



On Her Way

HAILING FROM GENEVA, MAYA STOJAN IS ON THE VERGE OF HOLLYWOOD SUCCESS. By Elisa Tubecki

Maya has just returned from dinner with friends at Girasole, a little hole in the wall Italian restaurant in LA. It's around 11pm on America's West Coast and despite having a call back for a feature film tomorrow, she is still happy to do the interview.

We have actually missed each other a few times and I'm conducting the interview in my car with my mobile and tape recorder hoping that any background traffic won't

interfere with the sound. It's six o'clock Melbourne time and I'm on my way to an appointment, not to mention Maya's schedule is all over the place with auditions, filming, agent and manager meetings, and attending classes.

It has been a relaxing Sunday for Maya of breakfast in bed, watching *The Book of Eli*, and doing some cooking ("I made a delicious apple strudel if I do say so myself.") But, while laughing, she admits she usually doesn't do much cooking because of the amazing variety of food in California.

Maya's warm personality is refreshing compared to the usually reserved attitude of many actresses, maybe because she is on the brink of being a star. Most of us would have already seen her on US Fight Zone TV for Fox Sports Net interviewing the world's best UFC fighters.

IN FOCUS

"I really fell into it by accident, I was working on a short film last summer and the director Karl Nickoley was already working with Fight Zone. He basically pitched me as he must have thought I would be good with people, and it wasn't long before I was working with them," says Maya.

she was 13. Once at Hartford, she was immediately accepted into the college team, but it was in her second year that her golf coach and the Dean of the acting department confronted her with a decision – acting or golf. "It was pretty tough because golf was always such a stable part of my life, we would play as

had the experience and talent to take it to the next level. And he was right. It wasn't long before Maya was securing roles in film and on stage, the hosting gig on Fight Zone, and more recently *Entourage*. However despite this success and having a good understanding of the industry, it still caught her off guard.



... Maya Stojan with Forest Griffin

A longtime fan of mixed martial arts and a pedigree in hosting (her uncle, George Alagiah, is an interviewer for BBC world) she never thought of going down this path as she was so focused on acting. It has actually been a blessing in disguise that has only complemented her chosen career.

Yet, despite being the tender age of 24, Maya has already faced some tough professional decisions. Born in Geneva, she moved to the US to study acting at the Hartt School in Connecticut when she was still a teenager. Also a very talented golfer, Maya was recruited to the Swiss national team when

a family and giving that up was very, very difficult. I had to make the decision and I knew I wanted to make a living as an actress not as a golfer," she explains.

After finishing school on the East Coast she moved straight to LA – she didn't want to get side tracked passing through Geneva as LA "is the heart of the industry." Maya immediately began working on student films, music videos and doing extra work that allowed her to join the Screen Actors Guild and Aftra.

Before long Maya had found a manager who firmly told her to stop doing student films, as she

"I'm not surprised that it's tough, but I definitely didn't think it would be this hard. I was in college for four years and it just doesn't prepare you for the real world. But I am a hustler, I hustle everyday. I put the ball in my court; I don't just rely on luck. I definitely work at my talent and craft every day. I keep in touch with my agent and managers, and email casting directors as much as I can to see if there is anything I'm right to audition for," she explains.

Maya has just been put on hold for a role on *Grey's Anatomy* and has numerous auditions this week. She has also been doing



::: Maya Stojan with Joe Stevenson and Greg Jackson

voice over work for a cartoon webisode *LivWorld* for the past year. However, her main focus is a film titled *Elwood* where she will be opposite amazing actors such as Ron Perlman and James Russo.

It's a tough business and therefore to constantly keep her in touch with the industry she has also formed LouMay Productions with her Australian partner actor and director, Louis Mandylor. They have already invested in the film *Sinners and Saints* and have a few more projects in development.

"I was always interested in producing and I knew it would be beneficial to my acting career. Louis has great experience in the industry and has so many great connections. All the pieces of the puzzle kind of fit together and we've got some fantastic people working for us," she says.

Keeping a foot in all aspects of the industry is an intelligent

move and one that can only assist Maya in establishing a credible career.

"There are so many challenges and the first is just to be a working actress. It's not easy to get an audition to begin with and it's pretty much an odds game. It's going to be an ongoing challenge for the rest of my life or my acting career at least because nothing is predictable."

However, the challenges make Maya more determined to succeed and land that amazing role.

"My aim is to get a show on TV and also land a great role in a feature film – these are any actors dream really. But mainly I want to just keep doing what I love which is being on set, being able to portray a character other than myself and constantly learning."



::: Maya Stojan with Entourage's Adrian Grenier

