

The world according to Jessica

8 Reasons Why You Shouldn't Underestimate Her

by Lisa Arcella

Jessica Simpson's been known to call mice "mouses" and thinks spicy buffalo wings are actually made from buffalo, but the preacher's daughter-turned-pop queen from Richardson, Texas, doesn't mind her dumb-blonde rap. In fact, she's been laughing all the way to the bank with a rapidly growing empire. And despite her ambition and drive, friends say she's remained grounded—a combination that makes her likely to achieve world domination. "My calling is so huge that I can't fathom or tell you how far it has expanded," she has said. "People don't really know the depth to Jessica." Here are just some of the reasons there's a lot more to her than the lucrative ditz routine.

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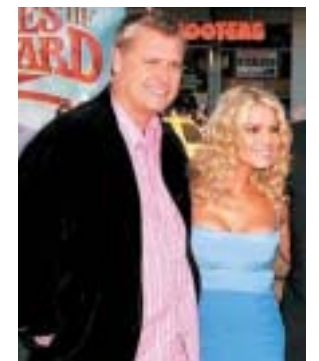
1 She has no regrets about her rise to fame.

Despite all the divorce rumors, paparazzi attention and gossip column allegations about her marriage, Jessica's grateful that the reality TV show that inspired all the attention, *Newlyweds: Nick & Jessica*, made both her and Nick Lachey household names. "I don't mind how MTV [portrayed] me, because you don't just see what's on the cover of a magazine or what's walking on the red carpet, you actually see a normal person," she has said.



2 She's choosy.

With the help of her manager/dad, Joe, she's learned to make careful career choices. In fact, debuting in *The Dukes of Hazzard* was a deliberate decision. "I turned down *Coyote Ugly*, *A Walk to Remember* and... others," she has said. "I didn't want to carry a movie my first time out. I wanted it to be an ensemble cast where, if it didn't succeed, all the blame wouldn't be on me."



3 She's ready to learn.

Many young women in her position are too stuck up to take constructive criticism—and it's easy to see why. The whole world is telling them how wonderful they are and willing to cater to their every whim. But Jessica is a firm believer in reaping what you sow. "I expected her to be a diva," *Dukes of Hazzard* director Jay Chandrasekhar has said. "In the first take of her audition, she was nervous and stilted. I started making suggestions, and she incorporated everything I said, immediately. By the time we were done, she nailed it."



4 She isn't self-conscious about her sex appeal.

Critics have lashed out, saying that Jessica—a virgin until marriage—is fostering an image that is far too sexy. It's a complaint Jess has been hearing since she hit puberty and developed her now famous "assets." She's learned to take it all in stride, and adds that the Christian groups who have attacked her are the ones behaving badly. "You know what? This is not really a Christian-like thing to do, to go to the press and say that about somebody," she has retorted.

5 She works hard for her bod, but knows how to indulge, too.

Getting a huge movie role and knowing that everyone will be critiquing every move you make would be enough to drive most people over the edge. And it was enough to send Jessica straight to the refrigerator! "When I found out I got the role [in *Dukes*], I ate all the chocolate cake I could possibly hold in my stomach," she told a reporter. But as soon as that moment was over, Jessica started training for those unforgiving Daisy Dukes, exchanging natural sweeteners for Splenda. "I cut sugar out of my diet. I haven't worked out since the movie, but I've stayed on the diet because I have so much energy without having sugar."

What's Next For Jess?

According to Psychic Medium Linda Lauren, "Jess is going through a rough, transitional period right now. We're going to hear some hot and nasty rumors about someone in her past." As for all the reports that she and Nick are separating? "It will be a rocky couple of months, but somehow they'll work things out by next year. She'll survive this." And what about her career? "She was partying too much and now she's going to have to work hard to get things back on track. Don't be surprised if she writes another book." And the biggest shocker: "Expect to hear baby news within 18 months," says Linda.



6 She completely understands her image.

A lot of actresses in Hollywood think they're the next Meryl Streep, but Jessica is content to be the current Jessica Simpson. "I want to make people laugh...I'm not here for an Oscar. I want people to walk out of the theater and just feel good. When you are...who you want to be, people respond to that. I'm living proof that it works."

7 She knows what's right for her.

There have been suggestions that it could help save her marriage, but Jessica has bristled at the thought of starting a family in the immediate future. "That's not happening anytime soon," she has said, adding that she definitely wants a child—someday. But for now, she's focused on strengthening her career and insists she'll only do it when the timing is right for her.

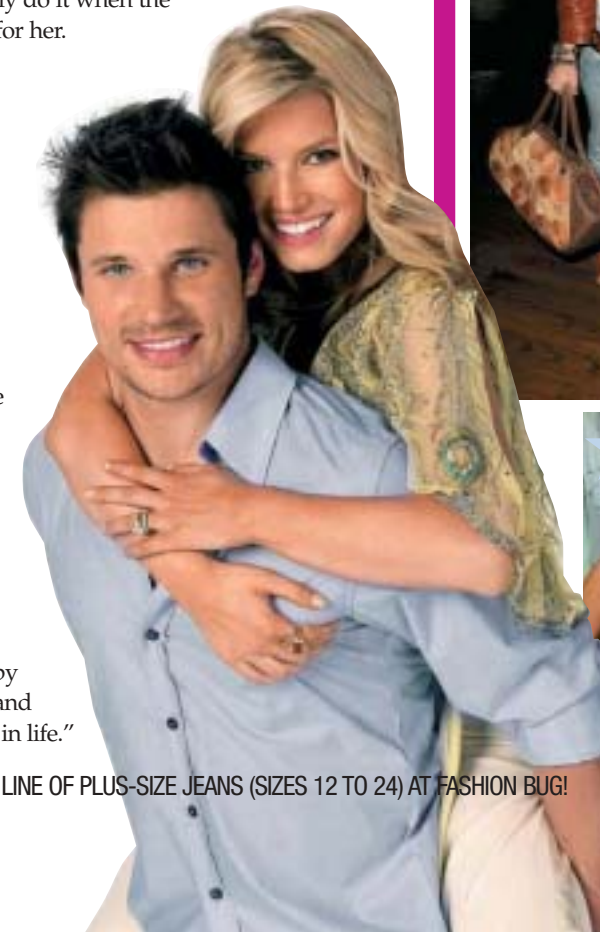
8 She's proving she's a survivor.

While she and Nick may be following in the footsteps of Jennifer and Brad (at press time she was denying rumors of a separation), Jess has been battling media misinformation since *Newlyweds* first aired and has learned to stay strong and tough it out, leaning on her family and drawing on her newfound sense of confidence. "I've created my own formula by just being myself," she's said, "and that's the most important thing in life."

PS! LOOK OUT FOR JESS' LINE OF PLUS-SIZE JEANS (SIZES 12 TO 24) AT FASHION BUG!

How to steal Jess' style

Forget singing—shopping may be Jess' true passion. With the help of stylist Rachel Zoe, she almost never has a bad-outfit day. Her secrets? She layers tops (1); always totes a status bag (2, 3); pairs her beloved cowboy boots over long and lean jeans (2); emphasizes her '50s pinup curves (4, 5); and lives in long necklaces (1, 4).



Get a piece of Jessica



Princy
Jess says the jeans in her new clothing line, to be sold at better department stores, are cut to fit a woman's curves—hopefully ones bigger than her own.



Jessica Simpson Footwear

Think about it—when have you ever seen Jess in a pair of flats? It was only a matter of time before she started her own line of heels.

Dessert Treats

Jess' new lower-priced line of Dessert beauty products will be sold in drugstore chains such as Walgreens and Eckerd. Mmm—edible and affordable.



And, of course, more movies

In the upcoming *Major Movie Star*, she'll play an actress who hits rock bottom and ends up in the military reserves. Think *Hope & Faith* meets *Private Benjamin*.



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