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Cooking with Kyra

Kyra Sedgwick talks about going to lesbian bars with her costar Julianna Margulies to research their gay roles in *What's Cooking?* By Michael Giltz

“I’ve kissed Paulina Porizkova, Helen Mirren, and Julianna Margulies,” laughs actress Kyra Sedgwick. “God, people would kill to be in my shoes.”

The smooch with Porizkova came last spring during Sedgwick’s “blink and you missed it” sitcom *Talk to Me*. Her dalliance with the estimable Helen Mirren occurred in *Losing Chase*, a 1996 Showtime movie directed by Sedgwick’s husband, Kevin Bacon. Now, in the new movie *What’s Cooking?* (which opens in New York on November 10 and in Los Angeles and selected cities the following week), Sedgwick enjoys a loving relationship with *ER* star Margulies.

A comedic drama, *What’s Cooking?* revolves around four families: a Jewish couple who are happy to have their lesbian daughter home for the holidays, as long as her “friend” remains just a friend in the eyes of the relatives; an upper-class black family with Alfre Woodard as a mother seemingly at loose ends; a Vietnamese family featuring an unrecognizable Joan Chen as the tradition-happy matriarch; and a Latino family headed by Mercedes Ruehl as the separated mom ready to date again.

Despite other subplots involving marital strife, a loaded gun kept hidden by a teenager, and interracial dating that gives parents on both sides conniption fits, the characters played by Sedgwick and Margulies are at the heart of the movie. They gamely endure



the questioning of guests who want to know when they’ll meet the right man, let Mom (Lainie Kazan) come into their room in the morning (with the single beds still pushed together), and try to make the best of an awkward situation.

According to the friendly and slightly raunchy Sedgwick (who perks up whenever she tosses off an expletive or two), she and Margulies were made for each other.

“We both care about the same things,” explains the 35-year-old New York City native. “We both are women who won’t take a lot of shit from anybody. We’re very in touch with our male sides as well as our female sides.

And we’re women who really expect to be treated as equals.” In other words, they’d both make good lesbians? “Yeah!” she laughs. “I think so.”

And Sedgwick also confesses to a bit of curiosity. “Honestly, I’ve always been slightly saddened by the fact that I had never had a lesbian come on to me,” admits the actress, who currently stars off-Broadway in *Stranger* [see review, page 96], a new play by Craig Lucas. Since she’s married to Kevin Bacon and the mother of two, Sedgwick’s chances to be the object of a woman’s affection seemed remote.

Besides, when she and Margulies hit the New York City bars to prepare for their roles, Sedgwick thought there might be awkward situations at the places where she and Margulies hung out as “tourists.” “I expected a little anger, a little ‘What the fuck are you doing here?’” says Sedgwick, who mentions Henrietta Hud- ▶