



photo by Gary Leonard

Davis Nguyen poses for photographer Sara Corwin.

Actors' Pics

by Sarah Kuhn

In this business, the most valuable advice often comes from your fellow actors. In the spirit of actor-to-actor referrals, Back Stage West asked our readers to name their favorite headshot photographers in Los Angeles. Below are 10 of the photographers who were mentioned the most. This is by no means a complete list of L.A. photographers, so please feel free to keep telling us about your favorites.

Sara Corwin

Sara Corwin Photography

Sara Corwin abides by a simple mantra: Treat your clients the way you would like to be treated. "I know that most actors really don't love getting their headshots taken," she says. "So, even though we're very organized and we're very serious, we try to keep it really fun."

Corwin has been in the headshot business for 11 years, but she's been a photographer her whole life. After majoring in photography in college, she got a job working for a product photographer in New York. Even though the gig was good experience in terms of technical elements such as lighting, she longed to work directly with people. "I always wanted to do portraits and headshots, and that's basically what my focus was on in college," she says.

Taking pictures of actors seems to be a good fit. "Each actor's different, and the qualities that I want to bring out in each person [are] different," she says. "I really like the creative process. I like working with creative people."

To enhance the process and make actors feel at home, Corwin and her assistant, who does the hair and makeup, do a lot of prep work with clients. "We discuss what background will work best with what look, and then of course the actor can say, 'Yes, I really like that background,' or 'No, I don't like that background,'" she says. "It's like a brainstorming preproduction thing, and I think that helps create a safe environment, because the actor feels really involved."

She shoots in her backyard studio, an environment that has the advantage of privacy. "We're not out on the street with people driving by," she says. "I don't know how someone could be relaxed in [that environment]. We're very intimate here."

Corwin offers film and digital, black-and-white and color. Her basic package is \$495 (includes hair and makeup). www.saracorwin-photography.com.

