



Sara Canning enjoys a picturesque spot on the seawall in Stanley Park, against the backdrop of the Lions Gate Bridge

PHOTO BY KK LAW

# Rising Star

Young, beautiful and acting in a hit TV show—Sara Canning is the kind of girl it would be easy to hate, if only she weren't so darned sweet and talented

**BY SHERI RADFORD**

The undead are certainly lively these days. On television, in movies and in novels, vampires are baring their fangs. Sara Canning, for one, enjoys the trend. The 23-year-old Canadian-born actress has always been a fan of the bloodsuckers, going back to the story of Dracula, which she first read as a teenager, and the film *Nosferatu*, right up to current hits such as the hauntingly beautiful Swedish film *Let the Right One In* and the worldwide phenomenon that is *Twilight*. She feels especially grateful to the enduring popularity of the undead fiends now that her show, *The Vampire Diaries*, is starting its second season.

**Matt Davis (Alaric) and Sara Canning (Aunt Jenna) in a scene from *The Vampire Diaries***



Canning portrays a human—the aunt of the main character, not a vampire—but she has contemplated the tantalizing vamps on her show. When asked if she's Team Stefan or Team Damon, she answers with a laugh that it would be Stefan for eternity but Damon for a weekend. "Any longer than a weekend and you may end up underground."

The young actress knows how fortunate she is to have landed a hit TV series. She's worked hard to get where she is, doing theatre since age 12, but in acting, she says, "Luck and good fortune are always part of it."

Realizing that luck and good fortune would be more likely to find her in Canada's largest film centre, Canning packed her bags and left her childhood home of Sherwood Park, Alberta, for the bright lights of Vancouver—and a year studying everything from acting to voice work to screenwriting at Vancouver Film School. Quickly, she became enamoured with her new city. She doesn't even mind the famous wet weather: "I really love being in Stanley Park when it rains or right after it's rained." One of her favourite West Coast activities is to rent a bike and ride it around the seawall in Stanley Park (page 70). She raves about all the fabulous places to

find great sushi, brunch spots such as Cafe Medina (page 82), and Chapters (page 26), the giant bookstore chain that doesn't exist in her new home of Atlanta, Georgia, where she has relocated for the filming of *The Vampire Diaries*.

Every chance Canning gets, she returns to Vancouver. Filming kept her away during the 2010 Winter Olympics, but friends filled her in about the incredible experience of proud Canadians thronging Granville Street. She spent the summer here during her most recent hiatus. When she's in Vancouver, she never has to worry about hiding her Canadian accent or the "Canadianisms" that creep into her speech. Born in Newfoundland, Canning worked especially hard to get rid of her "Newfie" accent, though it creeps back in whenever she phones her parents.

A bright future lies ahead for Canning. According to her, a creative person should "never be satisfied" and should "always be curious, wanting to know more." She constantly pushes herself, studying acting and writing, and she's currently working on a script with a friend. "I'm excited to see where the next five years take me," she says.

So are we. 

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**Sara Canning pauses on the seawall in Stanley Park**

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