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**I gotta tell you something about strong, fine-ass women.**

If you come across one you better not get involved unless you've got a strong personality as well and can handle the independence. If you can't...well, she'll just rip your mind to shreds and make you feel like your heart just got dragged by a Silvia drifting through a chicane at Willow Springs. No sweat. Ouch! What's the good thing about that type of woman? If she wants you then be prepared for a good ride. If you're ready, this month's *Import Tuner* cover model, Michelle Perez, can take you on that ride.

Michelle's lineage—her uncle is an actor who's bit-parted in movies like "Scarface" and TV shows like "Hill Street Blues"—suggests a destiny that leads toward limelight. She's been dancing since she was 7, and at 22 started her career in modeling. And guys, she's not just a pretty face with the intelligence of a sack of rocks. She's got a Communications Public Relations degree from California State University, Fullerton. Beware, she's all that and she knows how to use all her stuff to get you begging.

Don't get it wrong with her mind, body and personality; she's no she-devil, but you can say she's one hell of a woman. Michelle Perez I'm glad I met you...but can you please take the sleeper hold off my heart and pass the bandages already?!?

**ZNR:** Do you have an ideal guy?

**MP:** I like the pretty-boy type—a nice white guy with blue

the guy behind me. These rappers have huge entourages and, seriously, they're all over your ass. They think they can cop a feel. I was getting annoyed. I'm not at all about that. The guy was like "be my girl for the scene." I was totally avoiding him. I ended up right behind 50 just grooving. He's a cool guy. So is Eminem.

**ZNR:** Must be nice.

**MP:** Actually, there was a lot of drama on the set. It was shot in Manhattan Beach. That evening Suge Knight showed up with like 12 bald Mexican dudes. Somehow they got wristbands that got them on the set. They threatened Dre. So, they locked us in a room for like an hour because they had all this commotion going on. It was pretty scary. When we were on the set Eminem had a bulletproof vest on under his shirt. I don't think Knight was after 50, though. I think he was just after Dre. I guess "Mo Money, Mo Problems."

**ZNR:** Are there any clubs we can catch you hanging out at?

**MP:** In Orange County I usually hang out at Dennis Rodman's club—Josh Slocum's. That's my spot. It's like an L.A. club but right here in Newport. It's a good crowd; although, it does attract some of the 909 (not a dis to the 909!) but it does attract some of the trashy stripper chicks. Sometimes Dennis gets really fucked up! He'll either be really generous and give everybody a free round of Cristal or change the music to like thrash metal, then switch it up again to hip hop. He's totally crazy—but fun! In L.A. I like the lounge. I just like to hang out with a

## HERE COMES THE PEREZ UP CLOSE & PERSONAL WITH MICHELLE PEREZ

eyes. You know, the Abercrombie & Fitch athletic guy. I don't like big buff guys, but good muscles and teeth are attractive. They must have STYLE! Am I too, you know....

**ZNR:** Picky? No biggie, most guys'll take any girl from "The Man Show."

**MP:** Oh my God. Did you know I was a trampoline girl? It was fun, easy work.

**ZNR:** So any kind of training for that?

**MP:** (laughs) Hey, it was actually kind of hard. I haven't jumped on a trampoline in a long time. I think since high school. You really have to be coordinated. They ask you to do these crazy things like toe touches, backflips. I was in pigtails and had socks to my knees. I wore these basketball shorts, wristbands, a headband. I've never actually seen it, but I know they air it throughout the season. Never got a chance to catch it.

But I did a couple college commercials! I've been sent out on some big ones—national ones. Those are the kind that pay FAT money. If it's a national commercial you could get residuals. Basically, every time it airs you get a check. There are people that get \$50,000 to \$60,000 off one commercial. To work in that business is very lucrative.

**ZNR:** Wow, you could get a check without even knowing it was coming. So that guy that does the Subway commercials, he gets FAT money, too, huh? (no pun intended...heh-heh)

**MP:** Anyways, I just did the "In Da Club" video with 50 Cent. I'm in the middle of the video. It's funny, because my friends who see it laugh 'cause they say I'm totally trying to avoid

certain promoter's crowd—Brent Bullhouse productions. He's got a star-crowd—people that work in the industry. A stylish crowd. (pointing to my L-R-G straw hat) You're hat has style.

**ZNR:** Just my hat?

**MP:** In L.A. it's all about style and how different you are. In Newport Beach sometimes it's too stuffy. My style is...well, I like to dress sporty. I love my Nike Shox. My Abercrombie pants...I don't like hootchie things, I like sexy, tasteful stuff.

**ZNR:** Guys are gonna wanna know how they can fit your profile. What's the thing that'll make the "circle fit the square?"

**MP:** Confidence. It's the most important thing. Insecurity is the biggest turnoff. My man's got to be a gentleman. I don't need that much attention. So that obsessive crazy guy—the one that calls all the time—is out. I'm one of the most independent people I know. A man has to be comfortable with me just hanging out in the crowd. I don't have a set schedule and there's a lot of guys I've been with that can't handle my lifestyle. I have a lot of hot (male) friends. We go out to get attention, and it's not like we're going out and screwing. I'm just really social. Can't handle it? Then you can't hang. I'm picky...maybe too picky.

**ZNR:** So, do you get to date often?

**MP:** I have a lot of friends and when I do date I try to do it outside my little circle. I don't like the drama of having people know the person you're dating.

**ZNR:** OK, so what's your longest relationship?

**MP:** About a year-and-half.



**INTERVIEW: MICHELLE PEREZ**

INSECURITY IS THE BIGGEST TURNOFF. MY MAN'S GOT TO BE A GENTLEMAN. I DON'T NEED THAT MUCH ATTENTION. SO THAT OBSESSIVE CRAZY GUY—THE ONE THAT CALLS ALL THE TIME—IS OUT.



**2NR:** Wow, long-term'r, huh?

**MP:** That's long for me! I'm busy. I just graduated from Cal State Fullerton with a degree in communications. I gotta travel and fulfill this dream. I don't wanna look back and say "shit!" After graduating I had offers from a couple of marketing companies, but I'm all about having fun right now. But I did intern at the Fox studios over the summer. American Idol is cheesy—but cool. The best was being able to escort Kobe Bryant around to all his interviews. I got the chance to walk him down the red carpet. I told him where to stop. He's so nice. His wife Vanessa—I think a couple of months pregnant—was there. They just got back from Tahiti. He's such a dedicated guy. You can tell he loves his wife. Seems so faithful to her.

**2NR:** Are you a faithful person?

**MP:** Yes! That's one of my biggest pet peeves. Faithfulness and loyalty.

**2NR:** Look me in the eyes and say that.

**MP:** Sheeit, I'll look you in your eyes...

**2NR:** (*It worked*) Mmmmm...mesmerizing.

**MP:** If you're gonna be in a relationship and you're gonna cheat, just don't be in the relationship!

**2NR:** Toe-may-toe, tah-maa-toe. What's cheating?

**MP:** Just hooking up with anyone. Kissing...anything. Flirting is OK. Flirting can be like a business process. (*laughs*) You could flirt to get what you want but it really doesn't mean anything. When I go to trade shows I notice that a lot of men that hit on me are married.

**2NR:** Well, they've already got something. So it's no big deal if you turn them down.

**MP:** I think it's cheating if you initiate any intimate contact with another person. I'm not gonna cheat. I could go out and date eight guys if I wanted. Why would I grab the next guy just to fill a "boyfriend" role because everyone's got one?

**2NR:** You are really strong.

**MP:** You think? I think it because I've been through a lot. I went through that "quarter-life crisis" last year. It's a time when you don't really know who you are. I did a lot of soul searching and really got to know what I wanted. Now, I've learned to focus on what I want...my goals, my dreams.

**2NR:** You seem fit. (*I take the time to use this excuse to check her out*) Do you like or do any sports?

**MP:** I like college basketball and the Lakers, of course. I do Yoga, Pilates and I kickbox.

**2NR:** (*I quit checking her out at this point and kept my eyes above her neck*) Kickbox? You've seen *2NR's* editor and art director (Jason and Erik) walking around the studio, right? Could you kick their asses?

**MP:** Ummm, I don't know Jason's pretty big.

**2NR:** (*I'm fumbling through the mini blinds that separate the studio from the interview room*) Jason? (*Pointing through the window*) That's Jason.

**MP:** Oh that's Jason? Well, oh yeah, definitely! I could drop him.

**INTERVIEW: MICHELLE PEREZ**

I HAVE A LOT OF GUY FRIENDS AND THEY KNOW I'M A COOL CHICK. I CAN SEE CHEESY, FLASHY AND FAKENESS. POSERS. I CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH THAT.



**2NR:** How 'bout Erik?

**MP:** Erik? He's the bigger guy? I don't know...but Jason—I could kick his ass. *(we laugh)*

**2NR:** What kind of cars do you like?

**MP:** I like Mercedes. My ultimate would be the CL500 in black with some Giovanni rims...or maybe a BMW 5 Series. I like Escalades and Navigators, too.

**2NR:** With that CL500 setup you're asking about \$150,000. You really like that bling.

**MP:** Yeah, it's all about the "bling bling!"

**2NR:** Do you have a 5-year plan?

**MP:** I want a national commercial...I wanna travel. I think it'd be nice to have 70 grand in the bank and travel for the next 3 years, right?

**2NR:** I don't know if I could relax for 3 years. I think I'd drink up the money.

**MP:** I want to train really hard in dance. I'd really just like to dance—be a back-up dancer. Or maybe a Lakers girl.

**2NR:** Lakers girls are all right—not exactly goddess-like beauty...

**MP:** Or a Clipper girl. They're cute. So, 5 years...hmm...I'll be 30. I'd like to see myself as an agent at a top talent firm. You never know. We'll see.

**2NR:** What's a fun weekend for you?

**MP:** I love to gamble. I play craps and roulette. In roulette I bet my number (5) but I also like to bet the easy ones—like red and black.

**2NR:** When you start betting the reds and blacks ya gotta bet high! But watch out. The last time I went I was just running table to table looking for strings of red or blacks and plopping down 100-buck chips. I came to this table with a string of like eight reds and knew it was a sure bet if I bet black. That thing ran to like 12 reds in a row. I lost bank.

**MP:** Well, lately I've been sitting at the craps table. I went to Vegas one time with my friends and I was at the table. My dad was a craps guy. He let me in on a little secret. You take the dice. Rub the dice three times and you shake it. You don't blow them. Don't kiss them. I did that. I was seriously throwing them for like a half hour. I was betting the pass line and come line. I was winning, getting high fives, getting tipped. I don't know every single detail about the game, but I think it's just this lucky thing I'm feeling right now. The most I've won was 1,500 bucks. I did lose it right away, though.

**2NR:** What would you do with the money? What would you buy?

**MP:** I love purses. Prada! I don't know, because I'm really a shop-o-holic.

**2NR:** I think that's like most women. What's your prized possession?

**MP:** My CL—it rides like a Lexus. I had a piece of shit car before. An Integra...missing hubcaps...dented doors. I never took care of it. I was gonna say my red Prada purse. I'm such a label whore.

**2NR:** What would be your ultimate date?

**MP:** You show up at my door with a dozen roses. You then fly me to Maui and have a bottle of Cristal waiting for me on the jet. You set up a nice steak and lobster dinner. We have a little wine. We walk the beach. You take me for a spa treatment, a facial.

**2NR:** Sheesh! How 'bout low key?

**MP:** OK, well then, roses at the door—gotta have the roses. Take me to a front-row Lakers game or Justin Timberlake concert. Or at least close enough to the front row!

**2NR:** Note to self: Save up four grand.

**MP:** Seriously, all you have to be is romantic, sincere and like what I like. I can see game just like that. I have a lot of guy friends and they know I'm a cool chick. I can see cheesy, flashy and fakeness. Poseurs. I can see right through that.

**2NR:** Well, on my budget this is what I'd give you: A single rose at the front door. I'd take you to some nice park, say Griffith Park. Have sandwiches, or for that Hawaiian theme give you a lei and some Spam musubi with teriyaki sauce dip. A nice bottle of Boone's Farm—Strawberry Hill, of course—that I picked up from the same 7-11 that I got the rose. Then I'll take you to the Griffith observatory. I'd keep throwing out "it's just like that one movie, right?" just to keep you from wanting to see a movie...

**MP:** (*Laughing*) You know, I'd totally appreciate that—

just as long as it was genuine! If he didn't have a lot of money but put a lot of effort into the date I would seriously consider dating him again.

**2NR:** I guess I'm up for seconds.

At that, Ms. Perez was whisked away by Jason to get the photo shoot done. Dirty looks are my cue to leave. I'd overstayed his welcome. Didn't even get a sniff of the complementary pizza. Fuck it. I didn't want to stay anyway. I had no worries—the others could never sweep her off her feet. Shit, I'm the one with the Spam musubi and Strawberry Hill. Oh yeah, I am Pimpin'.

**MODEL: MICHELLE PEREZ**

Age: 25

Height: 5 ft 6 in.

Weight: 110 lb

DOB: 11/5/77

Sign: Scorpio

Birthplace: Fullerton, Calif.

Nationality: Filipino/Spanish/Hawaiian

Measurements: 34B/24/33

Turn-ons: Gentlemanly confidence

Turn-offs: Insecurity

Sports: Basketball, kickboxing

Ambitions: To become a dancer or talent agent

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