

COMEDY

# Lea rules

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bathrooms," she recalls. Go figure.

Ironically, to many lesbians in her audiences, she is seen as a sex object. Any problem with that? "That's my favorite part of the job," she crows. "For me it's all about getting laid, and it's working!"

So does anyone intimidate this tough-as-boot-bottoms broad? Not really, though she says she is in awe of the old Broadway legends.

Not too long ago she shared a dressing room with Elaine Stritch, a grand old dame if ever there was one. "I could hardly talk the first time I met her," DeLaria remembers. "But she had been to the opening of *On the Town* and loved me in it—that's a real leveler."

Is there a gentler side of DeLaria, a delicate flower lurking beneath the outrageous exterior?

"You see the softer side of me through my music.... You can't show that as a comic—unless you're Emo Phillips!" she quips.

DeLaria is, indeed, an accomplished singer who has won critical acclaim in several singing roles on and off Broadway. She is about to announce a record deal and hopes to release her first CD in February.

Her true love is jazz, so what song best tells the story of her life? She snorts out a laugh, then quickly rips off a few lines of "Filthy McNasty."

Something else that may surprise you about DeLaria: She collects gay and lesbian art, though she is bothered by lesbian artists who see vaginas everywhere.

"I like vaginas as much as the next lesbian," she writes. "However, I do try to refrain from searching for one in a piece of driftwood."

Another thing that may surprise you about DeLaria: She's good at some other girly things, like cooking. Her recipe for seduction: "Take a nice piece of salmon and grill it with olive oil and basil and garlic. Put on some Chet Baker and serve the fish rare, so it melts in your mouth. If you can do that," she promises, "you can have any girl."

As she admits in her book, "Cooking is one way we Italians get laid."

Lea DeLaria has been on quite a wild ride lately. She's a bit fuzzy when the interview begins, even though it's noon in New York, because she was out late the night before with another of those Broadway legends, fresh from an appearance at the Tony Awards.

"Ann Reinking took me out and got me loaded," she confides. And a few nights before that, "I got twisted with Janeane Garofalo. But then my girlfriend showed up and broke it up—we were out of control. She took the drink out of Janeane's hand, told her she'd had enough and should go home, then took me home." Ah, the fast lane!

A huge thrill came a while back when she finally met the current object of her unrequited lust, Susan Sarandon. DeLaria took her aside backstage and revealed that Sarandon is mentioned rather prominently in her new book. ("Modern-day commandment number two: Thou shalt not take the name of Susan Saran-

don in vain." Later, when Sarandon appears in the top spot on a list of "women it's okay to sleep with and it's not adultery," DeLaria admits that "if I was married to the most perfect woman in the world and the opportunity arose to 'do' Susan Sarandon, an exception would have to be made.")

According to DeLaria, the babelicious Sarandon let out a hearty laugh when told the nature of the remarks.

In addition to Sarandon's scantily-clad star turn in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, DeLaria loves her best yumming on Catherine Deneuve in *The Hunger*. Hard to argue with that!

Fans should keep an eye out for DeLaria's latest traveling road show, *So Over the Rainbow*, which she's performing with fellow out comedians Scott Thompson and Sandra Bernhard. "We're all close friends, and it's so much better to tour with someone," she explains.

DeLaria also has a role in *Further Tales of the City*, playing a het named Willy. "I'm so excited about it," she says, adding that she even gets to do some kissing.

And as if that isn't enough for any mortal to be doing,

DeLaria is also creating a one-woman show, *I'll Be Damned*, with the legendary writer-director George Wolfe. In it she falls in love with a Mafia princess and falls victim to a hit man. As she enters the white light and realizes she's on the fast track to heaven, she takes God aside for a little chat. "The entire show is me convincing God that I should go to hell," she explains with pure delight.

She hopes to mount the show in New York later this year. Who knows, perhaps she'll finally nab a Tony for it. (Many Broadway insiders felt she deserved one last year for her bravura performance as Hildy in *On the Town*.)

But wait, there's more! In her spare time she writes all manner of things, including a screenplay based on Leslie Feinberg's *Stone Butch Blues*, which she would dearly love to get produced. She's hoping the success of *Boys Don't Cry* will help create a more receptive climate for it.

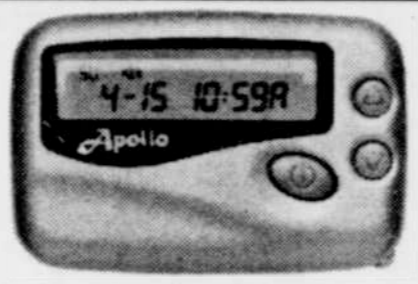
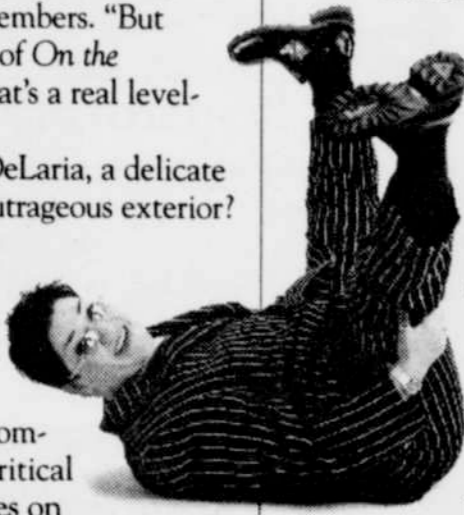
It's definitely a hoot to read a book of rules written by a determined rule breaker. Frequent mention is made throughout the book of her predilection for younger women. What she writes about that subject seems to sum up who Lea DeLaria is: "All right, then. Everyone who believes dating out of your generation is:

- a. A control thing
- b. A mid-life crisis
- c. Insecurity with oneself
- d. Escaping death
- e. Just about tits and ass

please form a military-straight line, bend over, pucker up, and kiss my hairy dyke ass. Okay...some of it is about tits and ass. That doesn't change the fact that you are jealous. You know it. I know it. Straight boys can't handle it when a woman gets more pussy than they do...and I'm the one who's supposed to grow up. Nope. Forget it. Not going to happen."

LEA'S BOOK OF RULES FOR THE WORLD is a Dell trade paperback available for \$12.95 wherever subversive books are sold.

ORIANA GREEN has her own anarchist streak and appreciates people who can bend and break rules with style. She is Entertainment Editor of Just Out and can be reached at [oriana@justout.com](mailto:oriana@justout.com).



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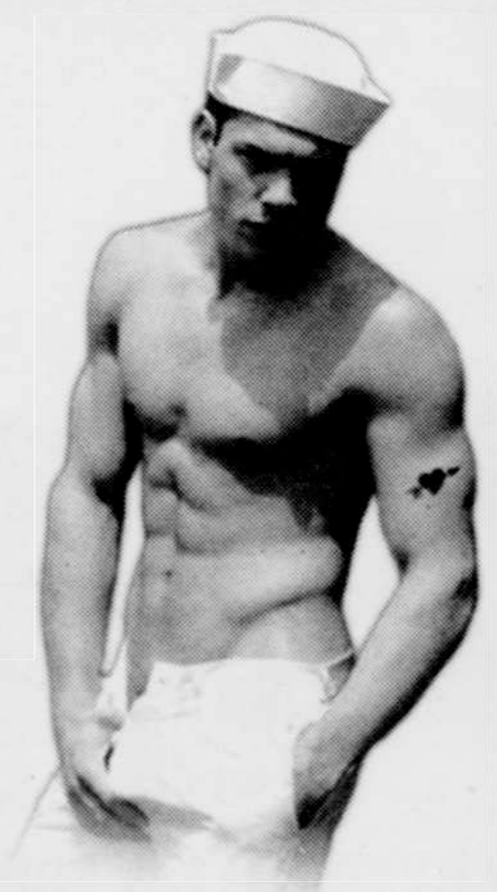
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