

JEZEBEL[®]

INSIDE
THE CITY'S
CHICEST
CLOSETS

MATT CZUCHRY

SCRUBS IN FOR
ATLANTA-FILMED
THE RESIDENT

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Leather jacket, \$698, and henley, \$348, both by John Varvatos; jeans, \$235, by AG Jeans; belt, \$178, by Saks Fifth Avenue Collection; boot, \$450, by To Boot New York; all at Saks Fifth Avenue, Phipps Plaza.

PHOTO BY ELLIOT LISS. STYLING BY JABE MABREY. GROOMING BY CANDACE COREY. SHOT ON LOCATION AT FOX TROT LIQUOR BAR.

TAKING THE LEAD

BY KELSIE ALLEN BARTON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ELLIOT LISS
STYLING BY JABE MABREY
GROOMING BY CANDACE COREY
SHOT ON LOCATION AT FOXTROT LIQUOR BAR

With Atlanta-filmed *The Resident*, Matt Czuchy steps into the spotlight to deliver a new kind of TV doctor—one with intriguing dimension, irresistible charm and undeniable swagger.



Shirt, \$165, vest, \$249, and pants, \$269, all at Ted Baker London, Lenox Square; shoes, stylist's own.



Seersucker bomber, \$1,795, white shirt, \$395, and pants, \$475, all at Ermenegildo Zegna, Lenox Square; belt, \$165, by To Boot New York at Saks Fifth Avenue, Phipps Plaza.

From *Gilmore Girls*' Logan Huntzberger to *The Good Wife*'s Cary Agos, Matt Czuchry has mastered the art of portraying the ambitious, often arrogant playboy we can't help but root for. Now, after captivating our screens (and stealing our hearts) for well over a decade, the talented actor is at it again—but this time, he's traded suits for scrubs as Dr. Conrad Hawkins, the brash yet brilliant main character on Fox's new Atlanta-based medical drama, *The Resident*. Though he plays a rebellious third-year resident with an unconventional approach to saving lives, Czuchry's anything but cocky in real life; in fact, the more he opened up to *JEZEBEL*, the more he proved to be down-to-earth, disciplined and, simply put, the kind of guy we'd love to have a drink with. Here, Czuchry takes a break between scenes at the fictional Chastain Park Memorial Hospital to talk his Southern roots, iconic roles and hard-earned rise to stardom.

You spent much of your childhood in the South before moving to Los Angeles. Do you consider yourself a Southerner at heart?

I have little bits of myself all over the place, I guess I would say. I was born in New Hampshire, moved to Tennessee when I was 9 and lived there through high school, then went to school at College of Charleston, so definitely a lot of pieces of the South there. I've lived most of my life in L.A., but I've also lived in New York and now Atlanta.

Speaking of College of Charleston, I hear you're giving the keynote address at commencement this year. If you could, what advice would you pass on to your 22-year-old self now?

I would say to be present in the moment, as opposed to worrying about the past or worrying about the future. So much of what we do with our lives is worrying about the things we've done or the things we want to do, instead of just being present in the now.

On *The Good Wife* you played a young, go-getting attorney—but that was almost the case in real life too. How did you ultimately decide to become an actor? Senior year in college, a kind of confluence of events came together to have me pursue a career in acting. I was planning on being a lawyer; I double majored in history and political science. I took the LSAT and did horribly on it, and that was one thing that made me rethink a new direction. I started taking some acting classes outside the school... and I loved them, and after I didn't do too well on the LSAT, I thought about pursuing that career as opposed to going to law school.



Checked blazer, \$1,495, polo shirt, \$295, cashmere sweatpants, \$1,495, and sneakers, \$795, all at Ermenegildo Zegna, Lenox Square.

And now here you are, starring in the new drama *The Resident*. What attracted you to this project?

We talk a little bit about the darker and grittier side to this beloved genre. For me, I've had some personal experiences with family or extended family with health, or medical error—which is one of the themes we bring up—or the health care system in general. When I was reading the pilot, I felt if I have so many personal connections to these themes and these stories, how many other people would have personal connections to the themes that we are trying to tell? So that's what really drew me in initially.

Is that darker side what makes this show different from other medical shows on TV?

Yeah, and [it's] a little bit more cynical in talking about the business of what it takes to run a hospital or health care system, and how that impacts patients and doctors. And also, something you'll see later in the season is the mistakes doctors make: How does that weigh on them emotionally and how do they compartmentalize that to be able to move on from their mistakes? ... You have this macro level of business and hospital, but then you also go down to the micro level of the emotional connections that you have with your patients. That personal exploration within these characters was something I was excited about.

Has filming this show been a challenge for you?

I've been challenged in a lot of ways: being the lead of this show, in terms of the responsibility associated with that; in terms of the time commitment; in terms of the material (with it being a medical show, the scenes where we have to combine the medical dialogue with the actions are the most difficult scenes in the show). Those are some of the things that have been really challenging for me... and I was ready for that challenge. And those are the best days: When you have scenes where you're not quite sure how you're going to be able to make it through, and you find a way. And by doing that, you learn about yourself in the process—what you can withstand and what you can achieve. The more challenges that are thrown at you, the more reward there is on the other side because you surprise yourself and say, 'Wow, these are things I didn't realize I was capable of.'

Were you excited to become Dr. Conrad Hawkins and shed the personas of past characters?

I was excited about this particular project overall being different than the projects I've done in the past. As an artist, you're looking to express yourself, and this character was very different from *The Good Wife* or *Gilmore Girls*. It wasn't about trying to distance myself from those projects—just about how, as an artist, you want to tell new stories and explore new characters.

I know you grew a beard as part of your preparation to play this character (well done, by the way). What other prep was involved?

It was really research-intensive to get into the mental aspects that these doctors go through and try to tap into their world. [That] was something I really enjoyed, and that's what took up the predominance of my time before the pilot, and then after the show got picked up, reading more and doing interviews with doctors—I ran around with doctors and nurses for a few days. So all that research to get inside this character's head and to get inside these stories was what took up, apart from the beard, the majority of my preparation.

Dr. Hawkins isn't exactly warm and fuzzy, but he's a total badass when it comes to treating patients. Did you have fun playing him?

Certainly, this character has a lot of moxie—that's kind of

“The more challenges that are thrown at you, the more reward there is on the other side because you surprise yourself and say, ‘Wow, these are things I didn’t realize I was capable of.’”

the way I'd put it. He is willing to break the rules, and he has a risk-taking quality that I like a lot. ... Professionally, he's kind of one step ahead of everybody else; but emotionally, perhaps he's a little bit stunted. So I think he throws himself into his professional world because that's what he's good at. In terms of his emotional world and relationships, those are more difficult for him. To see both of those sides... to me, that's interesting because that's human.

How has it been working in Atlanta?

I have family here, so that's nice to be close to them. It's also something that's been really nice for the work aspect: We were all kind of sequestered here, so to speak in terms of the cast, there's kind of a unity there and a focus that 'this is about the work; this is about the characters

and the story' that you feel when you're on location. It becomes a camaraderie.

Any ATL spots you're eager to check out?

There's one pizza place I really want to get to: Antico. That's the bucket list for me right there.

When you look back at *Gilmore Girls* and the role that launched your career, what was your favorite thing about that experience?

I would say now, one of my favorite things is how it's crossed so many generations. We did this reunion in 2015 in Austin, Texas, and a vast majority saw *Gilmore Girls* when it was on Netflix for the first time. That was just a huge surprise to me to see generation after generation of mothers and daughters or girlfriends in college together watching the show for so long. It's really nice to be part of a project that has filled people up with so much joy.

And were you happy with the way the Netflix revival, *Gilmore Girls: A Year in the Life*, wrapped things up?

Yeah, I think the most important part about that was that fans had been asking for it for nine years, since the original series ended. And there we were, nine years later, and who would have ever thought that this show would come back in such a unique way on Netflix in four installments? It just felt like the right time, and it felt like this is for the fans, and it felt really organic and pure in a lot of ways to be a part of it. So for me, that was so rewarding that we could deliver something to the fans that they had wanted for so long. For me, that made that particular job special. That was probably one of my favorite jobs I've had in my entire career.

I've noticed you're not on social media. What influenced that decision?

I think it ties into how much I give myself to the roles I play and the jobs I take, in terms of uprooting myself and in terms of the dedication and the hours. You want to try to find some balance of privacy and personal aspects of your life that you can maintain for yourself.

Looking beyond *The Resident*, what's next for you?

With this job, fortunately or unfortunately, there really is so much unknown, that it forces you to be present in the now. I'm not sure if there will be a season two of *The Resident*. So it goes one way if there is; it goes another way if there's not—but it's two very different paths. ... I didn't know when I finished *Gilmore Girls* I was going to be in New York for seven years. After *The Good Wife*, I didn't know I was going to be in Atlanta for this period of time. I had no idea; so it really forces you to try to control only the things you can control around yourself. ■

Suit, \$1,255, by Dries Van Noten; shirt, \$400, belt, \$455, and sneakers, \$895, all by Gucci; all at Jeffrey Atlanta, Phipps Plaza. Jumper, \$595, by Versace at Saks Fifth Avenue, Phipps Plaza.

