

MICHELLE BONILLA'S been popping up all over prime time for over a decade now, most notably in the recurring role of EMT Harms on *ER*, and earlier as Teresa Morales on *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*. Hollywood career aside, Bonilla is by many accounts just a regular chick, with a soft spot for Dinah Shore, *The L Word* and Joan Jett. She's also an accomplished athlete and activist. Our conversation took place a few days before Bonilla participated in yet another Susan G. Komen Foundation 5K. Last year, Bonilla tells me proudly, she came in second in her age group. "I was passed by a 21-year-old," recalls the actor, who refuses to give her own age. "I almost tripped her but I thought that would be a little unfair."

Nah, she'd never. The more we chat, the clearer it is that Bonilla is one of those super-sweet, down-to-earth types that's hard to find in Hollywood. She's also an out lesbian who, at press time, was happily attached and not giving any details. Damn.

How old were you when you came out?

I would say 29. ... So it wasn't so long ago. You know, it was just not happening with the guys. Even though, you know, I love the guys to death, but I really fell in love with a woman and that's when I realized, "Oh my God, this is what all the movies were talking about. The birds, the bells, the fireworks. When I got into a relationship with a woman I finally realized what the hell everyone was talking about, you know?"

Right. And by that time you had your career fairly established?

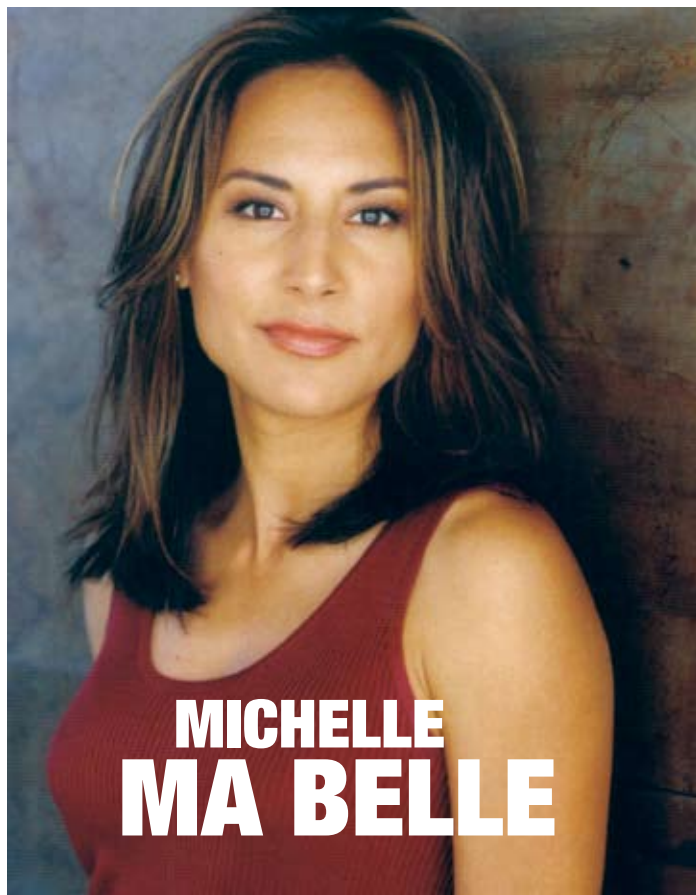
Oh, yeah.

And did you feel any danger to your career because of it?

No I did not, actually. I think of my career and my personal life as separate. I somehow think that no one really cares. And I say that rather loosely, because, I don't know, maybe it's just the way I think of things or I deal with things. I always put my work first, you know, my work is very important to me and I really love what I do. And when I really go in with that kind of focus, how can you really address anything else? I think it kind of com-

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***ER*'s resident dyke—off-screen that is—discusses the birds and the bees and being Latina. By Catherine Plato**



Jenny on Daniela

Jenny Shimizu dishes on her sexy *Itty Bitty Titty* co-star.



LESJIE BOHM (MICHELLE BONILLA)

ANOTHER HOT TODDIE revving up the screen in *Itty Bitty Titty Committee* is actor Jenny Shimizu, famed as much for her relationship with Angelina Jolie and Ione Skye as well as her roles in films (*Foxfire*) and television (*America's Next Top Model*). We asked her about her cast mate, *The L Word* star Daniela Sea.

Who do you like on *The L Word*?

I love that my friend Daniela Sea is on it now. You know, the funny thing is, I haven't seen *The L Word* this season. Because for some reason, well, I don't have a TV, and I've been very busy. I just love that she's on it. I saw a clip where she walks through and she looks beautiful on it, and she's so real.

I like Daniela too.

And you know, she's been around. And she represents the community, because she's been a part of the community, and there's no apologies with her. She's a musician, she's an activist,

she's political. And so, I love that they brought that in. Because I love *The L Word* thing, but I do think it tends to get very flashy, and a TV show should be flashy. For them to bring in Daniela I think is great, because there's some realness. That makes me really happy.

Last time I talked with her I said, "I don't know what you're doing in Hollywood, because you're just so amazing."

Yeah, that's what I say. I want to protect her.

I'm worried they'll eat her alive.

Yeah. She has a great girlfriend who is a tough lady, too. I think they've been around, so they know what they're getting themselves into. I think she has a great head on her shoulders. I don't think that she'll get messed up in any way, or hurt in any way. You know, it is all about visibility. For her to play that FTM character on there, thank God. She's just doing it.—*Diane Anderson-Minshall*