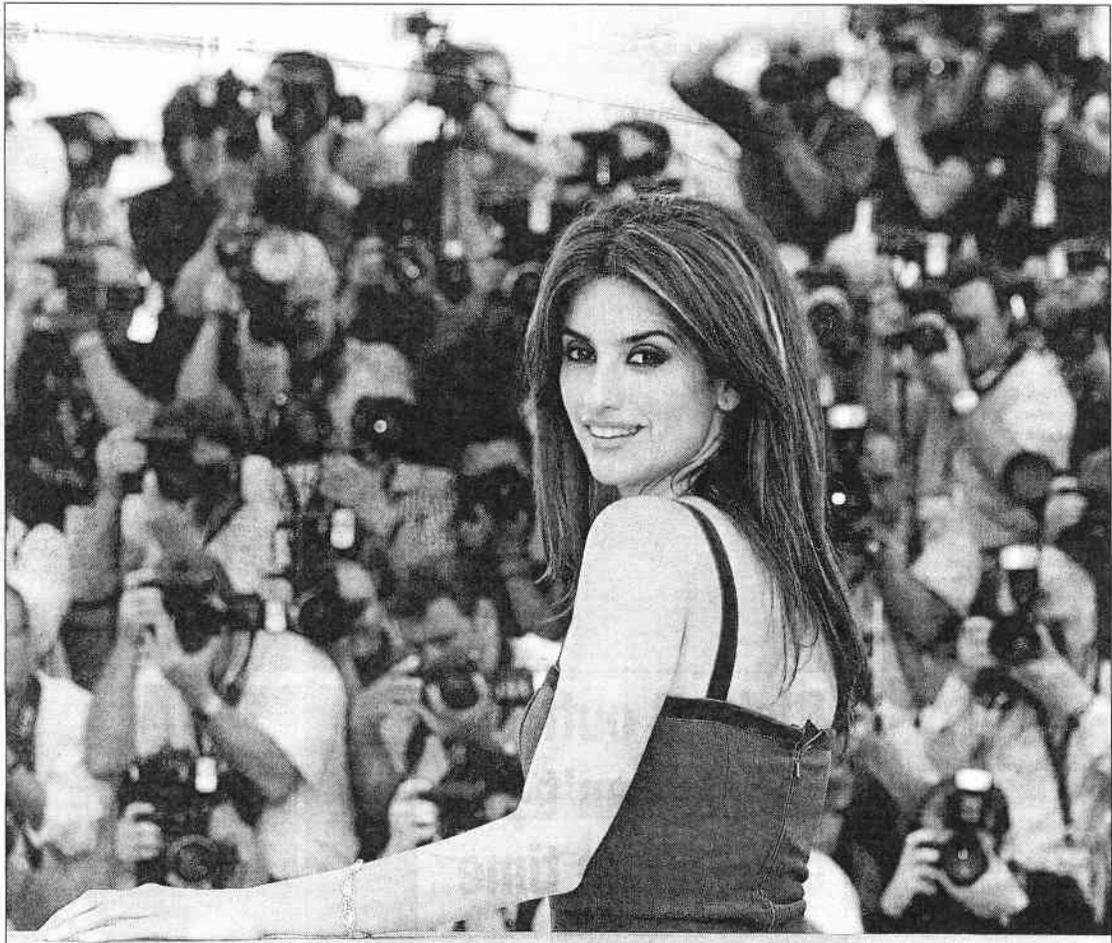


MÉNAGE A WOODY



Spanish actress Penelope Cruz heats up photo call for Woody Allen's "Vicky Cristina Barcelona" at Cannes film festival yesterday. Photo by AP

Dream team steams up Allen's comic drama

BY MICHAEL GILTZ
DAILY NEWS WRITER

CANNES — Woody Allen's new comic drama, "Vicky Cristina Barcelona," has three words in its title and a steamy threesome among Scarlett Johansson, Penelope Cruz and a very lucky Javier Bardem at its heart.

Early reviews upon its world premiere Friday at the Cannes Film Festival suggest this could be Allen's most successful movie since 2005's "Match Point."

It's certainly his sexiest.

At a press conference for the film, which opens in New York on Aug. 29, the 72-year-old director was asked whether he ever tried similar amorous arrangements in his personal life.

"It's hard enough to get one person," joked the Brooklyn-

born Allen, who is now filming a comedy in New York. "In the film you can do it, because I'm dealing with larger-than-life characters. In real life, most of us petty people could never handle anything like that.

"It's hard enough to get a relationship to work out with one person. With two, it becomes geometrically more fatal."

The film is about two American women — Johansson and Rebecca Hall — who spend the summer in Barcelona and are each seduced by painter Bardem.

Johansson moves in with him, and they're soon joined by his wildly unstable ex-wife, played by Cruz. Though the three are never seen in bed together, Cruz and Johansson do share a passionate kiss in a photography darkroom.

Cruz ignored a question



Director Allen makes the scene at Cannes-stravaganza. Photo by AP

about "your boyfriend" Bardem — who Allen explained was not at the fest due to a "family problem" — and revealed nothing when asked what it was like to kiss Johansson.

"I've had that question four times today," sighed Cruz. "I didn't give any answer because I didn't have a good answer. I've been wondering what would Woody say in that situation, and I'm still not inspired."

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