

BY MIKE BYGRAVE

# HEMINGWAY

I read menus backwards, starting with dessert," confides Mariel Hemingway, her coltish, rawboned frame tucked into a banquette at a Hollywood cafe. "Dessert is my main interest." With her broad cheekbones, heavy eyebrows and low forehead conspiring to make this lanky granddaughter of the great novelist Ernest Hemingway look like some unusual combination of Swede

and Eskimo, 21-year-old Mariel Hemingway has nonetheless managed to start the menu of life backwards, too. Sweet things like film roles with world-class directors and writers (Woody Allen, Bob Fosse, Robert Towne), bon-bons like an active love affair with a mucho handsome leading man (Christopher Lambert), have already crossed her plate. Her most recent morsel, following up her praised portrayal of slain Playboy Playmate Dorothy Stratten in *Star '80*, is a co-starring slot alongside Peter O'Toole and Vincent Spano in an upcoming comedy-drama called *Creator*.

In person, Hemingway is tall, speedy, giggly and not quite either the ethereally calm teenager she played in Woody Allen's *Manhattan* or the world-class athlete of Robert Towne's *Personal Best*. Were she not a movie star, she could be the proverbial girl next door. Or, judging from the cuts and bruises she sports from her minor collisions with life, the tomboy next door.

As Bob Fosse, her *Star '80* director has said of her, "she has a kind of innocence without being dumb." It was also Fosse who for a long time didn't think Hemingway had the sex or the sophistication to play a *Playboy* model. Fortunately he changed his mind, but meeting the real Mariel you can see what he meant. Though she is athletically attractive, she's no classic beauty and her manners have the charm and directness of her Idaho small-town origins.

Says Hemingway herself, "The other movies I'd done I was sort of playing myself — I wasn't really but it's a great compliment when audiences think you are. Those movies weren't different enough to show what I could do. I wanted *Star '80* so badly in order to make a statement that I could do lots of



## A NATURAL SCRUFF MAKES OUT

different stuff." She laughs and adds ruefully, "It's real funny. Now *Star '80* came out, everyone thinks *that's* what I can do. They never really believe you're an actress, you know."

Hemingway is not only an actress, she is also, literally, "a natural." One of three daughters of Ernest Hemingway's son, Jack, she grew up living the outdoor life

with her father, a dedicated hunter, fisherman and sports writer who taught her to fish, dry fly method. "I had no desire to be an actress," she recalls. "At different times I wanted to be a singer, a marine biologist, a secretary." Margaux Hemingway, Mariel's sister, was already a well-known model and when Margaux got her first film (*Lipstick*) she asked

Mariel to be in it with her. "Even after that film, I really didn't think I'd do it again. I went back to Idaho to ski race — which was my passion for a long, long time. Then I got a TV movie playing an unwed mother. There were millions of babies around and I was baby crazy at the time. It was 18 days and I really worked hard and I had the best time. And then I did *Manhattan* with Woody [Allen] and of course that was fabulous. Those two experiences decided me." Now, Mariel says, "I love my work so much I go crazy when I'm *not* working." She's also made recent preliminary steps toward studying her craft. She's taken on an acting coach "when I'm not working. I tried acting classes but I didn't like all that Method stuff. This way, it's just me and him, and I go and read Shakespeare, Chekhov, all the stuff I've never done." She also did her first play, in Dallas, "and I want to do it again and again and again. It was *so* good for my voice. I used to be quiet. I used to hide behind my mother and everything as a kid. I was desperately shy as a teenager. I used to be a nightmare for the sound people — they were always saying, can't you speak up louder? That's all changing, as you can see."

She is especially happy with her new film, *Creator*, because "I get to yell and scream. I'm definitely not the victim in this one." However, in the part-drama, part-comedy about a scientist (Peter O'Toole) who plays God, Mariel is once again in risky sexual territory. In *Manhattan* she was Allen's teenage mistress, in *Personal Best* an athlete involved in a graphic lesbian affair, in *Star '80* a nude model and in *Creator* she's a college girl trying to get the much older O'Toole into bed. There's no question Hemingway's fresh looks and inner simplicity make her effective in such roles. Her frankness extends to her own life and the May-September relationship she had with Robert Towne, the top Hollywood screenwriter who made his directing debut with *Personal Best*.

"Robert and I didn't go out when we were making *Personal Best* — in fact, he was going out with (co-star) Patrice Donnelly. But I did live with him when I was making *Star '80*. It's so incestuous and awful. Isn't it fun? It never crossed my mind when we were working to-