



THE EYES HAVE IT *British actress Lara Pulver's head-on gaze may as well have a license to kill*

THIS NEXT part gets a bit steep," I warn Lara Pulver, as we ascend a trail to the iconic Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles. "But I assume you're in excellent shape," I add, attempting to conceal my own gasps for air. "Of course!" she retorts. "I'm being trained by Daniel Craig's personal trainer!"

That's no surprise, considering the stunning brunette's recent role in the exquisitely shot BBC miniseries "Fleming," in which Pulver plays Ann O'Neill, the real-life lover and future wife of James Bond creator Ian Fleming. Airing on BBC America this month, it's a fascinating look at the man behind 007 and, as Pulver quips, "the one woman who Fleming went to bed with who was privileged enough to wake up next to him as well."

Pulver's on-screen presence looms so large, I was shocked when she showed up a petite 5 foot 2. From her role as Sookie's fairy godmother on HBO's "True Blood" to the enigmatic dominatrix Irene Adler on BBC's "Sherlock," Pulver demands the viewer's attention, with—as "Sherlock" writer/producer Steven Moffat has described—"eyes that could kick a hole through the back of your head with one look."

To prepare for the role of Fleming's strong-willed and complex wife—in many ways the ultimate Bond girl—Pulver

THE ORIGINAL BOND GIRL

*Globe-trotting with Pulver—
Lara Pulver—star of the
BBC America miniseries "Fleming"*

perused her diaries. "When I initially read the four episodes, I remember marking all over the script, 'But why? Why is she going back for more with this brute?'" Yet from her diaries, Pulver discovered that O'Neill's mother had died when she was young, and that she was so unused to affection that she vomited the first time her childhood sweetheart kissed her. "So all of a sudden you go, 'Oh, no wonder you've ended up in a very dysfunctional relationship!'"

Pulver's ascent has been fairly quick—she arrived in L.A. only five years ago and has been working steadily ever since—although her projects tend to shoot everywhere but Hollywood. "Fleming," for instance, had her jetting off to London, Budapest and Majorca, among other exotic locales. "I get to travel the world with the job I do," she says excitedly. "The people you meet, the cultures and the cities—it's extraordinary." For the moment, she is relishing a bit of downtime. "I was sitting on the couch the night before last, thinking, 'This is unusual for me to be sitting and watching TV,' because I've spent years hopping around cities, living out of suitcases. It would be quite nice, actually, for this to be 'usual' for just a moment!" —DAN CRANE