

PRETTY, SUCCESSFUL

MORE THAN A SUPERMODEL, HEIDI KLUM IS A ONE-WOMAN INDUSTRY—AND IT SEEMS LIKE SHE'S EVERYWHERE. AS GORGEOUS AS EVER AT 40, SHE TALKS TO GLOW ABOUT HER EARLY CAREER STRUGGLES, HER UP-FOR-ANYTHING ATTITUDE AND WHY THE GOSSIP PAGES WON'T GET HER DOWN.

BY MIKE ALBO

When I sit down to interview Heidi Klum, I start by telling her that, coincidentally, I've just written a feature for a magazine about the return of the supermodel. Some of today's top young models, like Cara Delevingne and Coco Rocha, are so big they're becoming first-namers: just "Cara" and "Coco." It's just like the supermodels of the '90s—the decade in which Klum started to make her name.

"Well, why didn't you talk to me?" she asks. "I'm really disappointed in you, Mike."

I'm not sure if she's serious, so I start babbling an apology.

"I'm just joking," she says, finally.

If you've been keeping track of Klum over the past 11 seasons of *Project Runway* (or, this past summer, as a judge on *America's Got Talent*), you'll be familiar with this tactic of hers. She wipes away her smile, becomes serious and then swiftly jokes about it, thus completely disarming whomever she's addressing. You see her do it on *Project Runway* when Michael Kors gets too sassy, or when, at one of those occasional rooftop champagne toasts, a contestant thinks Klum is going to be his or her new bestie. She effortlessly adopts the persona of an icy German beauty, then deftly undercuts it with irony, as if to say, "I may not be an ice queen, but I'm also not a dumb blonde."

Apart from her beauty, it's this mix of playfulness and strength that has been Klum's greatest asset, helping make her one of the most successful models of the past 20 years and elevating her to "model mogul" status—a distinction shared by only a select few. (Tyra Banks is another prime example.)

"When I started out, being a model was all about being cool and it wasn't cool to do certain things," she says. "I was never cool. I already didn't fit in. I was just being me and having fun."

And she's right: I should have talked to her. Klum is a pivotal figure in the history of modelling. In fact, it's mainly because of her (and Ms. Banks) that the whole business of modelling has expanded →

HEIDI'S HAIR HIT LIST



2003

A tanned Klum sports a short, bleach blonde 'do at the premiere of *Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle*.



2005

Bigger is better: Bombshell waves from her days as a Victoria's Secret Angel.



2013

Making an elegant case for perfectly polished tresses at the 2013 Golden Globe Awards.

GLOW EXTRA:

Check out more fabulous hair looks from Heidi at glow.ca/heidiklum

far beyond perfume ads and magazine spreads. Now, thanks in part to Klum, a model is able to conduct her career through multiple outlets: TV, print, social media and more. And Klum's type of model—friendly, talkative and upbeat—has become the norm.

That wasn't always an advantage, though. Klum, who turned 40 this year, was born and raised in a town outside of Cologne, Germany, and was discovered after winning a national contest called Model '92. She hit the streets to find work, but it wasn't easy. "I was not edgy enough to be in this industry. I went to Paris, I went to Milan.... They turned me away immediately," she says. "They wanted the super-skinny and druggy look. I was too happy and too healthy to be in this industry."

It may be hard to remember, but it's true: In the mid-'90s, models weren't supposed to laugh or smile. Even the "super" ones were often discouraged from displaying personality. Modelling was a mute career, like being a silent film star, and it took persistence and guts to be someone with a voice.

But over the past decade, the industry has changed—and so has its audience. Due largely to Klum and the culture-shifting influence of *Project Runway*, fashion has seeped into the mainstream and is now enjoyed by millions. (Even your computer-nerd nephew probably has an opinion about how an evening gown should drape.) Dozens of *Project Runway*-like reality competitions exist, coverage of runway shows saturates the Internet, and models have become media celebrities. Following Klum's lead, younger models like Delevingne, Rocha, Karlie Kloss and Kate Upton are hosting TV shows, reporting from the tents during Fashion Week, and sending out numerous tweets and photos on Instagram. These days, we expect all our models to be like Klum.

"Linda Evangelista once said that she doesn't get out of bed for less than \$10,000 a day," notes New York-based fashion journalist Derek Blasberg. "A girl today wouldn't say that. She's up and she's on Twitter."

Giving up the pretensions of European fashion, Klum moved to the States in '94. "I had to find my own way," she explains. "I needed to understand who I am in this market and find my own job. So, my work was more mainstream and more catalogue. Then I got *Sports Illustrated*, then Victoria's Secret."

Victoria's Secret proved to be Klum's big ticket. In 2007, she stepped down as a representative of the lingerie powerhouse, but her career rise happened in tandem with the rise of the brand. Working as a V.S. Angel, for which she walked down its glossy runway in elaborate winged outfits, Klum became

internationally recognized. The shows had long been considered beneath the fashion industry, but they grew in popularity anyway, and so did the media attention surrounding them. Reporters began crowding backstage. "I always loved that part. I saw it as the greatest opportunity.... Eventually, I took the mic and started interviewing the other girls. I kind of slid into being a host."

Since then, Klum has continued to parlay her charm and enthusiasm into numerous ventures: Her infant and toddler apparel collection, Truly Scrumptious by Heidi Klum, is going strong; last year, she debuted as the face of Clear Scalp & Hair Therapy; in August, she launched her new fragrance, Shine Blue, in Europe; and in September, she released her Fall 2013 Heidi Klum for New Balance collection of activewear and footwear. "I only want to work with people [and brands] that I use and enjoy," she says.

All the while, Klum has continued to be a favorite of the gossip pages—an inevitable occupational hazard, especially when one's life is in upheaval. In 2004, she separated from her boyfriend, Flavio Briatore, an Italian businessman and the former head of Renault's Formula One team, while pregnant with their child, and began a relationship with singer Seal. Seal eventually adopted the child, Leni, now nine years old. Klum and Seal got married in 2005 and had three children together. Then, on Jan. 22, 2012, the couple announced they were separating. Klum filed for divorce that April and confirmed by September that she was dating her bodyguard, Martin Kristen. Just days before we talked, there were paparazzi shots of the two of them jogging in a New York City park.

It sounds stressful, yet somehow Klum has managed to move through her life with a seemingly carefree confidence, frustrating a tabloid industry that thrives on celebrities' shame and dysfunction. In many of the photos taken of her, Klum is totally natural, sometimes even smiling for the camera, seemingly unfazed by the paparazzi. "At some point you have to come to terms with it," she replies. "I'm not going to change my kids' lives or not go shopping or [not] sit in a restaurant. I want to sit outside. I like to people-watch the same way any other girl does. Especially in NYC."

How does she maintain such an even keel? Does she meditate? "No. I'm a happy person. I have great friends, I have a wonderful family, I have a job that I love. I don't have to sit in a room and meditate."

Her mode of relaxation, she says, is to have all her kids at home with her. "That, to me, is relaxing. All the kids around me, loud and crazy. That's when I can sleep the best—laughing and giggling until I pass out." @