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Letters & Editorial
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Blog
Calendar
Business Directory
Gallery
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Go

TV? Check. Film? Check. Stage? Check.

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by Leo Buck



David Moretti projects an aura of quiet charisma and smoldering sex appeal. Yet just below the surface, there's so much more.

For one thing, he recalls that his first taste of fame was playing a big role in a pre-school extravaganza.

"I was the letter 'N' in Candy Cane Preschool's groundbreaking rendition of the everlasting nursery rhyme 'Bingo,'" he says with a chuckle. "It's been compared to Phantom, but I'm not one to brag!"

By high school, this Cranston, R.I., native and some pals had formed a comedy troupe called the Blueberry Johnsons. It even performed in some clubs around Providence.



"It was kind of weird performing for drunk people at a club when we couldn't even drive a car, let alone order a Manhattan," he recalls fondly. "But I guess that means we were all right at what we did. It was a fun time."

Not long after graduating from the University of Southern California with a degree in English, Moretti was spotted by the casting people at Here! TV, who were putting together a spin-off of sorts to the network's hit supernatural soap opera Dante's Cove. This show was about a cabal of gay vampires who occupy a sex club on the island known as the Lair. Here! TV was founded on the philosophy of creating LGBT-positive programming and casting openly gay talent.

Moretti's tantalizing mix of boyish good looks and charming intensity made the out and proud actor a natural for the key role of Thom Etherton, a reporter who stumbles upon the cult and through whose eyes most of the action unfolds. The series became an instant hit, completing three seasons and developing a major following along the way.

"I like to affect people and feel lucky to have a platform in which to do so," Moretti says about his and the program's success. "If just one kid in a red state sees what I'm doing and gets a modicum more confidence to be themselves and appreciate who they are, I've done my job as a human being."

Moretti is highly regarded for his work on behalf of such causes as AIDS Project Los Angeles, the Trevor Project and the Matthew Shepard Foundation. He says that even though the gay community as a whole is making impressive strides, the entertainment industry has a long way to go.

"There is still a huge stigma associated with openly gay actors in this town," he said. "I've been told I'm not gay enough for the gay roles, and yet because I'm out, they won't even consider me for 'boyfriend' roles on CW-type shows. It's quite a catch-22."

But Moretti continues to make inroads.

"I certainly don't regret coming out," he clarifies, emphasizing that there is the larger picture to consider. "Hopefully with me doing what I'm doing — and other brave actors who have decided to screw the 'rules' and be themselves — that pink wall of inequality will eventually collapse."

Film and TV are fun for Moretti, but like many actors, he says the stage is where his heart is. In fact, last December he starred in the off-Broadway hit *My Big Gay Italian Wedding* as the groom "Andrew" for eight weeks. He says it was the most rewarding experience of his career thus far.

"There is nothing like the rush of the stage," he says, "and it was such a surreal experience getting a phone call that I was even considered for the role! Being requested for the New York stage, in my opinion, is one of the most flattering honors one could ever receive — and the actual experience was beyond amazing!"

Moretti can now be seen as Pearce Wright in the screwball romantic comedy *Finding Mr. Wright*, which has just been released on DVD. Pearce is a mild-mannered life coach who, at the insistence of personal manager Clark Townsend (Matthew Montgomery of the film *Role/Play*), is called upon to oversee a secluded weekend retreat/intervention for his client — a talented but out-of-control party girl, Eddy Malone (Rebekah Kochan of the popular *Eating Out* films) — when her latest shenanigans threaten to exclude her from Hollywood's A-list. Smitten at first sight, Clark and Pearce seem clearly meant for each other — that is, if Eddy's neediness doesn't keep getting in the way.

Moretti's performance is being hailed by both critics and audiences, but he was initially considered for a supporting part instead. However, it quickly became apparent that he had lots more to bring to the lead.

"Even though he was not described physically like myself

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Even though he was not described physically like myself, emotionally I felt like I was reading my own unwritten diary at times," confesses the actor. "So I told them I had to play the title role and made them let me audition." Having convinced the producers, he was signed right then and there.

The characters in the film seem more than willing to do some pretty off-beat things to win the hearts of those they desire. In real life, though, does Moretti himself feel he's more of a romantic or a realist at heart?

"I'm all over the place," Moretti says. "I'm learning to be a realist, but c'mon, I'm an actor! I obviously have a slightly warped sense of reality and hopeless romantic tendencies."

He does acknowledge, though, that the longer he lives, the more balanced this perspective gets.

"Every time I try and do something crazy, it winds up being the last time I see them. Over the years, I've learned simple works far better than the grandiose. When you are really trying to win someone over, chances are the other person really isn't that into you. You should both feel like you're a catch for one another, and the rest should happen naturally."

Big screen, small screen or onstage, though, Moretti seems to be well thought of by those he has worked with.

According to friend and fellow Lair alum Brian Nolan, "His passion for life is his greatest gift to the world — and to all those lucky enough to know him and get to work with him on a set. On top of that, he's fun to be around. I always have a good time with him wherever and whatever the situation!"

Matthew Montgomery, whose Proteus Films also co-produced Mr. Wright, wholeheartedly agrees: "It's always a highlight working with an actor as talented as David."

To learn more about David Moretti and keep up with his latest projects, visit davidmorettionline.com. Finding Mr. Wright is available on DVD through Amazon.com, TLAvideo.com and at video stores everywhere. For more information, check out www.findingmrwrightthemovie.com.