

## “JESSICA CUSTODIO”

I’ve been tongue tied before. The first time I was married, or my second for that matter. My first arrest, or my second as well. And there I sat, with that same stammering confusion, as an office cat with a diamond studded necklace purred at my feet, trying my damndest to ask meaningful questions to the Bombshell Model, professional poker playing Jessica Custodio. Not to say that her stunning beauty and caramel charms are frightening, but for the first five minutes she glowed in front of me, I was actually sweating.

The pictures I’d seen of Jessica – a burgeoning actress, model, and dangerously serene card player – did little to prepare me for the purity of her radiance. The perfect blend of German, Irish, Spanish, Filipino, Cherokee, and innocent charm, she is an ideal model, but even more so, a perfect card player.

Jessica is a member of the Bombshell Girls ([www.bombshellmodels.net](http://www.bombshellmodels.net)), eight striking, poker playing models whose tagline is, “Come Play With Me”. Also referred to as the Bombsquad, the girls are poker players for hire, whether playing their weekly online tournament at [pokertropolis.com](http://pokertropolis.com) (every Tuesday at 7pm PST) where salivating men are invited to test their skills, or promoting events at casinos from LA to Las Vegas. High rollers can also hire the Bombsquad to join in at their home games.

I can’t imagine how any right-minded man can concentrate on cards when sitting next to the likes of the Jessica Custodio.

“In some cases my appearance does work to my advantage and (guys) get distracted,” smiles Jessica. “Often online, they don’t even believe that it’s me. But just as often, guys get cocky, saying ‘chicks can’t play.’”

Poker, and more specifically, Texas Hold ‘em, is in the midst of a full frontal assault on American popular culture. The game had been slowly simmering until the 2003 World

Series of Poker (WSOP). Chris Moneymaker, an amateur who had won the \$10,000 entry fee by winning an online satellite tournament and had never played a live poker event in his life, beat 839 other players to win the \$2.5 million main event grand prize. Suddenly, anyone could defy all odds and win. ESPN covered every step of Moneymaker's amazing journey and a phenomenon was born. Countless online poker sites and television shows sprouted up. In 2004, entries to the WSOP main event tripled to 2,576. This year, there were 5,619 entries.

With such an overwhelming surge in poker popularity, it's amazing it took so long for someone to merge the poker market with sex. Enter Jessica Custodio, the right girl at the right time. Born in Florida, she was raised in San Jose where at age 10, she already knew she wanted to act. After attending performing arts schools and doing musical theater in San Jose, and finding herself being run into the ground at a 60-hour a week any-job, she knew that if she had any chance of realizing her dream of film acting, she'd have to move. In 2003, she made the fated journey south to Hollywood.

Without benefit of a dramatic agent, Jessica has managed brief appearances in film and television, and plenty of print and modeling work. She had never played poker before the call to interview for the squad, but the game has more than grown on her.

"I'm addicted to poker now. My life is auditioning, sleeping, going to the gym, and poker. I almost find it meditative," she laughs.

Addicted is one thing. What I want to know is how good is she.... at poker that is.

"I won a tournament against the Playboy bunnies recently and I've made it to the final table in our weekly online game a few times," she says. "But I beat all my friends now... they call me a hustler."

The exposure she's getting as a Bombshell Girl is helping Jessica's career hustle along as well. She's set to appear in the season finale of the popular HBO series *Entourage* and in October will be profiled on the ABC/KCAL 9 show *Latination*.

Almost unconsciously, it's an hour later and I'm speaking effortlessly. Jessica's sublime innocence and graceful beauty has put me at ease without my even knowing it. She has an alarming, almost hypnotic way about her. The perfect poker player.