

Since 2000 the television airwaves have been saturated with purportedly unscripted programs documenting real people, not actors, in real situations—so called “Reality TV.” Why so called? What many viewers don’t realize is that these shows are actually a somewhat modified version of reality; the cast members are manipulated to behave in certain ways by personnel coaching them off-camera, there’s heavy editing, and most of these shows take place in cramped quarters in exotic, or abnormal locales. One of the most popular genres of reality TV are the dating based competition shows. Who can forget Fox’s 2001 reality show, *Temptation Island*, which opened the flood gates for a bevy of lonely hearts looking for love (or money) on primetime TV? Hit shows like *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, *Average Joe*, *For Love or Money* and *I Love New York* followed suit. And the networks, in a never-ending quest to gain audiences for their newest incarnations of dating game shows, keep pushing the dating parameters envelope for the strong hook.

So it was no surprise that the dating game reality genre began courting the LGBT community, starting with Bravo’s 2003 show, *Boy Meets Boy*, filmed right here in Palm Springs. Its viewer enticement was, “Is he gay, or is he straight?”

as gay James Getzlaff chose among 15 men; half who were secretly straight, to find ‘the one.’ Last year MTV’s *A Shot at Love with Tila Tequila*, the first bisexual reality dating show, debuted at No. 1 for its time slot on cable in the target demographic of persons 18-34. The finale boasted over 6.2 million viewers to find out whether Tila picked the boy or the girl [Dani Campbell, who you can read about in this issue on page 68]. Much to the chagrin of lesbians everywhere, Tila opted hetero. But there’s going to be another *Shot at Love*, season two is in the works and maybe Tila will go lesbo this time around.

Which brings us to Calpernia Addams. This tall, leggy, green-eyed, redheaded beauty who resembles Rose McGowan, only prettier, has a smoking hot bod (36-30-38 to be exact) and is a striking 5’ 11”. She is the newest star of her own TV series on Logo, the network that continues to bring groundbreaking shows to the airwaves. Logo’s dating game reality show, *Transamerican Love Story*, which premiered February 11, centers on the striking and beautiful Southern Belle bachelorette, Calpernia Addams, as she searches for true love among eight bachelors with the help of her best friend Andrea James, and cohost Alec Mapa. Ah, but there’s something about Calpernia, she’s a MTF transgender; a fact all her suitors are aware of from the beginning—unlike the exploitive and controversial British TV series, *There’s Something About Miriam*, which kept Miriam’s identity as a transgender secret until the last episode. Calpernia’s show was never meant to be sensational, but rather a sign of our progressive and inclusive LGBT community. As Brian Graden, President of MTV Networks and Logo stated, “These shows advance Logo’s continuing mission to not only explore the diversity of people in our community, but also the diverse lives

they lead. Calpernia Addams proves that steely optimism and a genuine spirit are the universal keys to finding love.”

That optimism is tempered by her gentleness. Her easy going and kind air about her was evident even over the phone when she spoke with *The BottomLine* recently. Perhaps it’s the result of her Southern upbringing. She still has a bit of a Tennessee accent after being in L.A. for the past five years, and she certainly possess the fortitude so common among Southerners. She’s overcome some horrible tragedies in her life—foremost losing her boyfriend to a brutal hate crime murder in 1999. Yet she doesn’t seem to be jaded in the least by her hardships. Calpernia took a neg-



# Calpernia Addams looks for love on Logo

BY PJ MAYTAG