

THE PERFECT MATCH

WHAT DOES FINDING YOUR DREAM GUY REALLY MEAN? BEING REALISTIC WHILE STILL AIMING HIGH.

BY CELIA SHATZMAN

■ **THOUGH EVERY WOMAN HAS A LIST OF QUALITIES** she's looking for in a significant other (trustworthiness, kindness, sense of humor—sound familiar?) sometimes it's hard to tell if our expectations are too high. But before you start second-guessing your dream guy's attributes, know that it's okay not to compromise as long as you're realistic, says Dr. Hernando Chaves, D.H.S., M.F.T., a Colombian American sex therapist and human sexuality professor at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, Calif. Here, he and several Latinas looking for love remind us what's truly important when it comes to relationships.



PERSONALITY: "Many women want their man to be their best friend, but what does that really mean? Most couples don't talk about what it looks like to be each other's best friend and we often want more than they are built to provide," Dr. Chaves says. Keep in mind that your significant other can't be everything you're looking for—that's what girlfriends are for.

FAMILY: Few things in our culture are as valuable as *familia*. "The qualities that I am looking for in my ideal man are someone with family values and similar religious beliefs, who is

close to his family and wants one of his own eventually," says Victoria, a Mexican and Puerto Rican Manhattanite. Dr. Chaves agrees that looking for a guy whose values mirror your own is wise. "The importance of family is powerful," he says.

MANNERS: "First and foremost, I am looking for a gentleman," says Jessica, who is Mexican American and lives in Santa Fe, N.M. "I cannot tell you how many times I have been turned off by guys who do not put forth any effort." While everyone wants a guy who knows how to behave in public, the focus should be on how

he acts toward you. "When it comes to men, I observe the way he treats other people because it says a lot about how he will treat me," says mexicana Lizethe, from El Paso, Texas.

CAREER: Who hasn't dreamed about marrying a doctor? "It's no secret women are looking for men who can support a family, and ambition often equates to professional success," says Dr. Chaves. The truth is, we shouldn't judge men on whether they have a status job. Instead of examining what he does, think about how he does it. Is his work ethic strong? Is

he reliable at the office? These qualities are important in the long run.

LOOKS: "As cliché as it sounds, my dream guy would be tall, dark and handsome," says dominicana Maribel, who lives in New York City. Sometimes it doesn't feel politically correct to focus on looks, but Dr. Chaves says there's no reason to feel guilty about it, since sexual attraction is crucial. However, he cautions that the more specific the ideal is, the harder it is to find someone to fit that criterion, so try to be flexible and willing to compromise.