

Matthew Rhys

ACTOR

Interview by TIFFANY BAKKER

You and Keri Russell didn't just co-star on TV show *The Americans* for seven years – you also fell in love and became partners. What was that like?

I think we were fortunate because we worked well together, like our characters on screen. There were days I'm sure I drove her up the wall, but I thought we worked incredibly well as a team in that we have the same goals, appreciate the same things and love the same elements of the show. It was just this incredible teamwork to do the best we could; it was a very special moment in time.

What are the positives of being in a relationship with another actor?

The obvious thing is that they understand the job you do. They understand that you have to... I was going to say go away, but it doesn't look like that will be happening anytime soon. Keri wishes I would go away [laughs]. She's like, "Aren't you shooting somewhere?" And I'm like, "Um, no dear." They also understand the harder elements of what it is you do. But in the same vein, they're also human and know you've got to film sex scenes and do those things, and it's not easy in a relationship. But I think the understanding of it outweighs the negative, because you also know what goes into doing those scenes, so it's not a complete mystery to you.

You and Keri have three children [their son, Sam, is four; River, 13, and Willa, 8, are Russell's children from her previous marriage]. How have the



"Keri and I spent 20 hours a day arguing over a scene, so we're used to being together"

past few months in lockdown been for the family? Well, how are we all doing, really? Your kneejerk reaction is to go, "Great! I'm great! Fine, fine!" In all sincerity, we are very lucky, because we've been isolating up in the Catskills [in upstate New York]. Homeschooling has been a challenge. I realise I have no

patience. Oh my God, it's an exercise in imagination and how you can continue to find ways to entertain them. But on *The Americans*, Keri and I spent 20 hours a day together arguing over a scene, so we're used to being together [laughs]. **You star as the titular character in a new reboot of the classic TV series**

Perry Mason. What are your memories of the original show? I knew it was a big show that was always on. You knew he was a lawyer. You had a vague recollection of people confessing on the stand. And that was about it. But [it's] like yeah, he's a bit of a do-gooder, isn't he?

Initially, though, you weren't going to take the role. My agent said, "I need to talk to you about this remake of *Perry Mason*," and I thought, "Oh God, who would remake *Perry Mason*? That sounds like a terrible idea." But [then I discovered] it wasn't going to be a remake, really. And the era really appealed to me – you know, 1930s Los Angeles during the Depression.

Which co-stars, besides Keri of course, have made the most impact on you?

I would say Sally Field [*Brothers & Sisters*] and Tom Hanks [*A Beautiful Day In The Neighborhood*]. Both are double Oscar winners, and you understand why. They come at the job with the exact same attitude. When I worked with them [I realised], "Oh, that's the level of work I have to put in." I mean, I knew it, but to see it up close is something. Their natural talent is enormous, but their work ethic is of an equal par. Sally gives 110 per cent and expects everyone else to do the same. She is very nice about letting you know you're being slack [laughs]. It makes you want to up your game.

And is Tom Hanks really the nicest man in the world? He really is. He's aware of the effect he has on people. You see it when he walks on set – people are star-struck. I think it takes an inordinate amount of energy to put everyone at ease in order for everyone to perform at their best. He must be exhausted, because he's forever making sure everyone is OK.

To me, it just sounds bloody exhausting. But I don't have two Oscars. ★ *Perry Mason* airs at 11am and 8.30pm every Monday on Fox Showcase.

ON THE COVER: PHOTOGRAPHY: STEVEN CHEE; STYLING: KELLY HUME; HAIR: JULIANNE MCGUIGAN USING ORIBE; MAKE-UP: NAOMI MCFADDEN USING M.A.C COSMETICS; NATALIE BARR WEARS: VELANI DRESS; VELANI.COM.AU; RELIQUA EARRINGS: RELIQUACOLLECTIVE.COM; DAVID YURMAN BRACELET: FAIRFAXANDROBERTS.COM.AU; BUNDA BRACELET: BUNDA.COM.AU; HER OWN RING. THIS PAGE: PHOTOGRAPHY: HBO/GAVIN BOND; CHARLES DENNINGTON; STYLING: JILLIAN DAVISON; MAKE UP: VICTORIA BARON; HAIR: ALAN WHITE



"I don't think I'm naughty; I'm glad you think I am, because I've always wanted to be naughty"

CARLA ZAMPATTI HAS A CANDID CHAT WITH FRIEND CAMILLA FRANKS, PAGE 08

stellar

- 03 (reverse flip) David Campbell
- 03 Matthew Rhys 04 Natalie Barr
- 08 Carla Zampatti & Camilla Franks
- 10 Tatiana Grigorieva 12 Style
- 13 How I make it work
- 14 Homes 15 Travel

BODY^{soil}

- 04 Q&A with Rachel Khoo
- 04 Public relations
- 05 Advice 06 Post-iso beauty
- 08 Wellness 10 Beauty
- 12 Treatment 13 Stars
- 14 Nutrition

delicious. ON SUNDAY

- 16 Herbal remedy 18 Matt Preston

★ ARE YOU FOLLOWING US? STELLARMAG.COM.AU FACEBOOK STELLARMAG INSTAGRAM STELLARMAG TWITTER STELLARMAGAU ★