



Carla

Gugino arrives for lunch in Manhattan clad in a favorite frock, a slinky black jersey dress by Diane von Furstenberg. “It’s the *most* comfortable, like wearing a nightgown,” says the actress, who can visit the dark side in *Sin City*, then play for laughs in *Spin City*. She’s always on the lookout for jersey, she says: “Silk is pretty, but not after you’ve got sweat wings down the side. People Botox their armpits not to sweat, but that to me is horrifying.”

Not that Gugino, who turns 40 in late August, has much to sweat about. Her career is thriving. “Even when I was an ingenue, I never seemed like an ingenue, never sounded like one,” she says in her low, throaty voice. “I always knew that when I hit my thirties and older, I was going to come into playing roles that matter.” And so she has, especially on the New York stage. In recent years,

she’s garnered raves in such challenging dramas as Eugene O’Neill’s *Desire Under the Elms*. Next spring she’ll star in an adaptation of the William Styron novel *Sophie’s Choice* at the Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven, Connecticut. “I have not gotten the movie where I get to explore a character at the same level,” she says regretfully.

Gugino was two when her parents split; she lived with her mother in California but often visited her father in Florida. At age 13, she began modeling, enrolled in an acting class and quickly found her vocation. “I tend to be controlling, so the notion of being able to let go completely in a controlled environment suited me,” she says. A straight-A student (except, she notes, in PE), she graduated valedictorian from Colin McEwen, a private high school in Malibu. Gugino had scouted Brown and Yale but put college on permanent hold after she landed a role on the prime-time soap *Falcon Crest*. “I played the virgin bride of an older man, and I killed him with a letter opener,” she says.

Two decades, 40-plus movies and seven TV series later, Gugino divides her time between homes in New York and Los Angeles, where she lives with the screenwriter and director Sebastian Gutierrez (*Snakes on a Plane*), 42. “I just think he’s the coolest person on the planet,” she says. They’ve been together for 14 years (and have collaborated on seven films, including last spring’s *Girl Walks into a Bar*); she speaks of his children—Gabriel, 18, and Isabella, 16—as her stepkids.

Gugino’s current inspirations are her *Mr. Popper’s Penguins* costar Angela Lansbury, 85 (“She’s extraordinary!”), and Jane Fonda, 73, whom she met at a benefit for the Women’s Media Center. “Jane said when she turned 60, she realized the third act of your life is the most important,” says Gugino. “I guess I’m starting or partway through my second act. Page 40 in a script would be the beginning of a second act. I don’t know how that works in human years.” —Leah Rozen



THE SEXY SUITING

This dress is inspired by menswear tailoring, but when crossed with überfeminine elements (the slit, the neckline), it oozes appeal.

ZAC POSEN *wool crepe dress*, \$1,790; Neiman Marcus, 888-888-4757.
VAN CLEEF & ARPELS *18k white gold, diamond, onyx and white mother-of-pearl necklace*, price on request; 877-826-2533.

WOLFORD *nylon blend fishnet tights*, \$45; wolford.com. »

← THE NEW LOOK OF TEXTURE

All the rage: the luxe detailing of paillettes. For best effect, combine the embellishment with a simple silhouette (like that of this sheath) and a monochromatic color scheme.

PRADA *organza paillettes dress*, price on request; prada.com for stores.

SUSIE FOX *18k gold, emerald, black diamond and jade earrings*, price on request; London Jewelers, 516-

627-7475. DEVILLE FINE JEWELRY *18k white gold, diamond, blue sapphire and carved-crystal rock bangle*, price on request; devillefinejewelry.com.

TEMPTU *Aix pod lighter in champagne*, \$35; sephora.com.