



Girl with a car (and a career)
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Rev your engine. Drop the clutch. After more than 50 film and television roles, Emmanuelle Vaugier is heading full throttle to green screen mega stardom

Although she hasn't played at the film level of a Tennessee Williams script yet, Vancouver actor Emmanuelle Vaugier gives us both realism and magic in her break-out electronic game role as Nikki, in this season's block-buster *Need for Speed: Carbon*. The magic lies in the interactive world that was created from space – green space. Vaugier read 60 pages of dialogue (an average film script) and spent two weeks filming the action on a “green screen,” an imaginary world of green backdrop, props and markers in a South Vancouver warehouse. Her actual voice and likeness were dubbed in later during the animation process.

The striking 26-year-old, who dazzled 'readers' with her image on the cover of *Maxim* this year as one of the world's sexiest women, has been compared to that of Angelina Jolie. She was a natural choice for Nikki, the gamer's girlfriend and guide through the latest version of Electronic Arts' virtual street racing series. Not just because she's every gamer's visual ideal, she also has a high recognition factor among the gaming demographic. Emmanuelle Vaugier cut her acting teeth in the sci-fi and horror genre. Her most recent film credits include *Saw II*, the number one box office hit released by Lion's Gate.

The year 2006 has been a pivotal one for Vaugier's film and television career. After a decade of paying her dues as a working actor this season, she landed a part in one of the most successful drama series on TV. The Los Angeles producers of the international crime show success story *CSI* picked up Vaugier for the new New York version. As Detective Jennifer Angell on *CSI: NY*, Vaugier is the envy of the local acting community. The lucky hit came within months of her recurring role last season as the love interest of Charlie Sheen on the top-rated sitcom *Two and Half Men*.

VLM's Darren Parkman does the honours and interviews one of Canada's busiest young actors.

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The offers may be plentiful today, but Emmanuelle Vaugier says it's been a long road. Like many up-and-comers, she spent years honing her craft with smaller parts here in Vancouver on series like *Andromeda*, *The Outer Limits*, *Highlander* and *Smallville*. She says paying her dues eventually paid off.

“This was my training ground for making it to L.A., because I learned so much working here. There's a lot of talent in Vancouver, but many times a series is already cast before it gets here, so you're relegated to smaller parts and guest roles. I was happy to do it.”

Vaugier says although Vancouver's film industry is world-class, it was long before she realized to become a real success she'd have to leave Hollywood North, for the real thing.

“I really believe to get to the next level you have to leave Vancouver. I think you can only achieve so much here, and the opportunities to get ahead are more abundant in L.A. You can do well here, and build up your resume, but you have to take the next step.”

Today Vaugier lives pretty much full time in L.A., where a lot of her work is, but she still keeps a residence in Vancouver that she occupies only “very occasionally.” The McGee High School grad grew up in a French-speaking household here, and says it's always nice to come back to visit her mom. But, in spite of a lot of great memories, Vaugier admits she really only misses her hometown a little bit.

“The rain is a constant reminder of why I don't miss it here that much, to be honest. There's nowhere more beautiful in the world than Vancouver... when it's sunny! {laughs}. That's why I tend to be here a fair bit in the summer, but work can bring me home any time of the year.”

That's just what's happened again, with her latest role in the comedy *Blonde and Blonder* opposite Denise Richards and fellow British Columbian Pamela Anderson. The movie has been on location in Greater Vancouver this fall.

“It's basically *Dumb and Dumber* but with two bumbling blondes. They're not very bright in this movie, but they're funny together and fun to work with.”

How has all this success changed things for Emmanuelle? She says it's opened up a whole new world for her.

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In a business where fame can be fleeting, Vaugier says she doesn't believe in the concept of overnight success. Her best advice to up-and-coming Vancouver actors - keep a good head on your shoulders.

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Story: Darren Parkman

Sidebar: Elizabeth Pennington

Photography: Evaan Kheraj

Make-up: Lynee Denomme

Location The BMW Store, Vancouver

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