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# BAZAR

Harper's

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### Cover Look: **COURTENEY COX**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TERRY RICHARDSON

**On the newsstand cover (left):** Courteney Cox wears gold-and-diamond earrings, \$9,925, **Cartier**. 800-CARTIER. **On the subscriber cover (right):** Dress, \$2,525, belt, \$575, and bracelet, \$1,730, **Lanvin**. 646-439-0380. Necklace, \$2,550, **Cartier**. Sandals, \$630, **Gianvito Rossi**. Saks Fifth Avenue; 800-330-8497. To get Courteney's newsstand look, try Skin Illusion Foundation (\$35), Illuminating Cheek Colour in Lovely Rose (\$28), Colour Quartet eyeshadow palette in Earth (\$40), Eyeliner Pencil in Black (\$23), Wonder Length Mascara in Wonder Black (\$23.50), and Gloss Appeal lip gloss in Paradise (\$21). All, **Clarins**. See Where to Buy for shopping details. Fashion editor: Mel Ottenberg. Hair: Chris McMillan for Chris McMillan Salon; makeup: Frank B.; manicure: Denise Knoll Manicures.



# From dating a woman to marrying a man

*After being in love with a WOMAN for years, writer Jennifer Baumgardner settled down with a MAN. Here, she explains why gender doesn't matter.*

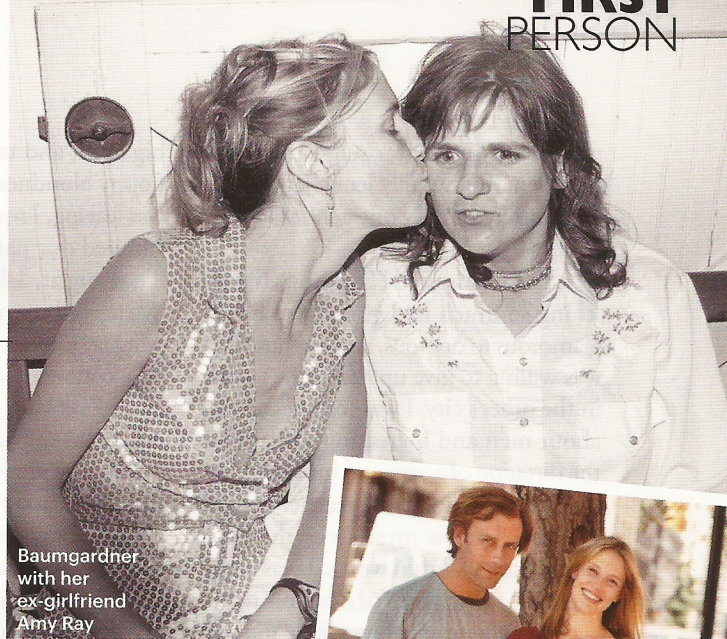
**T**he other night, I met a girl who reminded me of you," my friend Elizabeth said. It was a steamy Saturday afternoon in May, and I was rushing down a narrow Greenwich Village street to buy flowers for my wedding. "This girl, she was smart and feminist and said she was bisexual," Elizabeth continued. "I said, 'I know how this works. You'll be married in 10 years.'"

It's hard when your wedding day is used as evidence that your life is a sham. On a certain level, though, I understand the confusion. How can you be bisexual and married? If marriage isn't about picking a team, what is?

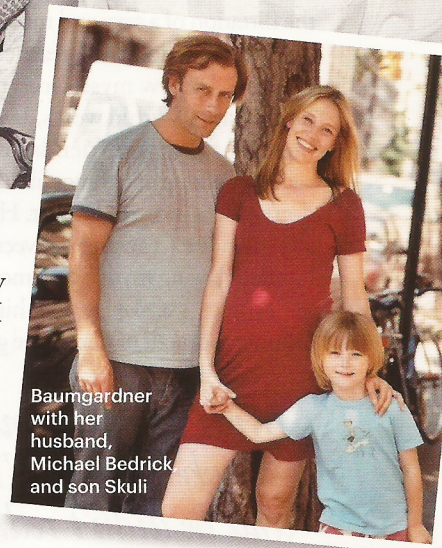
My run-in with Elizabeth made me think. I never thought I'd marry, even before I fell in love with a female intern at my first job in New York. That relationship—surprising, shocking, and thrilling—jolted my identity.

My 20s and 30s were a series of big loves with men and women, but the biggest one of all was Amy, an electrifying, alluringly butch musician who happened to be one half of the Indigo Girls. She had a Georgia accent, a kind soul, and selfless politics. We met in Montana when I flew out to cover a concert series in the late '90s. It was love and lust at first sight, spurring me to break up with my boyfriend and confirming the fact that I was not a straight girl. Soon we were flying back and forth between Atlanta and New York City, meeting on the road during her long tours, and spending holidays with each other's families. Her friends were attractive, progressive lesbians and inspiring musicians; mine were New York writers and feminists. I loved being in her world, and she embraced mine.

*My five-year relationship with Amy was COWIFELY: loving, healthy, and egalitarian*



Baumgardner with her ex-girlfriend Amy Ray



Baumgardner with her husband, Michael Bedrick, and son Skuli

I never wanted to marry Amy, but the fact that I couldn't legally do so made weddings attended with her poignant, vaguely itchy affairs. A friend once asked me if Amy and I were going to get hitched, and I felt a surge of gratitude that almost made me cry—not because I had my dress all picked out but because someone at least saw a wedding as an option. It's difficult to reject something that has rejected you first.

Some of my resistance to marriage was driven by my feminist politics. I was keenly attuned to the compromises associated with being a wife. "Why I Want a Wife," an essay in *Ms.* magazine (always on my mother's coffee table), had a profound effect on my youthful thinking. I often paraphrased poet Jan Clausen, saying, "If I'm going to be a wife, I damn well get to have one too." My five-year relationship with Amy was cowifely: loving, healthy, and egalitarian. We discussed politics, hiked on the Appalachian Trail, hung out with our families, and supported each other's work. We recycled, cooked together, rescued kittens, traveled all over, and found lots and lots of time for sex. For once, orgasms were easy.

By contrast, my relationships with men had always left me feeling like a clichéd version of myself—naggy, competitive, and quick to complain about how "emotionally unavailable" they were. I was dismissive of "typical couples" with their public bickering. I despaired of finding the relationship I wanted with a guy, and because of my ability to fall in love with women, I didn't try too hard. Men had their charms (lustful assertiveness, an air of mystery, fun body ▶



parts), but my better self—the more confident, funny, fully Jenny Jennifer—came out with only one gender.

**I**n 2002, Amy and I broke up. Traveling so much had gone from being glamorous to onerous, and neither of us was willing to give up her home to live in the other's city. I was feeling curious about men and increasingly returned the flirtation of a sexy and misanthropic musician/public-school teacher named Gordon. I threw myself into this new relationship. Within weeks, I was making excuses to my friends about his rudeness and saying things like “You just don't get his sense of humor. He's actually hilarious.” I swung between hating him and hating myself. In a moment of self-respect, I broke up with him. In an ensuing moment of denial, we got preg-

big eyed, and tall, his hair a thatch of floppy blondness. We chatted, and as I was leaving, I squeezed his arm and said I hoped our paths would cross again. That night, I Facebooked Michael. We agreed to meet for a drink. When Michael arrived, he handed me a bag of chocolate-chip cookies. “These are for Skuli,” he said, pronouncing my son's odd Icelandic name perfectly.

Michael also proved he understood me as someone who can love women and men, and he didn't reduce my relationships to “phases.” He's proudly supportive of my career as a feminist writer and activist and dedicated to making my chaotic life easier, and he makes me, an exhausted mother, feel like the sexiest woman in the world.

Although Michael wanted to get married, he accepted that I didn't. Soon, we

*Michael also proved he understood me as someone who can LOVE WOMEN AND MEN, and he didn't reduce my relationships to “phases”*

nant. I had a baby, Skuli, but ended the relationship with Gordon. I focused on my son, and romance slid off my radar and settled onto my to-do list. (*Item no. 121: Procure love life.*)

The first three years of my son's life were full with writing, book tours, friends, family, and the seemingly endless dramedies of the little boy with whom I lived. I was single for the first time in my adult life, and it felt surprisingly great. Being alone with Skuli was luxurious. Sometimes I would wake up with his little form snuggled next to me and think, Life is really good. But, delectable as it was, at 37, I sensed I was too young to have Skuli be my bedmate for eternity. I decided to move my love life back to the top of my to-do list.

This time around, I dated only men. It's hard to know why, but my sexuality isn't some equal-opportunity employer; it has its own logic and serendipity. Just as I was starting to feel like I had my mojo back, I ran into Michael, an old friend of my sister's, on a subway platform. He was broad shouldered,

were pregnant and living together—an instafamily. That's when I took a breath and realized I kind of wanted to marry him. I had a child with someone else; I wanted something with Michael I hadn't had with anyone. On the one-year anniversary of our first date, a little tipsy after dinner, I proposed. Eight months later, we said “I do.” My family was surprised and thrilled, but no one, thank God, acted relieved.

My lifelong mate is male, but it hasn't changed my sexuality. I believe that my sexuality emanates from me and is not conferred on me by my partner. On the other hand, I'm aware I appear straight, because bisexuality is invisible (or unbelievable) to many people. I know I'm not straight and never will be. I'm really proud of who I am, and I'm lucky that Michael is too.

At our wedding, I forgot the bouquet I had run out to buy hours earlier, so we fashioned one out of some flowers on the table. When I married Michael, I didn't feel like I picked a team, but I feel like I'm part of one. ■





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