

## From "SNL" star to the big screen

### Andy Samberg takes his carefree comedy to new heights as a daredevil in "Hot Rod."

By Jay Dyckman

"I'm thinking of dropping the lime into the OJ," says Andy Samberg, carefully pondering the fruit combination's suitability over lunch at a French bistro in New York City's Greenwich Village.

Throwing caution to the wind, the "Saturday Night Live" comedian tosses the garnish into his drink. But such tentativeness stands in stark contrast to the carefree suburban daredevil he plays in "Hot Rod," out now. As is obvious from his hilarious work on "SNL," Samberg hardly shies away from taking risks.

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**"SNL's" Andy Samberg plays a daredevil in "Hot Rod."**

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In comedy, that is.

The movie draws on Samberg's love of '80s pop culture, especially the garish theatrics of professional wrestling's heyday. "I was big into the WWF," gushes the 28-year-old former Hulkamaniac. "I used to stay up at night and sneak into the TV room, past my parents, who were asleep, to watch 'Saturday Night's Main Event.'" It turned out that the adolescent Samberg's love of atomic leg drops and sleeper holds would have a serendipitous effect on his future. Broadcast occasionally, "Saturday Night's Main Event" was the fill-in for another show in that time slot, "Saturday Night Live."

"That's how I started watching 'SNL,'" he says. "On accident."

The rest, as they say, is history. Samberg fell in love with the sketch comedy show, honed his craft and became a full-time cast member last year. With his newfound fame, though, he's quickly realizing that the world can start to feel very different. Attention has spilled over into his personal life; rumors have linked him to a former "SNL" host, Natalie Portman. It's a dilemma that Samberg laments.

"It's weird to have people so interested in your personal life," he sighs, pushing around some eggs on his plate. "It's a part of the business that

grosses me out. I'm always bummed out for people who just happen to be dating a celebrity, and they're also famous, and they can't live their life."

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## **Why he's on our radar: Andy Samberg**

**Biggest claim to fame:** He's the man who is behind the YouTube favorite Lazy Sunday, which chronicles two New Yorkers on a journey to see "The Chronicles of Narnia" and won an award from "High Times" magazine.

**Man to Muppet:** One of Samberg's skits for "SNL" included him doing an impression of the Swedish Chef "singing" the theme from "Beverly Hills Cop."

-- J.D.