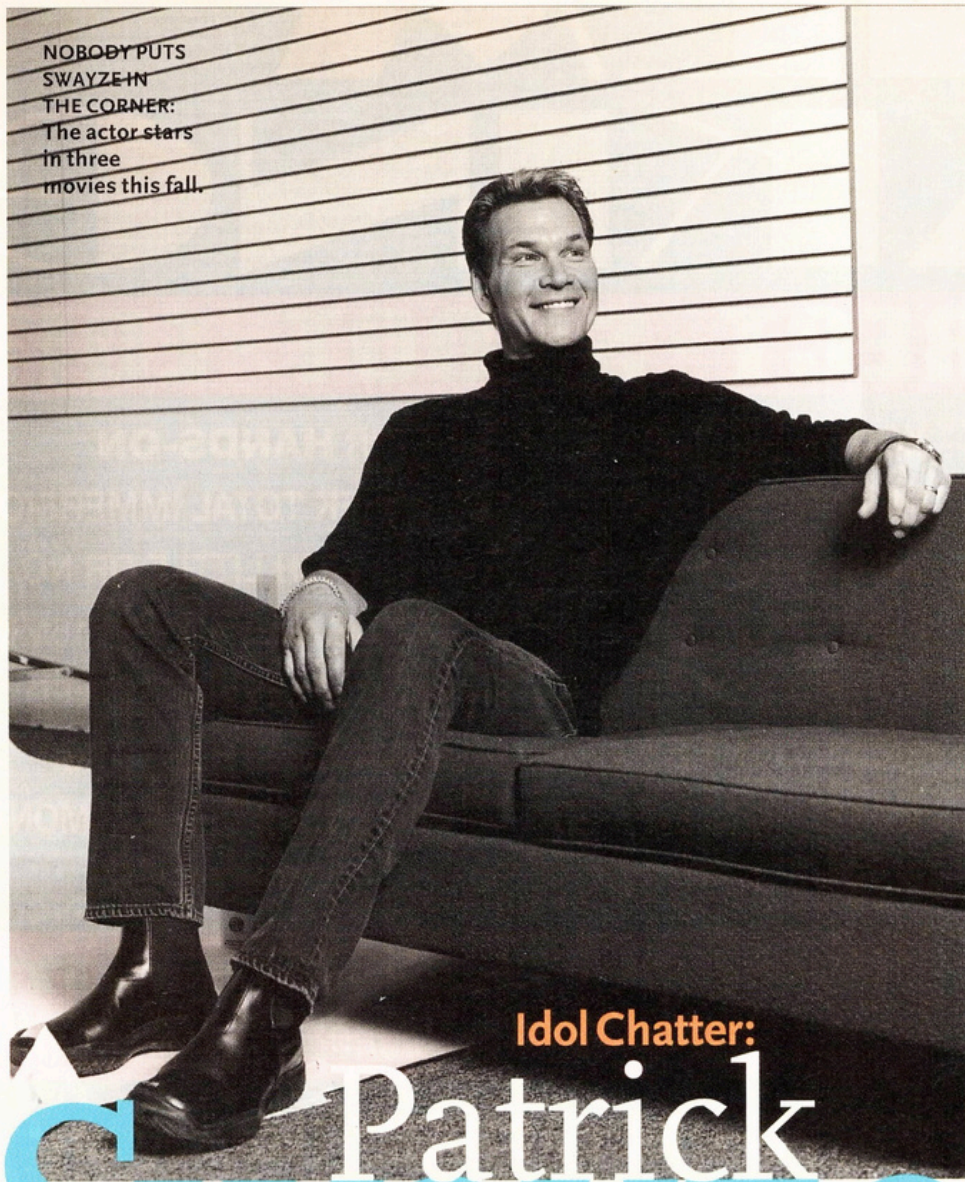


NOBODY PUTS  
SWAYZE IN  
THE CORNER:  
The actor stars  
in three  
movies this fall.



Idol Chatter:

# Patrick Swayze

**PREMIERE:** You play three wildly different characters in *Waking Up in Reno*, *Green Dragon*, and *Donnie Darko*. Roy from *Wakin' Up in Reno*, in particular, is 180-degrees different from your tough-yet-vulnerable M.O. Was that a conscious decision?

Patrick Swayze: Well, I'm always trying to grow as an actor, seeing if I can get really good at the craft. With Roy, in many ways I'm playing [costar] Billy Bob [Thornton]—before he moved out of the sticks. [laughs] You and your wife, Lisa Niemi, met back in the sticks of Texas, and the two of you have just finished shooting your passion project, *Without a Word*. How long have you been working on it? We wrote it as a play maybe 15 years ago, and it went through a whole bunch of writers and financiers until Lisa finally

decided to write and direct [the movie version], and I produced it [through their Troph Productions]. And since we own it, we get to shop it.

**Why have you waited until now to produce?**

For quite a while, I figured I needed directing and producing like a hole in the head. Like I need *less* of a life? But now we've got other projects we're developing out of our office in the barn of our ranch [about 30 miles outside of L.A.]. We call our place Rancho Bizarro because it's such a mix of country and high-tech—we live with horses and chickens, but there's also a recording studio, where I'm writing music for the movie.

**Being you sounds exhausting.**

My mind is going 150,000 miles an hour

at all times, so just sitting down, I think I burn calories. I used to just run myself ragged, do four movies back-to-back, then come out of the last one having to be hospitalized with pneumonia. These days I'm trying to control the obsessive-compulsive side and not have it run me. **Not to be morbid, but do you ever feel like "He was Johnny Castle" will be on your tombstone?** Actually, it was [the 1985-86 miniseries] *North and South* that blew the lid off my life; *Dirty Dancing* just took it into insanity. It made life a little confusing—people are telling you you're great on a level that you know you're not, because you're the same jerk you were in high school.

**What do most fans say to you?**

It depends. There's the faction that is salivating and screaming. Then there are people who are really working too hard at being cool because they really want to salivate and scream. Then there are the ones that want to treat you like a normal person. Or they need to validate for themselves that you're just a normal person or that you're a jerk because you're famous. So it depends on where you put yourself. In my wild days of fighting my way out of bars, it was, "Cool, Mr. Movie Star." Then a little while later, it was like, "What do you mean you won't dance with my wife? She ain't good enough for you?"

**What do you think about the *Dirty Dancing* sequel?**

**I heard that Ricky Martin may play the lead.**

If they had come up with one that didn't feel like a rip-off to me, I would have done it. I would still. But I sure hope they don't have someone playing Baby or Johnny Castle. It'll be interesting how they do it. Part of me says they're crazy to try to do a sequel without me and Jennifer [Grey]. But who knows? The title alone may just fill theaters.

**How often do people ask you to say "Nobody puts Baby in a corner"?**

[laughs] I hated that line—I tried everything in my power to get it out of the movie.

**What about "Ditto" from *Ghost*?**

That one also seemed so innocuous. But what was the one from *Point Break*? Oh, yeah, "One hundred percent pure adrenaline." It's funny, each time I've hated a line, it's become incredibly famous. —Anna David