

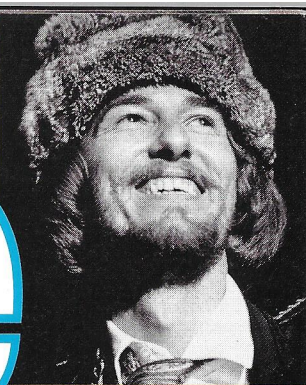
PLUS:
BLACKS IN
HOLLYWOOD
Where they
stand five
years later

Remembering the Mamas & the Papas' John Phillips

APRIL 2, 2001

People

weekly

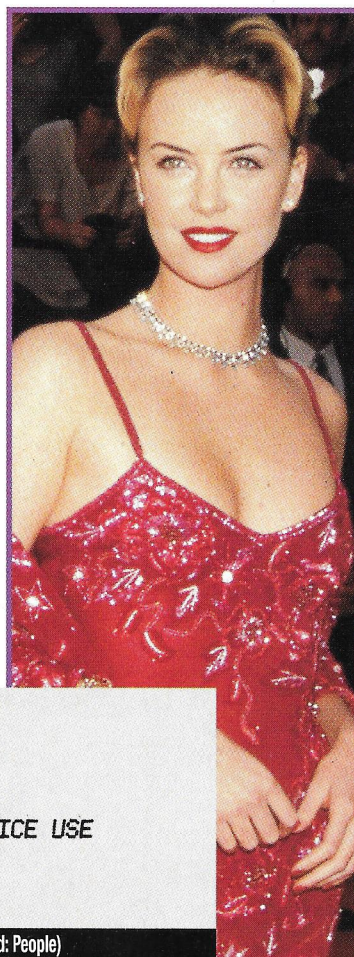


1935-2001

Hollywood's

HEALTHY BODIES ARE BACK

Starvation diets be damned!
These stars are happier—and
sexier—with a few extra curves



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DREW BARRYMORE

CHARLIZE THERON

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What Say, Juliet?

Thanks to volunteers in Verona, Shakespeare's heroine lives on as Miss Lonelyhearts



"People write to Juliet as a friend," says Giovanna Tamassia (at the Juliet House in Verona). "They look to her for words of comfort."

Wherefore art thou, Romeo? Actually, that's an easy one compared with the questions the women of the Juliet Club in Verona, Italy, usually deal with. "There are so precious few gallant men in the world today. What happened to the gentlemen of your time?" asks Jessica in Minneapolis, while unlucky-in-love Doug from Kansas wonders, "What am I doing wrong?"

Answering the roughly 4,000 missives a year addressed to Shakespeare's most famous heroine, the club's seven volunteers (accompa-

nied by a cat named Romeo) advise the lovelorn, the lonely, even the star-crossed. "It's not important if Juliet is real or not," says club president Giovanna Tamassia, 36. "What is important is that people believe in the power of the story."

Do they ever—particularly since Hollywood released its first version of the romance, in 1936. Tamassia, a former international-sales consultant, has been playing fair Juliet's secretary full-time since 1993 and has received letters and e-mail in more than 20 languages. "We try to

be reassuring and advise people to be confident and optimistic," says Tamassia, who is married to Luca, 38, a hardware-store manager, and has a 6-year-old daughter named Giulia. "The questions seem normal, but it's not easy to reply." Nor is it easy lugging the many bags of letters—most addressed simply to Juliet of Verona—back and forth from the Juliet Club, which is funded by the city and local benefactors. But postal worker Carla Sirotti doesn't mind. "For me," she says, "it's kind of like delivering mail to Santa Claus." ●