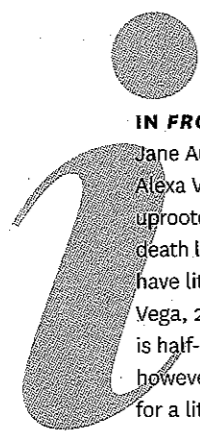


From Strangers to BFFs

Rising stars CAMILLA BELLE and ALEXA VEGA became so close while filming *From Prada to Nada* that they now call each other "sister."

By Damaris Ocaña



IN *FROM PRADA TO NADA*—a Latinized version of Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*—Camilla Belle and Alexa Vega play rich Mexican American sisters who are uprooted from Beverly Hills to East L.A. after their father's death leaves them penniless. Their onscreen counterparts have little in common other than DNA: Half-Colombian Vega, 22, plays a shallow shopaholic, while Belle, 24, who is half-Brazilian, shines as a sweet brainiac. The costars, however, became fast friends, and we got them together for a little girl talk.

The movie features many Mexican traditions. Did any of that feel familiar to you?

AV: I grew up in a Colombian family, and not a lot of people know that. They think of me as a white girl. The party scene was so familiar: I'm the oldest of six kids, so it's like that every Friday night.

CB: There are a lot of similarities between Brazilian and Mexican culture, so Mexican culture is very alive to me. I've grown up with it in L.A.

It seems like you two had incredible chemistry.

CB: She looks exactly like my cousin, so there was a sort of familiarity already. But you can always tell if it's fake when people play siblings on-screen. I think we come across really well because we started acting like sisters on set. It was real.

How did you become so close?

AV: We were stripped naked in front of each other to get spray-tanned. It was hilarious and embarrassing because we'd just met. We needed to make it to a table reading, and I had a hair dryer out and I'm blow-drying her boob. We really bonded.

What's your biggest similarity?

AV: Eating! Most girls are like, "I'll have a bite of this." Camilla can put down a steak.

What was your favorite on-set memory?

CB: Our costumes were for summer, but the weather was so cold when we were shooting scenes inside a car that we started making up songs. Our teeth were chattering and we made no sense. It was really funny to see the bloopers reel.

Did you hang out off the set?

CB: Wilmer [Valderrama] would take us salsa dancing, and I just fell in love with it. I'm obsessed!

Alexa, you got married to producer Sean Covey in October. How did you know you were ready at 22?

AV: When you're in this business as a kid, you grow up quicker. I have a career; I know what I want. And we went to premarital counseling to make sure we were prepared.

Who's given you the best marital advice?

AV: Robert [Rodriguez, who directed Vega in the *Spy Kids* movies and walked her down the aisle] told me to take it day by day. He's the coolest dude in the world!

Camilla, how did you feel when Alexa asked you to be a bridesmaid?

CB: Honored. It meant a lot because sometimes filming is like a circus, and after it's done, you try to keep in touch but friendships dissipate. We phone each other all the time and call one another "sister." It was disappointing not to be able to do it because I got sick.

You're 24 and single. Could you see yourself married in your 20s?

CB: It happens when it happens. When I do get married, I want to be stable in my career and my personal life. I'm very far away from that.

“We phone each other all the time and call one another ‘sister.’”



On and Off the Set

According to Belle, the two share guilty pleasures such as Gummi Bears and sour candy.

FAMILIAR FACES

Only in their early 20s, Vega and Belle are Hollywood veterans.

Alexa Vega

Little Giants (1994) In her first film, Vega was cast as the 6-year-old daughter of Ed O'Neill (*Modern Family*).

Twister (1996) Not even a cyclone could scare her as the younger incarnation of Helen Hunt's character.

Spy Kids movies (2001–present) Critics dubbed her "tough and scrappy" as Carmen Cortez in Robert Rodriguez's action series (top right). The fourth film hits theaters in August.

Ruby and the Rockits (2009) Vega played Ruby in this ABC Family sitcom alongside '70s idol David Cassidy (right).



Camilla Belle

Practical Magic (1998) Belle portrayed Sandra Bullock's character as a kid, studying the actress's physicality for the part.

Rip Girls (2000) At 13, she learned to surf to play the lead in this Disney Channel movie.

When a Stranger Calls (2006) Horror fans will recognize her as the babysitter terrorized by a psychopath (left).

The Jonas Brothers' "Love Bug" video (2009) Belle plays the love interest in this video about a couple from the 1940s who are separated by war (top left).

