



# Not e

He's handsome [*natural*]  
determined to do real g

**D**ressed in black leather jacket and jeans, George Clooney doesn't disappoint. He enters the room with a deep southern 'Hello', and a million-dollar smile befitting an actor who's become the Cary Grant of his age, handsome, debonair, with that indefinable 'something' that sets a handful of celebrities apart from the rest.

Yet he insists his superstar status is more down to luck than skill.

"I've learnt to understand how little my success has had to do with me," he says.

"So many elements make the difference, all of which I've learnt from my family, who

# Just A Pretty Face

lly], a fine actor [of course], but he's also good with his fame. Sandie Jones met him

are a mixture of great successes and cautionary tales.

"My aunt, Rosemary Clooney, was as big a singer as you could be in 1950, and burnt-out by 1960. But it didn't make her any less of a singer."

His father, was a celebrity, too — a news anchorman and game-show host, but George took his time deciding whether to follow him into showbusiness.

Once he'd discovered acting, the way he dealt with success was inspired by hearing a well-known actor, who he refuses to name, "complaining about how hard his life was.

## *'I made a series of bad calls early in my career'*

I thought, 'what a jerk — you got lucky, and you should be enjoying it.' And then I got lucky, and I'm going to enjoy it!"

So you'll never hear George moaning about the price of fame.

"Sure, there are some things about what I do that aren't so much fun, but I'm not going to complain about that to anybody. I get an easy ride and I will always appreciate that. I never take anything for granted."

As an actor-director, he's firmly at the top of Hollywood's A-list, but six years ago, with his kissing-baby-campaigning for his movies leaving him feeling 'unclean', he decided to do something of real value.

In recent years, he has become a committed political activist and charity ambassador, using his reknown and some of his fortune to help victims of the 2004 Tsunami, the Haiti earthquake, and the conflicts in Darfur and the Sudan, among others.

There's still time for romance but, despite dating a string of

beautiful women (and a brief marriage to actress Talia Balsam in 1989), George remains resolutely single.

When he was in his 30s, Nicole Kidman famously bet him \$10,000 he'd be married by 40. He returned the cheque she sent him on his birthday, offering double or quits in 10 years' time. As he's just turned 50, it looks like his good friend is now \$20,000 out of pocket.

His current partner — as we go to press — is model and wrestler Stacy Keibler, but it's well known that his longest live-in relationship, at 18 years, was with Max, a Vietnamese pot-bellied pig who died in 2006.

Doesn't he ever feel there's something missing in his life? "Of course there's something missing," he says, "and I'm going to address that situation immediately by adopting..." I gasp inwardly in anticipation of the forthcoming revelation, before he adds, "a 21-year old!" He falls about laughing.

He's made the transition from TV actor to film actor look easy, but I wonder whether he's made any mistakes along the way?

"God, yes!" he exclaims. "I made a series of bad calls early on in my career. I've learnt that you can make a bad film out of a good script, but you can't make a good film out of a bad script.

"When I first started out, I just took all the jobs that came my way. I remember calling up friends and family and saying excitedly, 'Woohoo, I've got *Batman!*' [he played the title role].

"But it wasn't a film that worked for me (it got panned by the critics) and I realised that I was going to be held responsible, not just for the roles that I played, but for the films that were going to be made."

He made the decision to only take on screenplays he believes in and his choices since then have served him well, winning him the Oscar for Best



Syriana won George an Oscar...



... and he's tipped for another for his role in *The Descendants*

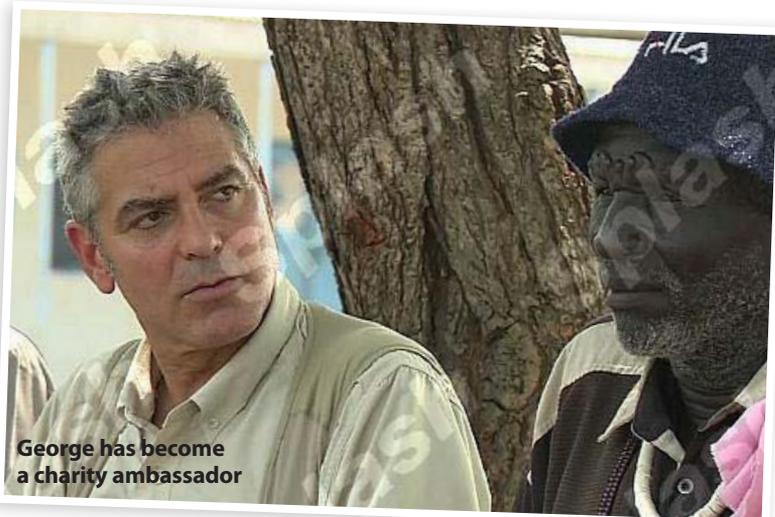
Supporting Actor in *Syriana* (2005), and being tipped for another with his latest film, *The Descendants* (about a father trying to re-connect with his two daughters after losing his wife in a boating accident).

He sighs. "Speculation at this time of year can get a bit tedious," he says. "I don't live my life to win awards.

"If my work is complimented in that way, then I say, 'thank you, that's nice,' but it's always the result of hard work by a lot of other people.

"I love films, pure and simple. I don't want to be wheeled out when I'm 75 to be told that I appeared in 15 films that went straight to No.1 at the box office. Being the richest man in the cemetery is not my goal in life."

● *The Descendants* opens in cinemas across the UK on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2012.



George has become a charity ambassador