

self portrait

SELF

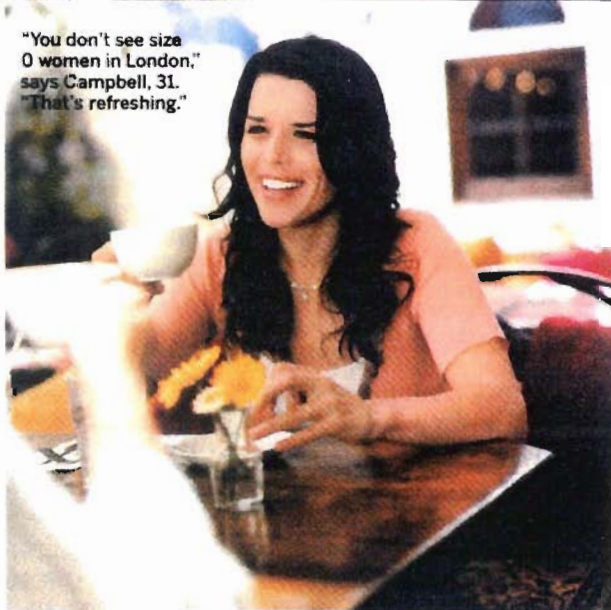
YOU AT YOUR BEST



Neve Campbell believes in self-fulfillment

The former *Party of Five* star prefers life outside of Hollywood.

Interview by Shelley Levitt



"You don't see size 0 women in London," says Campbell, 31. "That's refreshing."

I love ballet and always expected to become a dancer. I started dancing at 6 and joined the National Ballet School in Canada at 9. But the pressure was intense and, at 14, I had something of a nervous breakdown, so I dropped out. In the ballet world, I watched many friends damage themselves through anorexia and bulimia. We can get self-critical about our bodies, but I try hard to keep myself in check because I've seen how unhealthy that kind of obsessing can become.

In 1996, my whole life changed when I got the lead role in the movie *Scream*. The shows *Party of Five* and *Friends* were still new, and Courteney Cox, David Arquette and I were all just starting out. We felt like we were on this big, fun camping trip. None of us had any clue how popular the movie would be. Then, after it opened, we were suddenly celebrities.

I grew up with three brothers, and I was a tomboy. Maybe that's why I'm not that comfortable at photo shoots or on the red carpet. When I studied dance, I used my body as a tool in my craft, but being seen as a sexual icon was completely foreign to me. I was also oblivious to pop culture. My agents used to call and say, "Coppola wants you to read for him," and I'd say, "Who's Coppola?"

I lived in L.A. for 11 years. For a while, my mother lived there, too, and I realized it isn't much of a place for a divorced, middle-aged woman. Most men her age were dating 20-year-olds. There's something really wrong with that. I moved to London to be with my boyfriend a year ago, and I love that it's not all about the movie industry or how much you weigh.

My cousin Coleen and I have always been best friends. We were born eight days apart, and when she was diagnosed with epilepsy at 18, it was a shock for us both. She rarely talked about her condition because she never knew how others would react. Even after she became a successful makeup artist, she kept it a secret, telling her agent only this year. The two of us worked to launch the Bill of Rights for People Living With Epilepsy [EpilepsyBillOfRights.com], a document to help epileptics manage their condition and cope with issues that come up at work. It's about educating people the way Coleen educated me. Being around her keeps me grounded.

