



SAVOY

THE BEST PICTURES OF 2003 [P.105]

POWER. SUBSTANCE. STYLE.



“My fan base is [teenage] white girls and it trips me out because black people are like, ‘I’ve never seen him before.’” —Al Thompson

down.” Despite his modesty, Thompson’s already rubbed elbows on screen with Danny Glover, Gene Hackman and Gwyneth Paltrow. In December, Thompson plays Ted, Nick Cannon’s nemesis in *Love Don’t Cost a Thing*, a remake of the ’80’s classic *Can’t Buy Me Love*. “My character runs the cool clique and Alvin (Cannon) is trying to infiltrate my crew, but in my eyes, he’ll always be a grinder.”

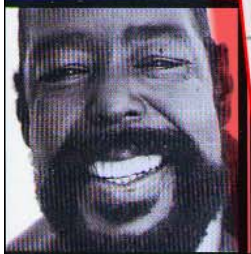
A League of His Own

AL THOMPSON MARKS HIS TURF IN CINEMA-LAND.

Clamoring for leading roles cramps Al Thompson’s style. “I would prefer not to have fame,” explains the 21-year-old Harlem native who co-starred in *A Walk to Remember* and *The Royal Tenenbaums*. “Because when you get too high up, you can’t really see

Though Thompson has had mainstream success, he still laments the Hollywood shuffle. “If there is a quality black role, [we’re] all fighting for it and that’s frustrating,” he says. “I want to write [about] young black characters with substance...[because] if I play a basketball player one more time, I am gonna kill somebody.” Spoken like a star who shines brightest below the rim.

—Rozalynn S. Frazier



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