Ask Miami City Ballet’s Jennifer Lauren if she feels any different now that she’s a principal, and she’ll quickly say no. “I’m still the same dancer I was 10 years ago when I joined the company,” says Lauren, who was promoted at the end of last season. “I’m still working harder than ever.” She does feel that people are watching her more closely now, though. “Kids in the school peek in the window all day,” she says. “I need to make sure I set an example.”

In some ways, Miami City Ballet has been a second chapter in her career. Lauren, 36, had previously danced with the unranked Alabama Ballet, where over the course of eight seasons she was frequently cast in leading roles. Since joining MCB as a corps member in 2007, she’s had to slowly work her way back up. “My career has taken me up and down and sideways,” she says. “It’s nice to have the recognition that comes with being a principal. Although if you asked me to dance in the corps tomorrow I would do it gladly.”

While her days can be grueling, life in Miami Beach has its perks. “I love the sunny days,” says Lauren, who lives close to the studios and the beach with her husband Blake, her pug Sophie and cat Coco. “As soon as we moved here, it was pure warmth and joy.”

Earlier this year, Pointe followed Lauren throughout her typical workday. At the time, she was preparing for her debut as the lead in Balanchine’s Theme and Variations, a major milestone for any ballerina. “It’s pure classical ballet, pure Balanchine, which is what I love and what I live for.”

“This is my 20th season dancing professionally, and I don’t see myself stopping anytime soon. I’m still loving every minute of it.”

—JENNIFER LAUREN

By Amy Brandt
Photography by Lilly Echeverria
“Lourdes has pulled a lot out of me that I didn’t know I had.”

—JENNIFER LAUREN

Breakfast usually includes a granola bar with almond butter, a banana drizzled with honey and a cup of coffee.

Lourdes has pulled a lot out of me that I didn’t know I had.”

—JENNIFER LAUREN

Here: In company class. Above: Lauren and soloist Ashley Knox pose for a selfie near the beach across the street from MCB’s studios. Lauren often heads there during breaks. “We look at the water, get a little vitamin D,” says Lauren. “But not every day, because sometimes you’re so tired that all you want to do is rest.”

After rehearsal, Lauren has a costume fitting for an upcoming performance of Stars and Stripes.

Lauren and her regular partner, Kleber Rebello, rehearse sections of Theme and Variations with artistic director Lourdes Lopez. “I really enjoy working with her because she’s very clear and easy to understand,” says Lauren. “She gives me a lot of ideas that help me present myself more as a ballerina.”