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NYP Tempo is a lifestyle and entertainment feature published Wednesdays inside the NY Post. NYP Tempo brings you the inside scoop on Latino New York: the people, neighborhoods, places, and hottest restaurants, clubs and trends in the city.

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Hayek and mighty

Salma lights up the big screen again in moving new romance

By **JOE CUNNINGHAM**

WHEN Salma Hayek was feeling a little nervous about shooting a nude scene for her new movie, "Ask the Dust," her co-star, Colin Farrell, took it upon himself to break the tension.

"He ran out of the trailer completely naked. We all screamed and then we started laughing," she recalls. "It was such a shock. He made such a fool of himself, he was running around, but it took the stigma out of it somehow."

The petite, 39-year-old knockout says she wasn't sure what to expect from Farrell, but the bad-boy actor was a perfect gentleman on the set.

"While we were doing [the nude scenes], his eyes never left mine. He never looked down once. Sometimes I'm dressed and I have conversations with people and their eyes wander," she laughs.

In the movie, Hayek plays Camilla, a Mexican waitress who gets entangled with an Italian American writer, Arturo Bandini, played by Farrell.

The movie is set in Depression-era Los Angeles, and examines the race and class divides of that time and place.

Camilla's lone ambition (and somewhat questionable goal) is to marry a white man so that her children might have a shot at a better life, while Bandini, himself emotionally wounded by anti-Italian prejudice during his youth, is



Salma truly sinks her teeth into the role of the tragic and beautiful Camilla in "Ask the Dust."

Mary Ellen Matthews/Celebrity Pix/Corbis Outline

determined to write the great American novel and marry a beautiful blonde.

Hayek, who is of Mexican and Lebanese descent, says that, though she's had to deal with some intolerance in her life and career, those experiences didn't really serve as inspirations for this particular character.

"I have encountered some of that, but I don't think you can compare it to a time when Mexicans didn't even have human rights,"

she says. "Sometimes, I use my personal experiences when I play a character, but I didn't really do that so much with Camilla."

Hayek, who has repeatedly taken roles in movies with Latin themes, believes much improvement has been made in recent years in giving Latinos a voice in cinema.

"When I first started out, there was nothing like that. People laughed at me whenever I said that I wanted to be an actress over here," she says.

And Hayek says she feels especially fortunate to have been offered the chance to play such a complex and juicy female lead.

"I created one for myself [in 2002's "Frida," for which she received a Best Actress Oscar nomination]. But, really, other than that, it's the first role like this that's come my way."

"Ask the Dust" opens nationwide March 17.

Sweet and 'Lopez'

George's sitcom wife, Constance Marie, is riding high

By **MERCEDES SANCHEZ**

PLAYING a wife, mother and entrepreneur in today's only English-language major network Latino sitcom, "The George Lopez Show," is not just another acting gig for Constance Marie — it's her way of educating America about today's Latino families.

"We're not all recent immigrants and that's what we're used to seeing in shows. I guess we are helping America find the middle-class Latino," says Marie. "We try to write well-rounded characters and not... sell out the integrity of the characters just to be funny."

The Los Angeles born-and-raised 37-year-old plays

Angie Lopez — wife of George Lopez's character and mother of two. At the show's start, Angie was a stay-at-home mom, but now she runs her own wedding-planning business.

This month, the show celebrates its 100th episode. Marie and the cast hope to get another deal for a fifth season. To mark the occasion, Mexican American sweetheart Eva Longoria guest-stars, playing an obnoxious bridezilla and client of Angie's.

Marie is a veteran of Hollywood, having appeared on the big and small screens, including "Selena" and the PBS series "American Family." She confesses that there's one thing not many people

know about her: After not being able to memorize lines or express herself, she failed drama class in high school.

Next up for Marie is a role in Mekhi Phifer's buddy comedy and directorial debut, "Puff Puff Pass." The film tells the story of two friends who realize they're getting too old to party and check into rehab. Marie plays the manager of the center. The film co-stars Danny Masterson and comedian Darrell Hammond.

After appearing on Martha Stewart's daytime show, where she and the Domestic Diva prepared a meal together, the vegetarian confessed to The Post that she doesn't even cook.

She has a two-dish reper-

toire: pasta and tofu turkey. Her Irish fiancée, a yoga coach for the L.A. Clippers, does most of the cooking.

"I am such a big fan of Martha's, and I know she's a big fan of yoga — that's just somewhat of a connection that we have. I wanted to be on the show, and she had a spot available when I was in New York," says Marie. "One of the great things about Martha is that she's a survivor. Cooking, creating the magazines and shows, going to jail — nothing stops her."

And you can safely say the same about Marie.

The George Lopez Show airs Wednesdays at 8 p.m. on ABC. The 100th episode airs March 29.



Marion Curtis/Startraks Photo

Constance Marie helps make the "Lopez Show" a hit.