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Lucy Hale
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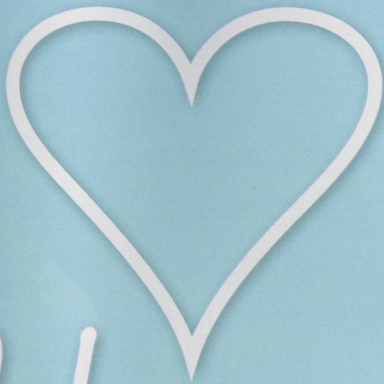
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We Love Lucy



With thousands of girls starting out in Hollywood every year, how did this *Pretty Little Liars* star rise to the top? Chalk it up to a truly rare mix of talent, enthusiasm, and hard-won confidence.

By Caroline Ryder

Right now, Lucy Hale is arguably one of the hottest young actresses in Hollywood. Proof: Her character, Aria, is the fan favorite on *Pretty Little Liars*, the ABC Family drama that is the number one, scripted-cable show, pulling in an average of 3.2 million viewers each week.

It's so popular that social-media agencies reported that the season two finale was the most tweeted about television episode in the history of Twitter. Movie blogs have been buzzing with people saying that the 23-year-old would make the perfect Anastasia Steele in the *Fifty Shades of Grey* movie. And news recently broke that the starlet signed a record deal with a major label and will release an album next year.

Considering that there are thousands of actresses currently

trying to make it in Los Angeles, it's damn impressive that Lucy has gone from virtually unknown to a respected leading lady in just a few short years.


So what is it that makes her so special? Sure, the doe-eyed brunette is gorgeous, and she can obviously act. But sitting down with her at a rooftop restaurant in Beverly Hills, you can instantly tell there's more to her than just that. For starters, she's ambitious but in a way that comes across as purely enthusiastic rather than cocky.

"I have no limits. I want to try everything," she says, adjusting the studded leather bracelet she's wearing. "I'm excited for people to see my different sides, because I know I am capable of so much and I want to show the world." Clearly, this is our kind of girl.

MAKING HER DREAMS HAPPEN

Not always so confident, Lucy admits she struggled with body-image issues when first starting out. She moved from Tennessee to California when she was 15, with dreams of becoming an actress. Shortly after arriving with her mom, Lucy's career took off. She landed auditions and scored roles on shows like *Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide*, *The O.C.*, *Wizards of Waverly Place*, and *How I Met Your Mother*. But behind the scenes, Lucy

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATT JONES

A woman with dark hair styled up, wearing a pink long-sleeved top with a colorful sequined front panel and white shorts, is leaning on a light blue kitchen counter. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows a kitchen with white appliances, including a stove with a white colander on top and a refrigerator. A small white sign is attached to the refrigerator door.

If Cosmo
had a cooking
show...

"I'm excited for
people to see my
different sides....
I know I'm capable
of so much."

THE COSMO QUIZ

Name: Lucy Hale
 Nickname: Luc, Goose

I'm totally addicted to:
coffee, hummus, my dogs, country music

My favorite part of my body is:
 a. My butt I'm petite, but I've got a bum!
 b. My boobs.
 c. My abs.
 d. My legs.
 e. Other eyebrows



She doesn't mind a six-pack.

I think it's sexy when a guy:
 a. Has a chiseled body.
 b. Is really close to his mom.
 c. Is a great dancer.
 d. Plays guitar.
 e. Can cook.
 f. Other: is driven and has goals.

← a little of this too ;)

A deal breaker for me is when a guy:
can't laugh at himself, he has to be willing to make fun of himself a little.

When I want to feel sexy, I put on:
a little black dress

My biggest guilty pleasure is:
 a. Reality TV. Toddlers & Tiaras !!!
 b. Chocolate.
 c. Trashy romance novels.
 d. Other: online shopping.

Ravishing on the red carpet



The best way to get over a breakup is:
staying busy, go outdoors, out with friends... but being willing to accept being sad. That way you can move on.
Breakups suck.

In a relationship, I usually:
 a. Wear the pants.
 b. Am the more emotional one.
 c. Can't get enough PDA. control freak
 d. Make all the plans.
 e. Overanalyze everything.
 f. Other: can't stop talking about the person, texting them, instagramming pics ;)



An onscreen smooch with one of these guys? Sexy.

I wouldn't mind filming an onscreen kissing scene with:
 a. Ryan Gosling.
 b. Robert Pattinson.
 c. Channing Tatum.
 d. Leonardo DiCaprio.
 e. Other: smiley face

I wish I could be more: relaxed at times I have a lot of anxiety.

I definitely don't get enough:
 a. Sleep.
 b. Privacy.
 c. Time with friends.
 d. Vacations.
 e. Other: Time with my family

always I sometimes get mistaken for:
selena gomez.

Yup, we see the resemblance.

My ideal date would be:
sushi & a concert.

The start to a great date night

You know a guy is perfect for you when:
he sees you before bed w/ sweats & zit picks on and still thinks you're beautiful.



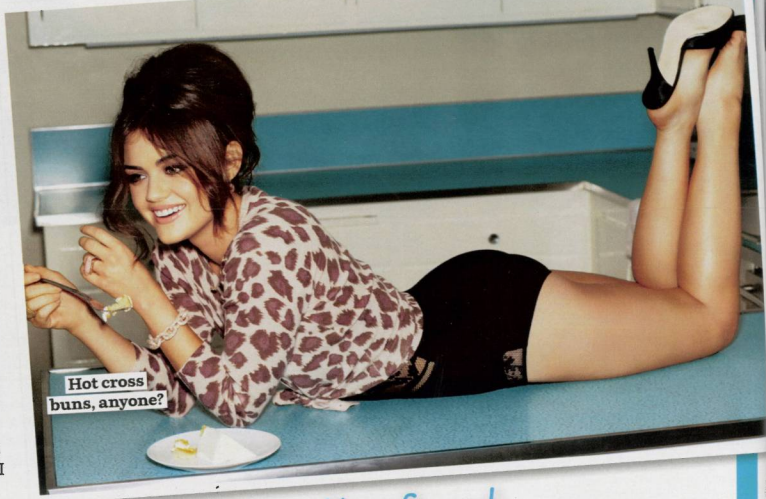
developed a dangerous habit all too common among starlets. "I've never really talked about this, but I would go days without eating. Or maybe I'd have some fruit and then go to the gym for three hours. I knew I had a problem," Lucy says of the issue that plagued her for two years. Luckily, unlike some actresses who have been unable to escape the downward slide, Lucy had the strength to turn herself around. "It was a gradual process, but I changed myself," she says.

In order to make that change, she had to get a handle on the criticism she would have to endure as an actress. "I realized you can't listen to the positive or negative things people say," she says. "You just have to follow your own track." And when it comes to friends, she says she's made a decision to be more selective. "I have been weeding out those who don't better me," she says. "Life is too short to surround yourself with people who don't make you happy."

Her strength and positivity were no doubt part of what helped Lucy score the gig that would turn her into an A-lister. She was cast as one of the lead characters on the CW's *Privileged* in 2008. Although the show was canceled after one season, producers noted Lucy's talent and magnetic personality and wanted to work with her again...right away. "They had a new script called *Pretty Little Liars* and asked if I'd be in it," she recalls. Lucy agreed; the show became an instant hit.

"There's something about her that draws you in," says Ian Harding, one of her costars on *PLL*. "She's beautiful, but she is also funny and throws herself into everything."

The next thing she plans to throw herself into? Singing. This past spring, she signed with



"I finally feel fully confident."

Hollywood Records—a label that reps many other successful actress/singers, including Miley Cyrus, Demi Lovato, and Selena Gomez—and is due to release her first album next year. "Growing up, all I wanted to do was sing," she says. "It's going to be fun going back to do that."

HER NUMBER ONE LOVE NEED

As driven as she is, Lucy isn't the type to put romance on the back burner while she focuses on her career. She met her boyfriend, 27-year-old actor Chris Zylka (*The Amazing Spider-Man*), through their...wait for it...hairstresser. The attraction was instant. "I was like 'Holy crap, you're gorgeous!'" she remembers. They made an even deeper connection when they attended the same New Year's party this past year. "It was like no one else was there. We couldn't stop talking," she says. The two have been a couple ever since.

Lucy swears their secret to happiness is trust. "Once you lose it, I don't think you can ever get it back. Ever," she stresses. "That's what a relationship is, trust and honesty. Once it's broken, what are you left with?" She says she has come across couples in Hollywood who have open relationships and can't understand it. "To each their own, but to me, love is something that should be shared between two people."

While she's heating up things with Chris offscreen, this season of *Pretty Little Liars* may be the hottest so far, with a new batch of illicit affairs and intense friend drama.

Given her rising stardom and burgeoning music career, you can't help but wonder how much longer she'll play Aria before moving on to bigger projects. Whatever may happen, Lucy has already achieved a level of maturity and sense of self she can be proud of. "I'm happy with who I am," she says. "It's all about understanding who you are and what you have to offer, and I finally feel like I'm fully confident." ■