



Find out a little about Arizona Resident Leeann Dearing, who you'd probably recognize falling into a pool alongside Danica Patrick in a Go Daddy commercial that aired during a little event we call the Superbowl! She got her first big role in 2008 playing a narcissistic pop star "Rio" in the Lifetime movie "Maneater." Since settling down in Phoenix she has become a full-time Go Daddy girl, and most notably has started the Dearing Acting Studio in North Phoenix with her husband. Her classes for all ages have lead to some roles on T.V. shows such as "Modern Family" and "Grey's Anatomy." We are so proud of what Leeann has accomplished for the acting market here in Arizona. She's also a first-time expecting mommy! Read more!

Arizona Foothills Magazine: How did you get started in acting?

Leeann Dearing: I was one of those awkward teenagers who found a kind of salvation in the theatre. I was drawn to acting in high school for many reasons; initially I think I enjoyed "escaping" into a character, but what has kept me in the entertainment industry is the absolute joy I experience when performing. In college I continued my theatre education with some Shakespeare training, which I still love. However, once I relocated to Arizona and met my husband, I found myself very excited with prospect of commercial and television acting. With coaching from my husband and a wonderful agent (Leighton agency) I experienced some success. Then in 2009 I booked a starring role with Danica Patrick in a super bowl commercial for GoDaddy.com, and that was when things really started to pick up! Shortly after that Bob Parsons asked me back to star as his sidekick in his hilarious video blog. It's such an honor to work with Bob; in addition to his business and technology savvy, he's got quite a bit of comedic prowess! Then 2011 brought even more opportunities when I was asked to become a full time Go Daddy girl. I've done 5 national commercials for GoDaddy.com, and it's opened up so many wonderful opportunities.

AFM: What do you enjoy most out of playing a different character? What is the most challenging?

LD: Creating characters is so satisfying! I think I enjoy the process of discovery the most. I've heard it be compared to sketching. You begin with large, rough, broad strokes and then you fill in the shading and the details as you go. The most challenging thing about creating a character, especially for film, is often the time frame within which you have to work. In theatre you have a rehearsal period of several weeks to discover the character. It's a very collaborative process where the cast and director work together to pull apart the text and explore the dynamic between the characters. With films, television or commercials there is often (not always, but often) less time to prepare. Either way, working with a good coach is imperative!

AFM: Do you have a favorite roll that you played?

LD: There are a few! I loved my role in my original Super Bowl ad with Danica Patrick. There was a lot of physical comedy in that spot (my character falls into a pool!) I also really enjoyed playing "Rio" in the Lifetime movie "Maneater". She was a really vapid, narcissistic pop star, which was a lot of fun. For that project I was fortunate to work with Tim Busfield and Sarah Chalke from Scrubs, who does comedy so well! As far as my theatre work, my favorite character so far has been "Brooke" in the British farce "Noises Off". There was plenty of physical comedy in that role!

AFM: What would you tell someone wanting to start a career in acting? Anything that would surprise them? Tips?

LD: I would say don't enter the Arizona market (or any market) expecting immediate gratification. Some people begin booking very quickly, and that's fantastic, but those overnight discoveries are few and far between. Be careful of casting calls, auditions and mall talent searches that imply you will "get discovered". I think that's a dangerous term. The actors who end up working consistently love the craft long before they are making any semblance of a living at it. I trained for about 7 years before I really started booking anything! I just knew that I loved the craft of acting more than anything else and couldn't think of doing anything else with my life.

Tell us about your acting studio in Phoenix:

LD: The Dearing Acting Studio is a training facility for actors of all ages and levels of experience. We offer classes for kids (ages 4-10), teens (ages 11-17) and adults of all ages. The class schedule is flexible. Courses run for a month at a time, and each month the topics change to give you a fresh challenge. We want to expose our students to all the different facets of the acting world. Our studio is unique in that all of our staff are working actors, represented by the best agents in town. And our students have an amazing camaraderie; it really feels like a family. It's an amazing support network for actors of all levels. Just a few of our classes include commercial study, scene study, sitcom T.V., dramatic film acting, soap opera (or daytime drama), audition technique, and lots of improv classes!

AFM: Why did you choose to start an acting studio? Why in Phoenix?

LD: My husband Matthew and I started the Dearing Acting Studio five years ago. We both shared the same passion for acting, the same love of teaching and the desire to further the arts community in the valley. The Dearing Acting Studio has been a house for actors to grow and explore

Leeann Dearing: Actress and Owner of Dearing Acting Studio

Written by Sarah Love

their talent! We're endorsed by all of the Screen Actor's Guild agencies in the valley, and we offer free agency placement for our students. Some of our students have gone on to do some huge things in Los Angeles and booked recurring roles on shows like Modern Family, Grey's Anatomy, Two and Half Men...the list goes on. It's so satisfying to see our students doing great work! As far as choosing Phoenix for our location...this is our home. We love the market here. We have a fantastic commercial market and a growing film industry. We believe in the Arizona market, and we're excited to see it taking shape!

What are your thoughts on the Arizona film industry, like the Phoenix Film Festival?

LD: The Arizona film industry has so much to offer new actors. We have a really strong commercial / industrial/ print market. My original audition for GoDaddy.com was right here in Scottsdale! We also have a marvelous independent film scene that produces some wonderful work! And of course, there are feature films that occasionally make their way through Arizona. In fact, big budget films are made here every year! Most people just don't know about them. I believe we're going to keep seeing even more film opportunities in the future. The Phoenix Film Festival is now well respected nationally as we bring in films from all over the world! That's a great indicator of the positive momentum we're seeing in today's market.

AFM: I hear you are pregnant, Congratulations! Will you want your son or daughter to be in the acting biz?

LD: Oh, gosh! That will be completely and entirely up to him. (Yes, it's a little boy!) If he gets "the bug" we'll be thrilled. The important thing I want my son to know is that he has to pursue his passion, whatever that ends up being. Do what you love and eventually success follows.



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