex scene? “Um, yeah, I’ve done one sex scene, one almost sex scene.” This suddenly feels like the type of chat you have in a school loo, so, in the spirit of that vibe, I ask her what happens. Like, what do you use to cover things? “I’ve never been naked,” she says. “Well, there was one... No, it was always pants on.” Hoping for some juicy gossip, I wonder who she was sexing? “Well, it was Hunter Parrish in one,” she says casually. “And then I was almost sexing Ryan Gosling in *Crazy, Stupid, Love...* We almost have sex, but we do not have sex. Although there’s one in the future, again with Ryan, where we’ve had sex, but it’s right after, so it’s never really like we do it in the end.”

She goes out with Andrew Garfield and she gets to nearly have sex with Ryan Gosling! When she gets a script and discovers who she’ll be acting alongside, does she ever think, “Yes! I get to hang out with this person for the next six months and kiss their face...” “And kiss their face off! And hope that things don’t get crazy!” she finishes for me.

Another perk of the job must be the free clothes she’s surely sent. But Stone insists

that any admiration for her style should be directed towards her stylist, and that fashion is something she’s still learning about. “It’s something that I have been more exposed to in the past year, so I finally have a deeper understanding and appreciation of it,” she says, before stressing that she is completely illiterate when it comes to dressing up.

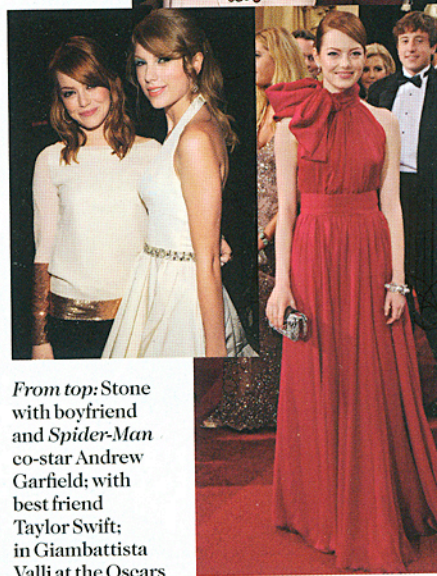
Weeks later, however, I bump into Stone at the Met Gala in New York. She is deep in conversation with Justin Timberlake, but still has time to say hi and introduce me to him (which my 16-year-old self is really, *really* happy about – she definitely is the best school pal I never had). Looking dazzling in a custom-made red Lanvin frock, with Alber Elbaz standing off to the side proudly admiring his creation, the flashbulbs fire at Stone as she poses ready for tomorrow’s best-dressed lists. “I’ll go wherever Alber goes!” she says when I ask about her party plans that night.

Watching her, I am reminded of a chat we had over the oysters, when she was describing what she loves about Elbaz: “He’s fantastic. And he wants to *hide*. Did you read that thing where he says he wants to blend into the background? He doesn’t want to be the icon at all, he wants to make things for women so that they can shine.”

Stone is set to become wildly famous, possibly an icon, herself. Does she worry about the ramifications of becoming a household name? Does she want to hide? “I worry about my fame making New York unlivable,” she says. “That would be... To not walk around would be awful. I don’t think that that would ever actually happen. Like, that it will ever be to the point where I can’t go anywhere. But that idea makes me physically ill.”

How famous Emma Stone is about to become is no laughing matter.

“The Amazing Spider-Man” is out now



From top: Stone with boyfriend and *Spider-Man* co-star Andrew Garfield; with best friend Taylor Swift; in Giambattista Valli at the Oscars