



CARRIE PRESTON

With her bubbly persona and drive to perform, **CARRIE PRESTON** has landed roles in everything from stage to the big screen to a starring role as Arlene Fowler, the red-headed sassy waitress in the Golden Globe nominated HBO series **TRUE BLOOD**. Preston's breakout Outer Critics Award nominated turn as "Miranda" in George C. Woolf's Broadway production of Shakespeare's **THE TEMPEST** with Patrick Stewart, led to roles in major television series such as **LOST** and **DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES** along with scene-stealing turns in **DUPLICITY** with Julia Roberts and Clive Owen; Woody Allen's **VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA**; the Oscar nominated **TRANSAMERICA**, playing Felicity Huffman's sister; Alan Ball's **TOWELHEAD** opposite Aaron Eckhart, the Daisy 3 Pictures' (her production company) film **READY? OK!**, and the critically acclaimed independent film, **THAT EVENING SUN**, with Hal Holbrook, which just completed its theatrical run.

Born and raised in Macon, Georgia, where her mother was an artist and art therapist while her dad was a geo-technical engineer, a young Carrie Preston discovered her true calling in life lay in performing arts. At the age of 12, she became the impresario of her own front-yard theater company as producer, writer, casting director, costumer, director – and of course, actress. Preston later obtained a BFA from the University of Evansville followed with an acting diploma from the prestigious Juilliard School.

Carrie made an auspicious big screen debut as one of the two sexy, Southern bridesmaid sisters in the Julia Robert's blockbuster **MY BEST FRIEND'S WEDDING**. Some other film credits include playing the 50's housewife Sally, struggling with her Rock Hudson-esque husband in **STRAIGHT-JACKET**; playing the lead in the indie festival hit **LOVELY BY SURPRISE**; **MERCURY RISING** with Bruce Willis ; **FOR RICHER OR POORER** with Tim Allen and Kirstie Alley; **GUINEVERE** with Stephen Rea and Sarah Polley; **WOMAN WANTED** with Holly Hunter and Keifer Sutherland; **STEPFORD WIVES** with Nicole Kidman; and Robert Redford's **THE LEGEND OF BAGGER VANCE**.

On television, she was a series regular on the sitcom **EMERIL**, starring the chef Emeril Lagasse. Guest appearances include Felicity Huffman's sister (again) on **DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES**; **PRIVATE PRACTICE**; **LOST**; **NUMBERS**; **THE INSIDE**; the series finale of **ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT**; **WONDER FALLS**; playing two killers and one victim on **LAW AND ORDER: CRIMINAL INTENT**; **SEX AND THE CITY** with Sarah Jessica Parker; **SPIN CITY**, with Michael J. Fox; **UNION SQUARE**; **SIGNIFICANT OTHERS**; and **TRINITY**.

A crucial role playing “Ophelia” in *HAMLET* 15 years ago at the Alabama Shakespeare Festival is where Carrie met her husband, Emmy Award winning Michael Emerson, who was playing Guildenstern in the production. Since then, the two have both starred in the movies **STRAIGHT JACKET**, **GRACE & GLORIE**, and **THE JOURNEY**. Keeping it in the family, Carrie played Michael’s mother in a flashback on his hit series **LOST**. Michael also had a role in the film **29TH AND GAY**, which Preston produced and directed.



Other theater credits include: **Broadway:** *FESTEN* with Jeremy Sisto and Julianna Margulies and *THE RIVALS* with Brian Murray and Emily Bergl. **Off-Broadway:** *ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA* at the Public Theater (cross dressing as Octavius Caesar to Vanessa Redgrave’s Cleopatra) *CYCLING PAST THE MATTERHORN* with Shirley Knight ; John Guare’s *CHAUCER IN ROME*, with Jon Tenney (Lincoln Center) *BOYS AND GIRLS* with Malcolm Gets and *FREEDOMLAND* (Playwrights Horizons); the stage version of *STRAIGHT-JACKET* (Playhouse 91); *THE LIBERTINE* (Theatre Row). She has performed regionally at theaters such as The Guthrie, where she played “Honey” opposite Patrick Stewart and Mercedes Ruehl in *WHO’S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?*; Williamstown, where she played opposite Bebe Neuwirth and Roger Rees in *TAMING OF THE SHREW*; Baltimore Center Stage, where she originated the lead role in Warren Leight’s *NO FOREIGNERS BEYOND THIS POINT*; The Long Wharf, where she played Mia Farrow’s daughter in James Lapine’s *FRAN’S BED*; and the McCarter theater’s acclaimed production of *HAMLET*, acting with her husband Michael Emerson. She has also performed in countless Shakespeare plays in festivals in Georgia, Alabama, Utah and California.

Carrie is also a director and producer with her production company, Daisy 3 Pictures. Her directorial debut was the feature film **29th AND GAY**, written by and starring James Vasquez, which was released on DVD by TLA Releasing. She also directed the short film **FEET OF CLAY** by David Caudle, which made the festival rounds. James Vasquez’s **READY? OK!**, which she starred in and executive produced, played more than 50 festivals, both domestic and international. Carrie won Best Actress at Film Out San Diego, where the film had its world premiere. **READY? OK!** was released on DVD by Wolfe video and recently made its cable TV debut on Logo. Both feature films are available at Netflix, on iTunes, on Amazon and at local video stores.

Always up for the next challenge, Preston is currently shooting the third season of the highly rated **TRUE BLOOD**, the HBO series from creator Alan Ball (mastermind of “Six Feet Under”), alongside an international multi/culti ensemble of actors, including Stephen Moyer and Anna Paquin. She also just completed two episodes of **THE GOOD WIFE**, playing Chris Noth’s new lawyer. Preston can be next seen on the big screen starring opposite Jennifer Connelly and Ed Harris in Dustin Lance Black’s **WHAT’S WRONG WITH VIRGINIA?** Also on the horizon is her harrowing turn as a struggling single Mom in **A BAG OF HAMMERS**, with Rebecca Hall and Jason Ritter. Carrie is also busy preparing to direct her next feature film, **THAT’S WHAT SHE SAID**, written by Kellie Overbey. She will produce the film with Emmy and Golden Globe winning producer Lucy Barzun Donnelly (**GREY GARDENS**), and it is slated to start production in NYC in the fall.

Carrie and Michael travel back and forth between Los Angeles and New York with their dog, Chumley.

CURRENT PROJECT

True Blood

Arlene Fowler



Divorced with kids at home, Arlene is pushing into her forties and is in complete denial about it. Her last boyfriend, Rene Lenier, turned out to be a crazed serial killer, which hasn't helped her odds of finding a father for her children while hustling burgers to the crowd at Merlotte's.

Production Stills



PRESS





Pink dress: *Angela Jones*
Pink necklace: *WhitcombDesign.com*



Denim jacket: *Calvin Klein*
Dress: *WhitcombDesign.com*
Black shoes: *WhitcombDesign.com*



Dress: *GC by Oleg Cassini*
Shoes: *Inspired by Herve Leger*
Beard: *WhitcombDesign.com*

Vampire shows are this decade's hospital drama. Do you feel like *True Blood* is the steps "ER" for the genre?

I never considered that before, but I guess we could be considered the "ER" of the vampire shows, with a heck of a lot more blood, sex and profanity! We started the new trend on TV, and I guess imitation is the best form of flattery. But I sure hope all of these other vampire shows don't wear the audience down so much that they don't want to watch any of the shows. I hope people keep looking to "True Blood" as the Mother of all vampire shows.

Love the new look! Although comedy has always been your comfort zone, how does your new hair color push you to being comical, yet sexy and edgy?

I love doing comedy, but I've done my share of drama as well. I don't know if the red hair will impact what kind of material I do, but I do think it gives me a more distinctive look than I've had before. Recently, I did two episodes of "The Good Wife" with the new red hair and the character could not be more different from Ariana on "True Blood". My character, Eubank (The Good Wife), is a strong, distinctive, slightly quirky mid-western lawyer. And I was pleased that the red hair really helped set her apart from any other characters on the show. Both Ariana and Eubank definitely served up some comedy on each of the shows, but they also possess some gravitas as well.

You're naturally a blonde, why the change to red? Is it to project a sexier yet professional look?

I was hoping the red would start to command the dots for despite a little more. I had been traveling around insights for so long, since every character I play looks totally different than the one before. The transformation one gets to do as an actor is part of the reason I love what I do. But I wanted to see what it felt like to bridge the gap a little bit. And after I did it, I realized that having red hair in real life also made me feel edgy, strong, yes, maybe a little sexier, more like I feel on the inside, really. And it is a bonus that now, when I go to "True Blood" related events (or even just going on set), I don't have to introduce myself to everyone and explain that I play Ariana!

***True Blood* has an enormous fan base, which HBO has of canceling once everyone likes them. Should we be nervous?**

Since "True Blood" is supposedly HBO's biggest hit since the " Sopranos", I'm hoping they will want us around for a while. Of course, nothing to ever define in this business, but I think the ratings must help!

Just like characters, fashion seems evolves the more you learn about yourself. What's different now, then when you started your career? Could you have previously pulled off the looks you have now?

I've always been interested in clothes and fashion. I'm one of those people who like to experiment with styles. One day I'll be in a sexy dress and the next day I'll dress like a teenage boy. It depends on my mood. But lately, it has been fun working with stylists and exploring different kinds of red carpet looks or doing interesting photo shoots. It's very much like acting; you're just playing another character when you dress up like that. Back when I first started, I was a theater kid, so I was really concerned with my costumes on stage. Now, it's fun to costume myself off-stage too!

What *Angela* has made a name for itself as wearable luxury, or every girl's dream. Are they yours? What does wearing shoes of this quality and luxury level do for the confidence in the outfit you are wearing?

In acting, I think shoes are really important when you're creating a character because they are what literally grounds you. And I think that's true in real life as well. A great pair of shoes can make an entire look come together and make you feel comfortable, grounded, confident and sexy. What *Angela* shoes definitely do that and there's a pair for every "character" you want to play in your life.

You are everywhere. What future projects can we look forward to?

I am in two movies that are coming out in the festival circuit very soon. One is called "What's Wrong with Virginia" written/directed by Dustin Lance Black ("Milk") and also starring Jennifer Connelly and Ed Harris. The other is "A Bag of Marbles", written/directed by Brian Cokor and also starring Rebecca Hall and Jason Ritter. I am also working on finalizing the funding for a film I'm directing in NYC in September. It's a comedy called "That's What She Said", written by Katie Couric. In the meantime you can catch me on HBO's *True Blood*, Sundays at 10pm.



TEEN MOM'S FARRAH
**MY PAINFUL
 LESSON**



TRUE BLOOD

**INSIDE THEIR
 SECRET
 WEDDING**

After a steamy on-set romance
ANNA and STEPHEN say 'I do.'
 Her two gowns, their celeb guests



KHLOÉ & LAMAR
**Our Untold
 Love Story**

**ALL THE
 DETAILS &
 PHOTOS**



**Rutina Wesley
 & Jacob Fishel**

Wesley (who plays Sookie's feisty BFF, Tara) and the fellow Juilliard alum have been married since graduating from the acting program in 2005. "We thought, if we could spend years together at this crazy school, then we can make it the rest of our lives," the 31-year-old Las Vegas native once gushed. "He's an amazing actor, cook and husband."



**Carrie Preston
 & Michael Emerson**

Preston, 43, tells Us "it was a big trial" being apart from Emerson, 55, while he filmed *Lost* in Hawaii for five of their 12 years of marriage. The pair, who met performing *Hamlet* in Alabama in 1994, learned that the key to a healthy relationship is "finding the time to see each other, even when you feel like you don't have it," she says.

RACHEL FALLA/ABRAHAMSON

With thanks to Rebecca Berman, Michael Berman, Stuart Sussman



TRUE BLOOD

True Blood Star Debates Hit Show's Hottest Guys

June 18, 2010

As if starring on HBO's latest breakout hit *True Blood* weren't enough to invoke jealousy, **Carrie Preston**, who plays Merlotte's waitress Arlene Fowler, also spends her workdays surrounded by some of Hollywood's hottest men — including **Stephen Moyer**, Sam Trammell, Ryan Kwanten, **Alexander Skarsgard** and new cast member **Joe Manganiello**.

Posed with the question: Who's the hottest of them all, Preston tells PEOPLE it's a tough choice. "They are all gorgeous," she says. "We have some beautiful men of all different body types. All of them are attractive in different ways. We've got tall. We've got ripped. We've got more delicate."

Of Manganiello, who plays werewolf Alcide, Preston laughs and says, "Yeah, his body is pretty amazing."

Resident Bon Temps ladies' man Jason Stackhouse (Kwanten) also turns up the heat on set. "We all kind of marvel at Ryan's body," Preston says, "because nobody is quite sure how he gets that body."

Kwanten "doesn't seem to be obsessed" with fitness says Preston, but the actor — who hails from Australia — keeps active by running, hiking, surfing and playing racket ball, according to his costar.



People weekly

Still, there is pressure for the guys to look their best. “Lately in Hollywood the bar is set so high for men,” says Preston. “At lunch I’ll hear the guys talking about how they’re staying away from carbs and what exercise they are doing and who their trainer is.”

As for the show, Preston has a meaty storyline to focus on during season 3 — plus she doesn’t have to worry about her character’s figure.

“The whole season is very much about [my character] grappling with being pregnant. It’s unexpected and Arlene is having to figure out what she has to do,” says Preston. “We’re finally getting to see a more intimate side to my character. It’s a season about identity, about soul-searching, about internal conflict.”

Asked if her real life husband — *Lost* star **Michael Emerson** — will ever make a guest appearance on *True Blood*, Preston is hopeful. “I know he’s a fan [of the show] and they are fans of his,” she says. “I think it would be great.” —*Marla Lehner*

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Carrie Preston Talks 'True Blood' Season 3 (Is Arlene Dead?!) and 'Good Wife'

'True Blood' star Carrie Preston doesn't have to go far to get scoop on one of her favorite shows, 'Lost.' All she has to do is turn over and ask Michael Emerson, who plays Ben Linus. Yes, these well-respected, fan-favorite actors on two of the most high-profile shows on television are married.

Now that's we call a Hollywood power couple.

But while Preston and Emerson may not be paparazzi targets like Brangelina, anything they say or do concerning their respective shows gets dissected and analyzed by fans on the Internet. Case in point: When it was announced that Preston would be guest starring on CBS' new hit legal drama 'The Good Wife,' fans of 'True Blood' instantly began to speculate whether this meant death for her character, waitress Arlene.



Hold your horses, though, she warned in an interview with AOL TV. "Let me put it this way, we've done half the season and I'm still there," she said. Preston spoke about the furor surrounding her 'Good Wife' guest stint, the upcoming third season of 'True Blood' and what she knows about the 'Lost' finale.

I've got to ask you about being on 'The Good Wife.' I don't know if you started filming yet

...

I did. I'm afraid the Internet has gone a little insane with this story [laughs].



Everyone thinks this means that you're not going to be on 'True Blood.'

That's so funny. Well, obviously I can't comment on what's happening on 'True Blood,' but I will say that I go through stretches where they don't need me. We have a cast of about 1,000 on 'True Blood.' [Laughs] I'm not kidding, we've got 20 series regulars, or at least people who do more than half the episodes. Then we have at least another 20 guest stars and stuff, so the writers are servicing many, many people. We all end up -- even Anna [Paquin] and Stephen [Moyer] -- having a stretch of time where we're not working. 'The Good Wife' caught me during

one of those times, so I did an episode and right now, we're in discussions with 'True Blood' for me to do more.

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More episodes of 'The Good Wife'?

Yes, yes. But, I'm definitely not going to be with 'The Good Wife' full-time; it's recurring.

Fans pointed out that Arlene isn't in the third book that much ...

That's correct. Although, we're not really following the books at all.

Are you amazed that a little bit of casting news can cause such a furor on the Internet?

I know. It was very interesting because like I said, I had a couple of weeks away from the show. 'The Good Wife' called and asked if I could do this, and since I had already gotten clearance to go out of town, we just went ahead and accepted it. We didn't even really feel the need to tell anybody. It was a fun character on 'The Good Wife,' but there's never any guarantee that any part you do is going to recur, even if they say it is. It was only an offer for one episode with the hope that it would recur. We didn't want to make a big deal out of it. I don't know who leaked it or how it got leaked, but then everybody just took a hold of it. It was pretty funny. I've been happy to hear the fans get extremely upset about the idea that Arlene might not be a part of 'True Blood.' That made me feel very appreciated.

And 'True Blood' fans are really intense, right?

They are! I recently joined Twitter (@carrie_preston) and I just can't believe how excited people are about the show, it's great. It's really great for me because like I said, I don't really experience the fans out in the world, but I am starting to experience them cyberly through Twitter and through the Internet. Especially with this whole breaking news about me doing 'The Good Wife' -- just being able really see into the minds of the fans has been fun ... It was nice to hear that people were up-in-arms that I might be dying -- and I can't say whether or not I am -- but let me put it this way, we've done half the season and I'm still there. I guess I can say that.

So, you're liking Twitter so far?

I am! I'm having a very interesting and rather surreal experience on Twitter because I'm following @ArleneFowler. There is someone who is Twittering as my character ... There are a bunch of fans out there that Twitter as our characters and they have this whole kind of game that I guess they play ... I'm following some of the 'True Blood' fan sites and I saw there was an @ArleneFowler and there's a Lafayette, there's Sookie. I sent her a tweet that said, "I'm following you now, girl. You're doing me proud." Six minutes later, I had a tweet back that said, "Gulp, I think my wig just fell off." ... We just kind of have a fun little rapport going. She stays in character and I talk to her as if we are Arlene.

What can you tell us about this upcoming season of 'True Blood'?

It's getting even bigger than the second season, and I didn't think that was possible what with the insanity and the town getting possessed, running around with black eyes and Maryann and all of her shenanigans. This season is even bigger. You have these small town people dealing with larger than life issues and you've got a whole new breed of supernatural introduced -- actually, a couple -- a couple of supernatural breeds are coming in that we haven't really seen before. There's a lot of blood. Yes, there will be a death, but it's later in the season and -- what else? Oh, it's just fraught, it's still funny. The writers have really found their stride, I think, and are having a great time. For us in the cast, it is so interesting because everybody will have time off and then you show back up and somebody is lying in a pool of blood [laughs]. It's pretty messy, but it's pretty exciting I have to say.

So, on 'The Good Wife,' you play a lawyer defending Chris Noth's character. Can you talk a little bit about your role and what you do on the show?

Yes. I am introduced at a moment of crisis in their apartment. He's under house arrest, so I'm introduced under some duress. Something has happened in the apartment and I come in at the last minute and sort of take over the situation and make it right. The thing that's fun about it is she's not a 'Law & Order' kind of talking head lawyer. The writers have really -- with all the

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lawyers on that show -- have given them interesting character twists and nuances that you don't normally get when you play those kind of roles.

My character is definitely a little off-kilter. She's definitely got one of those brains that works a million miles a minute, and she gets seduced by the next thought all the time and goes from A-to-Z in a second flat. I've only done the one episode. It was really fun and I'm longtime pals with Julianna Margulies, so it was fun to do a scene with her because I'm a friend. That made it a lot easier walking on the set as a guest with the responsibility to bring, all of a sudden out of nowhere a full character when you don't know anybody on the set. That happens a lot when you're a guest, but this time it was nice because I do know her and that made it a lot easier for me.

One of the great things about 'The Good Wife' is it has such strong female characters and you don't see that many network shows with a female lead.

You sure don't and that's why I'm so happy that it's doing so well, especially, because it's not a 20-year-old woman, it's somebody with history. It's somebody with a life and children and a past dealing with issues that are very topical. I just thought it was very exciting that the audience went for it. Not only did they go for it, but Julianna's winning all these awards and it seems to me that it's going to stay. Also, [the show tapes] in New York and Michael and I live in New York. That's our home base, even though we've both been working on the Pacific side of things. New York is our home base, so it's really fun to watch that show because every episode it's all of our friends that are on the show. New York keeps losing shows so it's nice that there's one there .

You also have some movie projects coming up -- 'What's Wrong with Virginia?' will be out later this year, right?

I shot that on the hiatus and they're in post [production] right now and I hear that it's looking really good. It was a really fun experience because Dustin Lance Black, who wrote 'Milk,' wrote and directed this one. He's a great, great guy. At he was a little wary about casting me because he thought I was too young and he wanted somebody who was a little more worn down and maybe not as -- I don't know -- who lived life a little harder than me. I said "Well, what do you need? I'll dye my hair, this is what I do. My hair color changes from role to role. We can create a makeup that gives you that look." Luckily, he was willing to take a shot ... I play rough around-the-edges Southern, but different Southern than Arlene Southern. I tend to play a lot of Southern characters because I'm from Georgia, but I like trying to honor all the different colors of the South.

Another film that I did over the hiatus is called 'A Bag of Hammers' and that's with Rebecca Hall and Jason Ritter, and again I play a Southern woman, but this is a very dark character and a very sad situation ... I had to go to some dark places, but I was happy to do that in contrast with doing a season of 'True Blood.' It was really nice, I definitely got to exercise all my muscles over the summer.



There was all this news about Michael getting injured on the set of 'Lost' -- is he OK now?

He is fine. It was an accident and the show is rough, there's a lot of combat and stuff and sometimes things just happen ... It's so hard for me to watch him on the show get beat up; it's always very difficult for me to watch, especially the few times I've been on set with him and they have him covered in all that blood, I sometimes get a little weak in the knees. It's so real, you know?

Any chance we might see you again on 'Lost'?

No, I wish. They're wrapping up an epic, epic six seasons of madness. I make Michael keep everything from me. I don't want to know.

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Really? You don't read his scripts or anything?

No, I'm a fan. I really want it to be that I'm seeing it fresh. I mean, he'll say things. For example, [the episode] which was all about Richard Alpert -- I thought that was genius -- all he said to me was, "I think that this is going to be one of the best episodes they've ever shot on 'Lost.'" Then I was like, "Oh my god!" I get so excited. Of course it was, I thought it was extraordinary.

Does he avoid spoilers for 'True Blood'?

He's not as married to that as I am. I mean he loves 'True Blood' obviously, but it doesn't bother him. He doesn't mind looking at previews for movies -- I don't like watching previews for movies. We're just different that way, so he doesn't mind getting any kind of spoilers and stuff because when he sits down to watch something, he's just there to watch it. He will forget whatever information he had about it before. He's just there to watch it. I can't do that.

When are we going to see him on 'True Blood,' because that would be *amazing*.

Yeah, that would be cool. I don't know. I know he would like to try and veer away from the bad guy roles for a bit, just to change it up for himself. 'True Blood' is full of bad guys, so I don't know exactly what will go down there. But I know they're fans of his on 'True Blood,' so you never know.

Do you like working together, or do you try to avoid it?

No, we love working together. We haven't gotten to do it that much, but the times that we have -- I produced a movie that I starred in; I have a little production company -- and it was called 'Ready? OK!' like the cheerleading thing. My friend who wrote and directed it, he wrote a part for Michael as well. We had one of my favorite scenes in the whole movie, we got to play together and part of it was just because he and I, we have a shorthand. We were so comfortable with each other, we trust each other. There was no need to even really talk about the characters or the scenes because we trusted the writing, we trusted the director and we trust each other. We showed up and it was just a really wonderful experience and I think it shows in the film



When they aren't cozying up in bed with a book, Carrie and Michael are busy catching each other's projects. "The surrealness of seeing each other on the screen is always interesting and often hilarious!" he says.

TRUE LOVE

At home in L.A. with *True Blood's* Carrie Preston and *Lost's* Michael Emerson.



"I gravitate to the kitchen, probably because it's roughly the same size as our New York apartment," says Michael. "Such a luxury to have the space to cook and hang out in the same room!"



TRUE BLOOD: Carrie rocks as bright-red-tressed waitress Arlene Fowler. "A lot of the show's spice and humor is labored my way, which I'm happy about," she says.

ON THE SET



LOST: Michael, who played conniving Linus for four years, is happy with how the show ended in May, he says. "I'm proud now think that I was among the last ones standi



This spacious bedroom is Carrie's fave room. "It's got lots of windows and glass double doors that open out onto the backyard," she says. Their decorating style? "We are attracted to warm-colored things from faraway lands," says Michael.

HOME, sweet home at last! Now that *Lost*, which shot in Hawaii, has ended, star **Michael Emerson** has ditched his rented Waikiki digs. And he's making the most of the new West Hollywood home he shares with wife of 11 years, **Carrie Preston**, whose series *True Blood* tapes there. "It's been the scene of several big parties already," says Michael, 55. "We finally have the facilities to support our social urges." The duo, who also have a NYC pad, are enjoying lots of alone time now too. "We like to camp out at home together," says Carrie, 43. But despite starring on hit shows, they insist they're not exactly living in haute Hollywood. Says Michael: "Our house lies outside the glamour zone." ★



Michael can often be found enjoying this secluded outdoor space. "Long-dormant farmer genes must be trying to surface in me," he says. "I can't stop tinkering around in the yard." Adds Carrie: "Michael is also quite the grill!"



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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW: Carrie Preston (Arlene) from True Blood



The third season of True Blood is officially upon us and it's off to a fantastic start. Tonight's episode picks up the steam even more (wolves!) in what is sure to be an amazing season. Vampires are certainly the focal point of the show, but it's the people in Bon Temps that make the show interesting. One of those people is Arlene, the take-no-prisoners waitress at Merlottes who loves her kids, hates vampires and just realized she is

pregnant with Terry Bellefleur's child. I recently had the chance to talk to Carrie Preston (who plays Arlene) about how she relates to her character, her favorite moment from filming the show and working with Alan Ball. I also had to throw in a question about her husband Michael Emerson as well now that Lost has just ended.

What originally drew you to the project?□

I had the great fortune of working with Alan Ball on his feature film "Towelhead", and he's the one who told me about "True Blood." He said he had a part for me in it, but when I read the script I didn't know what he was talking about. Arlene was so different from me, and I didn't think I was physically right for the role. But when they offered me the part, I couldn't resist it. It was a chance to play a real character and to transform, which is something you don't usually get to do on television.

How do you relate to Arlene? Are you anything like her?

I'm not as outspoken as she is. I'm also not narrow minded like she is. But I can understand where she is coming from. I grew up with women like Arlene, and I take it as a responsibility to find the humanity in her. On the page sometimes, Arlene runs the risk of being ridiculed by the audience by coming off as a stereotypically racist, ignorant southerner. Yet I think she expresses a much needed viewpoint on the show, which is this: Vampires might be seductive and mysterious and sexy, but they are also killers by nature, so maybe we shouldn't trust our children with them!

THE TV CHICK

tv from the inside out

Arlene is a heavily influenced character, as she showed last season with Marianne. However, she is strong at the same time. What has it been like playing her?□

I like to find the balance between the humor and the pathos with Arlene. On the page, I get a lot of one-liners or jokes, but I try to find the truth behind them. I always try to build a three dimensional woman with responsibilities and cares and woes that are similar to the concerns of our audience. She's grounded in the real world, which is a nice balance with the supernatural stuff going on around her.

Is there more to Arlene that we don't know yet? Will we meet her children's father?□

The audience is going to see a deeper, more emotional side of Arlene this season. However, it's not the familiar histrionics that she displayed in the first two seasons. I don't know if you will ever meet the father of her first two children — I like to think they are two different fathers, actually.□□

Arlene has had some bad luck with men. Do you think Terry Bellefleur will be different?□

Terry is by far the sweetest and most vulnerable man Arlene has ever dated. He's the first guy who seems willing to drop everything to make her and her kids happy, so even if he's got some emotional issues due to the war, it seems like she wants to make things work with him.

What has been your biggest challenge in filming the show so far?□

The biggest challenge happened in season two, when we were "frenzied" and did crazy long night shoots wearing those really uncomfortable black contact lenses. But other than the physical demands of that season, I feel blessed with how wonderful the cast and crew are. I'm always grateful to go to work on this show.

Was it difficult to speak in an accent? Did you have any dialect training?

□ I grew up in Macon, GA. So although Arlene's accent is a different, harder accent than the one I grew up with, it come very easily and naturally to me.

Do you have a favorite moment from filming the show?□

I loved in Season Two doing the scene with Tara (Rutina Wesley) in the bathroom where I tell her that I can't remember if I slept with Terry or not. It was a brilliant scene written by Raelle Tucker, and I loved playing it with Rutina. We were both totally engaged in it, and it had really high stakes, but it was also a bit humorous. That's the alchemy of the show that makes it so appealing.

Do you have a character you would like to have more scenes with?

I wish I could have some interaction with Eric. I think seeing Arlene square off with Eric in some kind of strange debate about vampire rights would be hilarious and scary.



THE TV CHICK

tv from the inside out

What has it been like working with Alan Ball? He's quite a prolific producer/creator. □

Like I said before, I worked with him on "Towelhead", and we hit it off immediately. We are both from Georgia, and we are both theater people. So we have a lot in common. He is a real collaborator, but he also has strong vision and leadership. It's a rare and wonderful combination. I feel so lucky that I'm a part of his acting family now.

What do you think sets True Blood apart from other vampire shows out there? Why do you think there has been such a positive response to the show? □

Well, as we say on the show, it sucks you in. People love the fantasy of literally devouring, or being devoured by, the object of your desire. Also, we live in a youth obsessed culture, and vampires live forever. These vampires are young, hot and eternally sexy. They aren't the old, scary Draculas of the past. Along those lines, the audience gets to imagine the sexy creatures they could be if they were allowed to fully let themselves go.

Can you give us a little teaser — I know you can't spoil too much — of what's coming up in season 3, especially for Arlene? □

Arlene is grappling with something quite big and personal this season, so there will be more of an insight into how she deals with stress and pressure. She's still serving up a lot of the humor of the show, but it was a nice change of pace for me to be asked to tap into a deeper well of emotions this season.

I loved your guest role on The Good Wife. Will you be back on that show in the fall? □

I actually had the great fortune of doing two episodes. I've been a fan of the show since the pilot. The cast is terrific, and everyone on set was very welcoming. Their writers gave me a real gem of a character. On the page, they created a quirky, mysterious, smart and complicated woman, and I was honored that they sought me out to bring the character to life. I do hope they bring me back in the fall. I would love to continue to develop that role with them.

True Blood has taken home some awards since its debut, but the Emmys haven't been too kind. The show is so fantastic and has such a big fan base, do you think awards matter? □

We always joke that the Emmy winners can have their trophies, and we will keep our ratings and fan base! It would be nice to win awards for the show, of course, but we are more interested in continuing to please the audience and staying on the air.

Do you think there's ever a chance that we might see your husband, Michael Emerson, appear on True Blood? □

You never know in this business!!!

Thank you so much for taking the time to answer all my questions. I've seen the first few episodes of season 3 and I can't wait for more! □

Thank you! I'm glad you like the show!



ZAP 2 NEWS & BUZZ

from inside the box

'True Blood': Carrie Preston teases a 'more vulnerable' Arlene

By Rick Porter | June 12, 2010 7:15 PM ET



Those of you gearing up for Sunday's (June 13) "**True Blood**" season premiere might be advised to re-watch the Season 2 finale.

Why? We'll let **Carrie Preston**, who plays sassy Merlotte's waitress Arlene Fowler, explain.

"We pick up immediately where we left off with everyone," Preston tells

Zap2it. "Bill [**Stephen Moyer**] has just been kidnapped, Eggs [**Mehcad Brooks**] has just been shot. So it picks up literally right there, and it just does not stop. It's like breakneck speed."

Preston also says fans can expect to see a new side of Arlene, and the other characters as well. "My character is definitely grappling with something she wasn't ready for, so that's been very interesting," she says. "It's been a fun season for me, because my character has really been able to -- they've given me some fun and more vulnerable types of scenes than the sort of funny-funny that I usually get.

"I think it's true for all the characters -- they're really starting to give us a little more deepening. We're getting a little more intimate with the series regulars."

Preston also tells us that the show will diverge from the books a little more this season, and to look out for scenes between Arlene and Jessica (**Deborah Ann Woll**): "That was fun to shoot," she says with a laugh.

"True Blood" premieres at 9 p.m. ET Sunday on HBO.

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True Preston

Staff Writer



As the sassy redhead on the HBO hit series, “True Blood” currently setting the airwaves on fire with the third season of the show, Carrie Preston stars alongside Stephen Moyer and Anna Paquin.

Preston’s breakout role as “Miranda” on the Broadway production of Shakespeare’s “The Tempest,” led to roles in major television series such as “Lost” (Fun fact! She is married to Michael Emerson who plays Ben!) and “Desperate Housewives” along with acclaimed films including Woody Allen’s VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA and the Oscar nominated TRANSAMERICA.

Now, Preston plays the role of “Arlene Fowler,” a kind-hearted waitress and the mother of two children in a small town in Louisiana. Everyone’s wondering what happens this season!

We sat down with Carrie to discuss how her character unfolds in season three, her fashion

style, and we even found out that the multifaceted Southern-born actress has also made a career out of producing! □ □

[Tell us about how Arlene is different this season.](#) □

The audience is going to see a deeper, more emotional side of Arlene this season. However, it's not the familiar histrionics that she displayed in the first two season. She's grappling with something quite big and personal, so there will be more of an insight into how she deals with stress and pressure. She's still serving up a lot of the humor of the show, but it was a nice change of pace for me to be asked to tap into a deeper well of emotions this season. □ □

[You guest-starred on an episode of THE GOOD WIFE, tell us about that experience.](#) □

I actually had the great fortune of doing two episodes. I've been a fan of the show since the pilot. The cast is terrific, and everyone on set was very welcoming. Their writers gave

me a real gem of a character in Elsbeth Tascioni (how's that for a mouthful?) On the page, they created a quirky, mysterious, smart and complicated woman, and I was

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honored that they sought me out to bring the character to life. Plus Julianna Margulies and I did a Broadway show together four years ago ("Festen"), so it was a treat to work with her again. Some of my scenes were with Titus Welliver, who was also on my husband's (Michael Emerson) show "Lost". So in a funny way, Michael and I were both battling the Smoke Monster at the same time!

What are your top 3 fashion disaster rules for women? What should they NEVER wear and why? 1

) I think the micro-shorts where the bottom of the butt is hanging out just doesn't look good on anyone no matter how rocking the glutes. The same goes for the thong bikinis. I think the rule there is to leave some things to the imagination; it's sexier. 2) If someone's fingernails can double as tools or weapons, they are too long 3) Don't wear long full jackets with long full skirts. I don't think they look flattering, no matter the person's body type.

Who is your all time favorite designer and why?

I'm someone who gets around fashion wise. I like all kinds of designers for all kinds of reasons. Some of them are Catherine Malandrino, Nanette Lapore, Theory, and Betsey Johnson. They all tend to have silhouettes that are inventive, flattering and even a bit whimsical. Those are the designs I gravitate towards.

Tell us about projects you have coming up besides TRUE BLOOD, we hear you are producing?

I have a production company, Daisy 3 Pictures. We have produced two features and a short film. Now we are teaming up with Locomotive (Lucy Barzun Donnelly and Joshua Astrachan) to produce a screenplay written by actress Kellie Overbey, and I will be directing it this fall in New York. It's a comedy called "That's What She Said," which I like to call "an East Village Sex and the City." It's the women's answer to all the "men are boys" movies that have been ubiquitous these days. As for acting, I have three movies coming out soon. "What's Wrong with Virginia," with Jennifer Connelly, "A Bag of Hammers," with Rebecca Hall and Jason Ritter and a movie I just shot in Texas called "Sironia" with musician turned actor Wes Cunningham.

RECENT EVENTS



12th Annual Costume Designers Guild Awards



16th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards



61st Annual Primetime Emmy Awards



67th Annual Golden Globe Awards



62nd Annual Primetime Emmy Awards

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Carrie's Reel

<http://carriepreston.com/reels/>

Hollywood 411 Interview

<http://video.tvguide.com/Celebrity+Interviews/True+Blood+Carrie+Preston/1378055?autoplay=true>

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