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miscarriage, infertility
& unexpected surprises

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work time and leisure time

Usain Bolt

Catching up with the fast-
est man in the world

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fame in three minutes

Sunshine Superwoman
Wendy Fitzwilliam

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Wendy Fitzwilliam in an ivory grey-black lace sheath dress by Zang Toi
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White is part
of your daily routine.

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St Maarten - the little island charmed us with its friendly people, great shopping and excellent food, and beckons us to return

Aliyyah Eniath



Cover Look

Wendy Fitzwilliam in a red hand-beaded rayon knit floral and butterfly gown by **Zang Toi**

Gold crystal earrings, bracelet and necklace by **Badgley Mischka** (Fall 2009 Collection)

Photographed by Calvin French

The photoshoot team for this issue's fashion feature, Jamboree, on location, at Maracas Bay



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catapulted to the top of the international charts in the space of three minutes

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Catching up with the world's fastest man

Pilaiye Cenac



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recovers your clothes'
whiteness but also
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from the first wash



B | APPLAUSE

Perfect Fit

I enjoyed the feature on Anya Ayoung-Chee last issue. I was not aware that she had launched a fashion line until I read that article. I loved the pieces showcased in her collection, and enjoyed reading her answers on the type of person who should wear her clothes. I think that I am one such person. I love wearing *Caribbean* but I want to look modern too. It's the perfect fit. I'm a huge fan!

Giselle Best
Trinidad



Anya Ayoung-Chee, Miss Trinidad and Tobago Universe 2009, featured last issue

Fashion in Jamaica

Why is your issue so late to Jamaica? I wait with bated breath each issue! It has only now arrived after two long weeks.

However, the fashion editorial you've compiled on the island made it worth the wait. Easy, breezy, beautiful, Mutamba!

By the way, this addiction began after I got my first copy at *Caribbean Fashion Week* (CFW) this year.

Kala, Jamaica

Note that some letters were edited for grammar and wordiness. Though only a handful of letters is selected for print each issue, we are grateful to all who took the time to write.

Special Offer: Submit your fan mail in writing or via email to caribbeanbelle@gmail.com and win a *Caribbean Belle* magazine subscription (4 issues for one year)!



Renee and Mathias' hillside villa, featured last issue

Grocery List

You have simplified my life! I use your grocery list each and every time I do groceries. My housekeeper uses it as well when she has to purchase for me. I used to forget at least one item every time, and have to scuttle back to get it. Now it's no longer likely that I'd be forgetting anything important. Thanks for looking after us!

Naddy-Ann R.
Trinidad

Bracelet inspired dress, by Mutamba, featured last issue

Women of Substance

When I pick up a Caribbean magazine, I want to read about women of substance. Too often it's only the models and the fashion icons being featured. And that's fine. But where are the other women? That's why I was pleased to see Angela Cropper featured last issue. Her delicate features showed some age, which we would expect from someone who has striven for the welfare of those around her for such a long time. I look forward to more stories on such strong women in the future. Great job!

Anonymous

Hillside Villa

I adored your feature on Renee and Mathias' hillside villa in Barbados. I loved their eclectic mix and sense of style. The photos featured were indeed spectacular. I've officially been inspired to finish this one room in my home that's been left undone since we moved in six months ago. Cheers.

Carole S.
Jamaica

Love the website!

Congratulations on the launch of your new website. I like the look and feel of it. I was able to easily maneuver and take in some features I missed in past issues. Keep up the good work!

Amanda
Trinidad



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Photos courtesy BVI Summer Sizzle

Now in its third year, the BVI Summer Sizzle was held on Saturday, July 25th at the Sir Rupert Briercliffe Hall in downtown Tortola; on that day the venue could have easily been mistaken for the Bryant Park tents in New York City as guests were treated to an evening of high fashion.

The dazzling show began with a dramatic swimsuit collection by **Aqua Couture** created by **Roger Gary**, a Guyanese born, New York based designer. The high fashion collection was accessorized with exquisite jewellery, gloves, fur and floor length sarongs. Opening his collection, was BET's **Gerren Taylor** and *Vogue* magazine cover model, **Sessilee Lopez**.

Baby Phat by **Kimora Lee Simmons** (a former *Chanel* model and *Vogue* cover model) showcased a collection of *rocker chick* fully accessorized with jewellery, eye-wear, bags, and shoes. Accompanying **Baby Phat** was **Phat Farm** with male models decked-out as rock stars.

(From left to right) *BET Baldwin Hills' star Gerren Taylor wearing Korto Momolu*
Julia Animisova wearing Aqua Couture by Roger Gary, New York City
Vogue cover model Sessilee Lopez in Baby Phat
Jessica Millin in Claudia Pegus
Sessilee Lopez wearing Korto Momolu



(left) *Micheline Auguste wearing Edwing D'Angelo, New York City*

(right) *Gerren Taylor, Baldwin Hill Reality Star wearing Aqua Couture by Roger Gary*



the venue could have easily been mistaken for the Bryant Park tents in New York City as guests were treated to an evening of high fashion

The Caribbean's needlewoman par excellence, **Claudia Pegus**, set things in motion with an elegant cocktail and evening wear collection inspired by **Michelle Obama**. Next up was Project Runway's star, **Korto Momolu**, whose tribal detailing and eclectic designs have become a trademark.

New York City's **Ocie Collins** sent male models down the runway in another collection dubbed 'urban-funk,' followed by an edgy, debonair collection (mostly menswear and a few gorgeous women's wear pieces) from New York City red-carpet designer, **Edwing D'Angelo**.

For the finale, the runway belonged to the beautifully designed and tailored collection by **Cesar Gallindo** shown with accessories by **Baroness Elizabeth Couture Jewellery**.

bvi fashion

Hosted by *Signature* by Terry Donovan



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Simply Helping Our World: *an evening of Cocktails, Culture & Couture*

an E. Welch, PCS Nitrogen's Managing Director is this year's *United Way Trinidad and Tobago* (UWTT) Campaign Chairman, entrusted with the responsibility to stimulate corporate citizens and individuals (citizens) to donate in kind and money, to the tune of the 2009 campaign target of five million dollars, to assist with the alleviation of poverty in Trinidad and Tobago.

SHOW – held at the *Hyatt Regency Trinidad* ballroom was a signature *PCS Nitrogen* charity fundraiser, designed by the PCS United Way Trinidad and Tobago Fundraising Committee (Julia Gomes, Georgia Alexander, Danielle La Touche, Pleashette Adams, Alec Purcell, Sonelle Gibson, Carlyle St.Louis, Ramsingh Boodoosingh and Ricardo Martin), to raise significant funds for UWTT.

The show was hosted in three categories: Preserve our Earth was opened by the Ng Dance Co. and featured fashion by Christian Boucaud Designs and Heather Jones. Celebrate our Earth saw Rachel Lee of DW² performing a Classical Indian Dance to Michael Jackson's *Will You be There* performed by vocalist Garvin Rodgers. Fashion houses featured in this section included Millhouse Menswear, Ecliff Elie Designs and Shaun Griffith-Perez Designs. The final segment, Conserve our Earth, got underway with a ballet dance by Marielle dos Santos and featured design houses Shurnel, Jeswear and Nayamkah's.



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sunsh

Wendy Fi
enterprise

Dress: Black beaded ivory

ine superwoman

tzwilliam on parenthood, health, fashion, and
;the finesse of doing it all, and loving it all...

(Motherhood, and new allergies)

"I'm allergic to shell fish," she explains, as a cheery *More Vino* waitress brings a serving of complimentary California Rolls to our outdoor table. Though Wendy Fitzwilliam is not a sushi fan, considers wasabi to be "gross" and thinks that there are much better ways to clear one's taste buds, it's obvious that she is used to this type of reception in her home country.

Amidst the jesting she mentions, "I love crab, but I never could eat it, it's very dangerous. I'd have to get shots to get the swelling down."

She stops to chat with at least six people before we can resume. A former classmate of hers approached our table only to regale us with an anecdote of Wendy being her prefect in high school, "I was so in love at sixteen that I wore a ring on my married finger to indicate that (in my heart) I was engaged. But Wendy was my prefect and though I begged and pleaded my love for my then beau, she confiscated my ring! I've never seen it again till this day!" Though Wendy does not recall what happened to the ring, she is a self-professed nerd, but more of that later...

For now she's talking about the birth of her son, Ailan, and how she's since developed a new allergic reaction to almonds. "I wore this amazing almond cream for the entire eight months - he was born after eight months. I slathered myself from head-to-toe every day; it was the most divine smelling thing. He was born on a Friday afternoon at 3:25 and at about 7 pm I went to have a bath. I slathered myself as usual and immediately started itching all over. By Sunday evening I broke out. Bumps everywhere. Thank God I was still in the hospital. I had never had a nut allergy before. That's what happens when you give birth, your body changes in little ways."

(The balancing act)

Letters to Ailan is all about Fitzwilliam's experience of becoming a single mother, documented from Ailan's conception to last Christmas (2008), and told as a series of letters to her son.

Becoming a single mom proved a very controversial decision, "Wendy goes from 'Wendy solo' to 'Wendy kid!' It must have been shocking for everyone!" she propounded.

Why did she write the book? "Because my manager suggested it, quite frankly. He was the third person I told back in 2005, and he was elated. He said, 'You have to write your journey; this would be your first book, Letters to Ailan.' He actually named the book. And because it's a series of letters to my son I can address things sensitively, intelligently and hopefully not offensively. I've addressed a lot of things that are taboo in many of the cultures here. I was born Catholic, very Catholic, and I love my faith. But there are certain things about my faith and other faiths that I find unhealthy. Christianity generally has a very unhealthy relationship with sexuality and therefore does not address it. When you don't address something, and don't educate yourself about it, you drive it underground and as a result 'ugly' festers where the need for 'ugly' does not exist. But I want my son to be the next wave of super-Catholic." I

More enticing is her unique manner in transcending the cosmetic world of beauty and fashion and the harshness of the corporate woman in a natural and refreshing way, that's just all her

surmised that this hope for metamorphosis was also the reason she chose a girl's Catholic school to break the news about her pregnancy.

She's armed to conquer the simultaneous roles of 'mother', 'friend', 'disciplinarian,' and open these very lines of communication with her son, "For me where I am in my life, I'm not worried about Ailan's education or material comfort. He can attend any University in the world and if he chooses not to and starts his own business he will still get that support. Where I find we as West Indians lack most is in the personal - in the way we relate to our children. There's that huge gap between parent and child where the child is not comfortable discussing life's intimacies with the parent, or the complete opposite where the parent does not draw the line and becomes a friend as opposed to the parent. It's a very delicate balancing act, and I am *determined* to get this one right."

Nonetheless, in our conservative society, many aren't particularly thrilled (to be mild) by Wendy's decision to be a single mom. In fact, her younger sister was aghast by the very thought, "She does not think it's best for the big sister that she worships." But Wendy confesses that she was not nervous at all, "I'm very comfortable with my life now. I do want a traditional family structure but I'm not going to give up my other dreams to facilitate that. And that is not as easy as getting an A (in school). I love the institution of marriage, the sanctity of it. My parents got divorced and that was difficult; I'm not doing that again."

(Mr. Nut King, and a new stash of vegetables)

Regardless, conceiving Ailan has impelled her to make pervasive changes, one of these being in the nutrition department.

"When the doctors told me I was carrying Ailan I lived on a diet of carbohydrates. A meal for me was macaroni pie, rice and potato salad. And we West Indians do not count anything liquid as calories so I was covering everything in some kind of sauce.

And I loved to snack. My employees know that I always had a 'goodie draw' in my office - so they loved to come to my office for meetings - because kurma and cookies would be passing around.

My whole diet changed the second I found out I was carrying Ailan. I stopped throwing away my vegetables. In fact, I eat a lot more of them (I actually stopped picking the bhaji out of bhaji rice) and tons of fruit and salad.



But I had some trouble relinquishing my worst habit. My *Mr. Nut King Corn Curls* habit. I would stop at the gas station, opposite Maritime plaza, in Barataria, every other day, literally, and buy eight to twelve packs of Mr. Nut King each time. This went on for almost a year. I checked myself when I was almost screaming at a gas station attendant, 'What is wrong with your ordering process *here*, you know I come every two days and you don't have any!' Then I thought I was losing it. I said to myself 'Wendy, you need to wean yourself off the corn curls.'

Ailan does not know that Mr. Nut King exists, "I hide them from him in the little toolbox compartment in the car – he does not go there. But I've been off it for some weeks now, I don't even go to that gas station anymore!"

For a second I wondered if I was truly convinced that she'd given up Mr. Nut King. "It's been two weeks since I've had one," she earnestly replied. I conceded to believe her, somewhat.

(Fashionista in NYC)

Of the pageant she quipped, "I was a very mature Universe compared to most. I was twenty-five, ancient, like the *granny* of Miss Universe. I visited my sister in New York, for a few days, before I left for Hawaii (where the pageant was held). We partied all night long the night before so I was very tired when I arrived on the flight. The other girls were dressed beautifully and fully made-up – they were competing from since then! My face was bare, and I only dabbed a little lipstick and mascara. As soon as the plane door opened in Hawaii there was CNN waiting to interview me...and I was wondering why they were paying so much attention to *me* when there were all those fabulous girls around. But the Internet was just blowing up then so there was talk and even bets on before I even got to Hawaii that I would make top ten."

Since being crowned she has been quite the fashionista in Trinidad and Tobago and abroad, "Trinidadians across the world were very excited about my win. Rick Davies – a well-regarded 'trini' stylist in New York, who totally flies below the radar - called Miss Universe and offered to style me. He met me on my first trip to New York three months after I won, and we hit it off completely. He was like a real 'trini' boy from San Juan. Whenever he styled me he pulled the most amazing clothes. I wore the best of the best – some of the less known but more exclusive and very high-end designers."

One of those designers was Zang Toi - a young, Malaysian designer, whose clientele includes Sharon Stone, Ivana Trump and Meg Ryan, "Zang, like Rick and I, hit it off. He's an island boy like me, and from the tropics as well, but from the opposite side of the planet. And he has a


beautiful studio in midtown, on 57th street between 5th and 6th Avenue, so it's perfectly located – right across the street are the infamous Brazilian sisters who can wax anything, and the Christian Dior store. The location is nice. I hanged out with him a lot; he dressed me in the most feminine and glamorous pieces, and we became good friends.

I also modeled at a couple of his runway shows. He used my body to cut his patterns, so that's why all his samples fit me perfectly (smiles)."

One look she recalls is the jewell ed high-neck gown and Celine jewels that she wore a few years back at the *Whitney Museum Gala*. And Zang, of course, was the designer, and the chosen designer for this issue's cover shoot.

(Full Circle)

Wendy does carry an air of responsibility - after all, she is the Vice President of Business Development at the *Evolving TecK-nologies and Enterprise Development Company Limited*, and a mother – but she does so enthusiastically, playfully. She speaks with genuine interest and passion about every sphere of her life, lending the impression that work is all play and play is all work.

More enticing is her unique manner in transcending the cosmetic world of beauty and fashion and the harshness of the corporate woman in a natural and refreshing way, that's just all her. Since her win in 1998 she has made significant strides as the *Red Cross* ambassador for children afflicted with HIV/Aids, and her compassion extends to the *Cyril Ross* home for children. But when, in mid conversation she excitedly pulls out her little book of quotations, hidden in her brief bag, talking about transcendence, forgiveness and the like, it becomes obvious that this woman would continue to shine and constantly surprise us all.  - *Aliyyah Eniath*

"There's that huge gap between parent and child where the child is not comfortable discussing life's intimacies with the parent, or the complete opposite where the parent does not draw the line and becomes a friend as opposed to the parent. It's a very delicate balancing act, and I am determined to get this one right"



Dress: Couture silk jersey
draped black gown; Zang
Toi

Jewellery: BM crystal
chandelier earrings and
crystal cuff; Sugar Creme

Inc. All styles from
Badgley Mischka Fall 2009
Collection

Shoes: Richard Tyler



She speaks with genuine interest and passion about every sphere of her life; for her, work is all play and play is all work

Dress: Couture silk jersey draped black gown; Zang Toi

Jewellery: BM crystal chandelier earrings and crystal cuff; Sugar Creme Inc. All styles from Badgley Mischka Fall 2009 Collection
Shoes: Richard Tyler



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an expert exposes the sensual side of

birthing



Sensuality. Caressing. Waves of pleasure. Intimacy. Passion. These are not the words that are usually associated with childbirth. And within the first few moments of viewing the documentary/film entitled *Orgasmic Birth*, it became clear that this was certainly not your usual film about pregnancy.

Produced, directed and filmed by birthing expert and educator, Debra Pascali-Bonaro, *Orgasmic Birth* explores the relationship between the childbirth process and the sense of ecstasy one usually feels at the climax of a sexual encounter. The film's message throughout is thus: Just as you enjoy sexuality, enjoy your birth.

Fifty-two year old New Jersey native Pascali-Bonaro, herself a mother of six, says that it was a combination of her own personal experience in childbirth and a dream to teach other women about orgasmic births that inspired her to make the film.

"I was sound asleep and I woke up with an absolute dream and it was so vivid that I woke my husband up and said I have to make this film," she says. "I took film classes and read books (about making films). It just goes to show that if you have a dream, be sure to follow it."

"Undisturbed birth is an integral part of a woman's sexuality and a widely neglected human right," asserts Pascali-Bonaro, adding that a woman's body is well prepared to handle birth on its own without the assistance of medications administered at a hospital.

She points out that during labour and birth, oxytocin, the hormone of sex and love, rises to peak levels in both mother and baby. According to this birthing expert, the same elements that would create a sensuous experience with a lover – dim lights, privacy and a sense of safety – also facilitate birth.

To complete her documentary, Pascali-Bonaro follows the birthing journey of several couples, all of whom are willing to capture their entire process of childbirth on film – from first labour pains to actual delivery of their bundles of joy. One couple, Tami and Bill, are quite enthusiastic to share their experience. In their scene, Tami is on her knees on the back deck of the couple's home while in labour, while her husband gently and sensually caresses her back, neck, arms and legs in order to induce the orgasmic feeling that Tami eventually gives in to with a loud, feral growl as her baby boy enters the world.

"It felt natural and good," Tami says in the interview following their son's birth. "I loved it. It was a beautiful family experience." In another scene, another couple gives birth to their child after a series of chanting, deep breathing, hugging and kissing under dimmed lights. And yet another couple brings their little one into

the world after spending hours of petting, moaning and simultaneous pelvic movements.


And orgasmic births aren't just for the benefit of the mothers-to-be. One husband, Kevin, describes the experience as "sensual and blissful" for both him and his wife.

The film also introduces the medical aspect of orgasmic birth, with well-known birth specialists, including, among others, Ina May Gaskin, founder/director of the *Farm Midwifery Centre* in Summertown, Tennessee; Marsden Wagner, MD, former director of Women's and Children's Health for the *World Health Organization*; and Obstetrician/gynaecologist and best-selling author, Christiane Northrup, MD.

"When you allow yourself to open (during birth) in the same way you open to orgasm, the same experience is possible," says Northrup.

In essence, all of the couples in the film have one thing in common – they all decide to use the assistance of registered midwives or "doulas" (assistants who provide various forms of non-medical and non-midwifery support, both physical and emotional in the childbirth process) to have their births at home rather than at the hospital; whether it be in the shower, on their back porch or in a tub of water in their own living rooms.

While the film advocates for the woman's right to not utilize the services of a hospital for the purposes of childbirth, it is important to note, however, that the mother-to-be should seek the advice of a midwife to ensure that she is healthy enough to give birth without having to go to a hospital.

Orgasmic Birth is a film in which viewers are asked to rethink what they think they know about giving birth and the potential it holds to help a woman soar to new heights throughout the experience. But if you are a woman who has never experienced an orgasm during childbirth, don't despair: Orgasmic births are not for everyone. Pascali-Bonaro says that the film is only meant to show women that there is a possible alternative to the pain that birth can be and that it can, in the end, be a pleasurable feeling. 

- *Tricia Henry*

Orgasmic Birth is a film in which viewers are asked to rethink what they think they know about giving birth and the potential it holds to help a woman soar to new heights throughout the experience

risk factors

for the dreaded, yet all too common miscarriage

The natural loss of a fetus before a pregnancy has reached its midway point (of twenty weeks) – termed a *miscarriage* – is a regrettably common occurrence. Often, the first time mother is not aware that as many as twenty-five percent of pregnancies, are miscarried by week six. Couples who miscarry are often left with heartbreak, confusion, unmet expectation and a ton of questions. Here's the scoop on why the most common miscarriages occur:

Chromosomal abnormalities

Chromosomal or genetic problems are found in more than half of embryos miscarried in the first thirteen weeks. In fact, pregnancies with a genetic problem have a ninety-five percent chance of ending in miscarriage. Most times, these chromosomal complications occur by chance, have nothing to do with the parents and are unlikely to recur.

Age

As a woman grows older, the chances of her having a chromosomal abnormality in pregnancy increase. Women older than age thirty-five have a higher risk – up to twenty percent – of miscarriage than younger women. At age forty, the risk increases to forty percent.

Health Problems

Miscarriages that occur in the third trimester are more likely to be due to maternal factors, such as an illness in the mother. Women with poorly controlled diabetes, for instance, are at risk. Women may develop diabetes after conception, but once treated, are no more likely to lose a pregnancy than other women. Other diseases and conditions linked to increased risk of

miscarriage include lupus, high blood pressure, kidney disease, rubella, and herpes simplex.

Hormone Imbalance

Some women do not make enough progesterone, the hormone that prepares the lining of the uterus to nourish a fertilized egg. If the uterine lining cannot sustain an egg, miscarriage will occur. Progesterone supplements can correct this problem. Hormone imbalance also can be caused by diabetes mellitus or thyroid disease.

Abnormalities of the Uterus and Cervix

Anything physically wrong with the uterus or cervix, such as a misshaped uterus, fibroids, or scar tissue can lead to a miscarriage. A weak cervix may widen too early in pregnancy, without any warning sign of labor, expelling the fetus from the uterus. These physical problems account for up to fifteen percent of repeated miscarriages.

Exercise

A recent study has found correlation between exercise and miscarriage. Of the ninety-two thousand women studied, most types of exercise (with the exception of swimming) correlated with a higher risk of miscarriage prior to eighteen weeks of pregnancy. The more time spent on exercise, the greater the risk of miscarriage: risk increased by ten percent with up to one and a half hours per week of exercise, and to two hundred percent with over seven hours per week of exercise. No relationship was found between exercise and miscarriage rates after the eighteenth week of pregnancy

Caffeine Consumption

Caffeine consumption, at high levels of intake, has also been correlated to miscarriage rates. A 2007 study of over one thousand pregnant women found that women who reported consuming 200 mg or more of

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caffeine per day experienced a twenty-five percent miscarriage rate, compared to thirteen percent among women who reported no caffeine consumption.

Male and Miscarriage

Age

One study found that pregnancies from men younger than twenty-five are forty percent less likely to end in miscarriage than pregnancies from men between twenty-five and twenty-nine. The same study found that pregnancies from men over forty are sixty percent more likely to end in miscarriage than the twenty-five to twenty-nine year age group. A virtual tidal wave of research has made it irrefutable that male fertility actually decreases after age thirty-five.

Smoking

There is an increased risk of miscarriage when the father is a cigarette smoker. A study indicated a four percent risk for husbands who smoke less than twenty cigarettes a day, and an eighty-one percent risk for husbands who smoke twenty or more per day.

 -Danielle Watson

Chromosomal or genetic problems are found in more than half of embryos miscarried in the first thirteen weeks. In fact, pregnancies with a genetic problem have a ninety-five percent chance of ending in miscarriage.





a tale of two couples

dealing with a stillborn, miscarriage,
infertility and the unexpected

Ben and Mary-Lou Gibbs' Stillborn

I was at a meeting until midnight, on the evening of Friday 8th September. When I arrived home, my pregnant wife, Mary-Lou complained of pains in her tummy. We waited for one hour hoping that the condition would subside before we called the mid-wives; we were then advised that Mary-Lou should take a bath as a pain relief method. After her bath, Pam, the Community Midwife on call, arrived at our home. She felt Mary-Lou's bump and used some equipment to try to hear our baby's heartbeat; but there was none.

Pam was not worried because the baby's position or faulty equipment could interfere with the heartbeat but she suggested a trip to the hospital for a proper scan.

She drove us to the hospital at around 3 a.m. on Saturday morning. On the way I remembered that I'd forgotten to bring the car seat to bring our baby home with us, but I didn't tell Mary-Lou because I didn't want to worry her anymore than she already was. When we arrived, I texted a couple of friends to pray for us and for our baby, and I phoned Mary-Lou's parents and my parents with the news. It was so hard – I had never given such bad news – but I wanted them to pray for us too.

Our doctor came in with the echo machine and said that he would do some scanning for a while, and chat with us afterwards. As he was scanning in silence, I held Mary-Lou's hand and nervousness crept in. It began to register that there could really be a problem. It was quite eerie. Pam was with us too, but no-one was speaking and it was obvious that everyone was very tense.

I was born with a congenital heart problem called *Transposition of the Main Arteries*, so I am used to echo cardiograms and I know what I am looking at on the screens. As the doctor scanned I wondered whether I should look at the screen, or whether that might scare me. I did glance at it a couple of times, and immediately wished I didn't. I saw the cavity where the heart was, but I didn't see valves flapping around, like I've seen in my heart.

I looked away and decided it didn't mean anything. After all, I'm not an expert on echo cardiograms. I began watching him move the scanner around Mary-Lou's tummy and then noticed that his hand was shaking. I squeezed Mary-Lou's hand and looked at her. She was just staring straight ahead at the opposite wall. I didn't know how to feel, all the signs were pointing towards the worst thing, but I was determined that this wasn't the case.

The doctor's eyes were very sorrowful. He apologised and told us that he could not find a heartbeat. Mary-Lou started breathing heavily, repeating, "No, no, no." I tried to hug her but it was very awkward because of how she was lying. I didn't know what to think or say; I just focused on Mary-Lou, trying to hold her.

Mary-Lou started groaning, then crying, then stopped and just stared at the ceiling. Hundreds of things were going through my head about what this meant – memories of our hopes, confusion about what needed to happen next, fears of its implications on Mary-Lou. I felt this was the worst thing that could have hap-

pened. The baby was nine days late by then, and was going to be induced on the following Monday. It was full term and fully developed; it had grown these nine months, and now, nothing.

The doctors recommended that Mary-Lou give birth to the baby and the horror I had felt as a child when I learnt that some ladies have to give birth to their dead babies flooded over me. I thought, "There is no way I'm going to let Mary-Lou give birth, it is the most horrific thing she could ever go through." So I asked the doctor if she could have a Cesarean section under general anaesthetic so that she could be knocked out while they took the baby out and not have to experience giving birth to the dead baby.

But a vaginal delivery was strongly recommended since a c-section is a serious operation with risks of complications in future pregnancies, whereas vaginal delivery was natural and far less risky.

When we were left alone, we cuddled. We didn't know what to say. Mary-Lou was still in shock. I started to think about where Jesus was in all this, I really couldn't work it out. I said to Mary-Lou that I felt I should remind us that Jesus is here somewhere in this situation, but that I couldn't see it. Mary-Lou hugged me and I began crying. I started repeating through tears, "I don't want this, I don't want this." I really felt desperate for things to be different, for there to be no problem.

Mary-Lou's contractions were getting stronger so she accepted

"...many couples who go through stillbirth and don't see their baby regret it afterwards"

some Pethidine from our new midwife, Caroline. After the injection, the pain died down but she was fatigued and fell asleep almost immediately.

I'd told our parents that we didn't want anyone to come to us, and that we wanted to be alone and go through this together; nonetheless my mom and dad arrived at about 7 or 8 am, just in case we needed them, and we decided to see them after all.

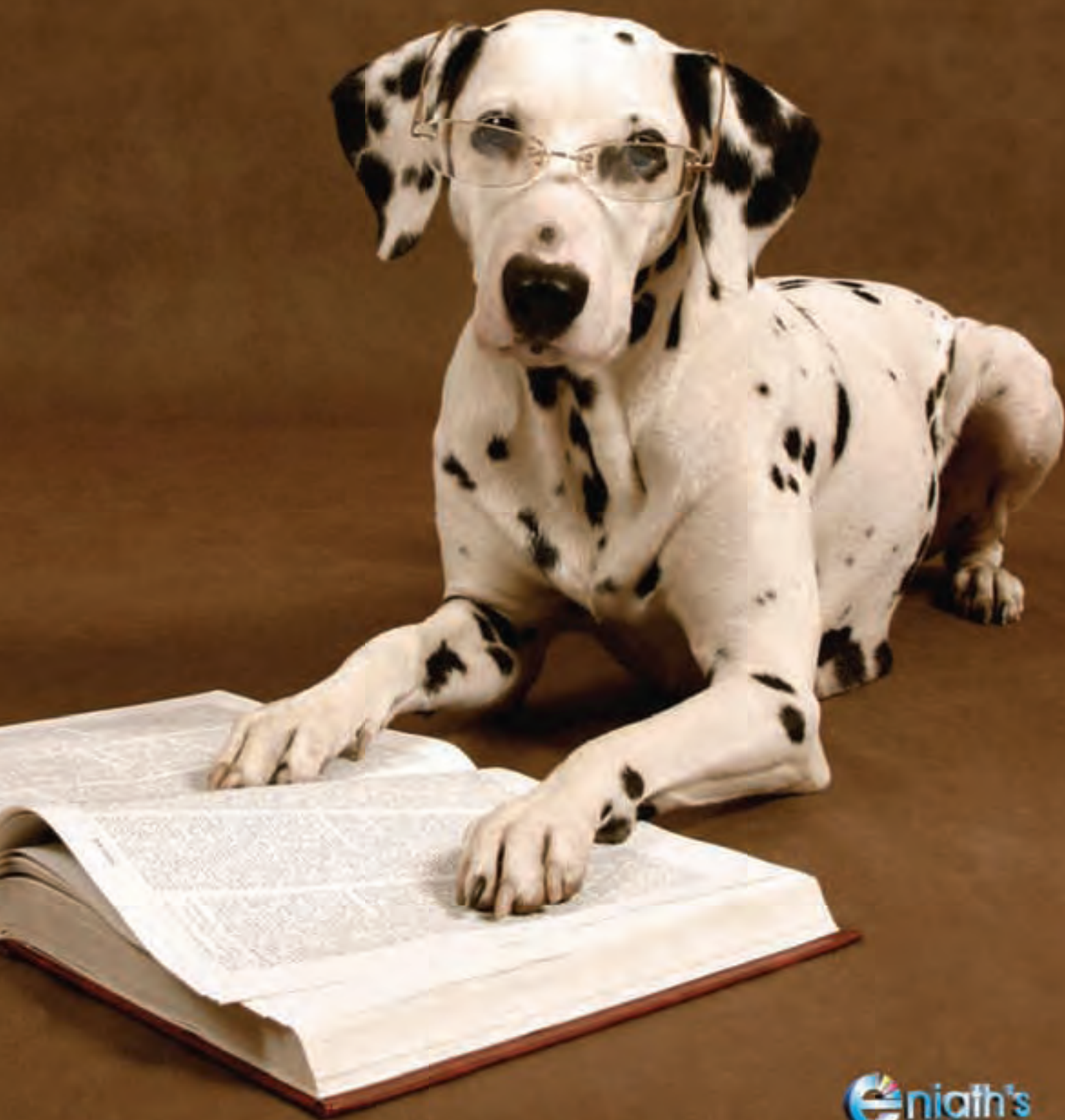
When they came in, we hugged then they sat down. Mary-Lou held my mom's hand because she was crying; no one talked much. We told them in detail what happened. I mentioned that we thought we wanted a c-section and that we didn't think we wanted to see the baby. Before they left my dad asked to chat with me outside the room.

He was troubled that we didn't want to see our baby. Mary-Lou and I had chatted about it earlier. I'd said that I would like to see it, but Mary-Lou didn't want to because the idea was so horrible. My dad explained that many couples who go through stillbirth and don't see their baby regret it afterwards. He explained that in the eyes of God, our baby was a person from its conception, that we will meet him or her one day in heaven and that we should name it and he encouraged me to see our baby and hold it with Mary-Lou.

After my parents left at around 10 a.m., I told Mary-Lou what my dad said, and as I explained, it slowly dawned on me how precious an individual our baby was. We chatted about it and both realised that we had been distancing ourselves from our baby as *our*

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baby, and that it was a human whom we should honour and respect. This helped us greatly in making decisions later on. One of the first difficult decisions was about how our baby was going to be delivered. We thought the most honourable thing was to complete the pregnancy through a vaginal delivery. To have a c-section under general anaesthetic was – in our mind – trying to shun our baby and not have anything more to do with it. We felt we would be neglecting the last nine months of discomfort and sacrifice we had gone through for our child.

The contractions continued getting stronger and Mary-Lou was dilating at about 1cm per hour; the normal rate. By 10 p.m. Mary-Lou had dilated 10cm, her legs in stirrups, and was encouraged to start pushing whenever she had a contraction. She initially had a problem in that she didn't know how or where to push. By this time Pam was on shift again and was looking after us – we were very grateful to have her and not another new person.

M

Lou's contractions were quite infrequent and irregular so our baby wasn't really moving much. At about midnight, the doctor returned and advised putting Mary-Lou on a drip which would help regulate her contractions and hopefully speed up the delivery, so we agreed to

that. After an hour, our baby's head had crowned and Pam could see the hair – it was like Mary-Lou's, she told us. Yet even with Mary-Lou pushing really hard and doing so well at it, our baby wasn't moving very far.

The doctor did an episiotomy, using forceps to pull our baby out. We had chosen not to see our baby being delivered so a sheet had been hung over Mary-Lou's tummy. Eventually, in one giant push, our baby was delivered, no sound, no noise, just Mary-Lou panting for breath and sighing with relief. Our baby was taken away by Pam and when she returned she injected Mary-Lou with something which helps the placenta be delivered quickly. Mary-Lou had suffered a third degree tear that required stitches straight away. We briefly discussed whether to have general or local anaesthetic and decided on local. Mary-Lou wanted me to be with her during the surgery and they agreed that I would be allowed.

When they had wheeled Mary-Lou on her bed into surgery, I was left on my own in the room, awaiting clothes to go into the theatre. I felt quite lost and lonely and started shaking a bit. Pam came in to help clear up and take away the stuff they had used for delivery and asked me if I wanted to know what sex our baby was. I said I didn't and that we would rather find out together, so she had a tricky time telling me how the delivery went and how big our baby was.

When I was called into the theatre, the surgeon seemed to have already started adding the local anaesthetic. I was given a stool next to Mary-Lou's head and I stroked her head and held her hand while I told her how much I loved her and how proud I was of her. She seemed to drift in and out of consciousness according to any pain she felt but I just kept stroking and whispering to her; there was nothing else I could do. The stitches took longer than the doc-

The doctors recommended that Mary-Lou give birth to the baby, and the horror I had felt as a child when I learnt that some ladies have to give birth to their dead babies flooded over me

tor had expected but once we were back in our room Mary-Lou, already quite dozy, fell asleep.

I asked the doctor how the surgery went. He said it went very well and that they were very happy with their work. Then he expressed how sorry he was for us and shook my hand. It was quite bizarre since I didn't feel like I had done anything to deserve having my hand shaken.

After only five minutes, I came back to our room to find the lights off, the drip machine beeping loudly and Mary-Lou panicking and moaning for help. My heart sank immediately with guilt for not being there and I rushed over to her bed and pressed the button to call for a midwife. I kept telling her that I was there with her as she was hyperventilating and looking into my eyes as if asking why I wasn't there when she woke up. Once Pam had come and sorted out the machine and helped to calm Mary-Lou down, she got me a camp bed to lie on, so for the first time in over two and a half days, we both got some proper sleep...for 4 hours!

When we woke up Caroline told us about our baby. She told us we had had a "wee girl" who was 10lb 3oz – not so "wee" after all! When we heard we had had a girl, Mary-Lou burst into tears and I couldn't quite take it in. We had both hoped for a girl, but as the pregnancy went on, we became more and more convinced we would have a boy.

I started wondering what we would name our daughter. We had gotten names for a boy or a girl, but I wondered if it was "worth" giving the name to our dead daughter, or saving it for a future daughter. But when Mary-Lou told Caroline we would call her Amy Isabel Gibbs, I felt that it was entirely right. Caroline asked if we wanted to see Amy, but we didn't feel ready to. There was a sense of fear and dread for us both, to see a dead baby – our dead baby.

Later on that Sunday afternoon, after lunch and organizing for some friends and my parents to come and be with us in the evening, we decided to go and see Amy. Mary-Lou was very scared about it, but I really wanted to see Amy at this point, and Mary-Lou didn't want it to just be me who saw Amy. Caroline took Amy to the room next door and dressed her in a body suit and hat that we'd given her from the bag of clothes and nappies we had brought with us. Then she came to get us and we helped Mary-Lou walk next door.

Caroline explained that Amy looked a bit red and that the forceps had left a scar on her right cheek and scalp, but as we went into the room and saw the Moses basket, then walked further in to see Amy in the basket, we were both quite shocked. Amy looked more purple than I thought she would, and her parted lips were very dark. She wasn't actually purple, but was a lot darker than I expected. The initial shock was quickly washed away by amazement at how much she looked like Mary-Lou! She was definitely Filipino



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looking with Mary-Lou's mouth and lips, and long black hair. I asked if her hat could be taken off so we could see all her hair. So Caroline took the covers and hat off. I remember bending over to look closer with my hands behind my back, as though I were inspecting her. I felt quite sad now and afraid to touch her, as though I wasn't allowed to. Then I plucked up the courage to pick up her left hand from on her chest and began talking to her, saying how much we loved her, how beautiful she looked (the initial shock had completely dissolved into pride by this point) and I thanked God for giving her to us and asked Jesus to look after her and let her know how much we love her. Mary-Lou then held her hand in mine too but was too upset to say anything. So I said goodbye to Amy, rubbed her hand with my thumb and rested it back onto her chest.

When we returned to our room we chatted about what she looked like and about how glad we were to have seen her. Then we cuddled and I began crying as it all began sinking in. The tears

I joined community groups in the hope of helping other less fortunate people, and having control over something positive...

and snosh and dribble – which I had seen so many times on Mary-Lou's face, and wondered how annoying they must be – didn't bother me, nor did the fact that I heard someone come in our room, and hastily leave after seeing me crying. I was overwhelmed with grief and pain like I had never felt, I just wanted to be held by Mary-Lou, nothing else seemed to matter.

I remember reading an article about fathers suffering a still-birth and it said that fathers may start to grieve up to thirty six months after the death occurs. I found this to be somewhat true for me. I coped initially by not really dealing with Amy's death. I concentrated on Mary-Lou – trying to help her recover physically and emotionally.

As the months passed, we took each moment, hour, feeling, wave of grief as they came. We didn't try to hide our feelings, even if it was anger, which can be a scary emotion. We had "reviews" where we talked about everything from trying for another baby, moving house, moving country, our jobs, dealing with grief, money issues. It was our way of keeping the lines of communication open as well as keeping hope, encouraging each other to dream and look forward.

As Mary-Lou recovered physically, she coped emotionally by structuring her week and focusing on one thing to do each day, such as making dinner. She spent one day a week going out on her own and arranged lunch and coffee dates with friends. She faced her fears by going to places like the Christmas markets where she

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imagined taking Amy; though Christmas, anniversaries, birthdays and other special occasions were most difficult for her.

It was more that two years later that our son Toby was born – a birth that triggered an identity crisis, in that, I still wanted to be Amy's grieving father, *and* celebrate this birth. Two contrary aspirations which created a lot of tension for me. I joined community groups in the hope of helping other less fortunate people, and having control over something positive, and though I feel that I've a

lot to really learn and discover at this point, I'm sure I'll be figuring it out the rest of my life. But for now it feels good and proper that I rest and invest in the place I have as Mary-Lou's husband, and Amy and Toby's dad.

Mary Jane Grenzow's Happy Ending

You're pregnant," the nurse said. I was standing at a phone booth on a dreary December afternoon in 1999. I had left work and driven three blocks to get my pregnancy test results in private; the thought of another month, another disappointment, another humiliation in front of co-workers was too much to bear.

I didn't believe her: Was she sure? The nurse laughed. Yes, she said. Quite sure. But she worked in a clinic that helped women overcome infertility – I wasn't the first who didn't believe she was actually pregnant. The nurse was gentle, and very reassuring. "Come in and we'll test again. But you are pregnant. Merry Christmas!"

Almost ten years later, it still strikes me how close I came to never hearing those words.

At age nineteen, I was diagnosed with a small tumor on my pituitary gland, the cause of years of menstrual difficulties. But more troubling was the doctor's warning that I would likely have fertil-



ity issues – and possibly, never be able to conceive. I wasn't interested in having a child right away, but the knowledge weighed heavily in my heart. By the time I married when I was thirty-three, I was ready. I knew it would be a challenge, especially with my age working against me. I visited a highly-regarded reproductive endocrinologist who started me on Provera, to induce a menstrual cycle, and Clomid, a commonly prescribed drug that stimulates ovulation.

And the agonizing game began. A cycle of Provera and Clomid, no pregnancy. Another cycle, this time a higher dosage of Clomid, but no pregnancy. Another higher dose yet, and another. Circled dates on the calendar: when to take Clomid, when to have intercourse, when to take another blood test, when to return to the doctor. And after each failed cycle, more tears and a little more desperation.

Nine months later, the doctor told me it was the last cycle of the drug he would put me on. If it didn't work, it was time to explore other options – such as in vitro fertilization.

But there would be no next step for me. We were of average means and simply didn't have the money for expensive procedures, especially when there were no guarantees. Maybe we could adopt, but that too can be a difficult and expensive journey.

It was my last chance. I lay on the living room floor one Sunday night as my husband, carefully following the doctor's instructions, injected me with hCG to trigger the release of an egg from my ovaries. Please God, let it work, I prayed.

It did. I was pregnant.

My joy washed away one Friday two months later when I started to bleed heavily. The clinic staff said there was nothing they could do. Bed rest, they said. Whatever will happen, will happen. So I stayed in bed, bleeding and crying and praying, until Monday morning when I returned to the doctor for an ultrasound: Somehow, my baby had survived.

And she continued to grow and thrive, right up until the day before her due date when I had my first contraction. We went to the hospital, where I labored for twenty-four hours. But the baby was stuck, and the hospital staff grew concerned that she was in danger. The doctor was called for an emergency Caesarean section. I was so overwhelmed and exhausted, I barely realized when they placed my precious baby in my arms.

By the time I left the hospital four days later, the emotional rollercoaster of the previous eighteen months no longer mattered. I knew I needed another child.

We began trying again a year later. This time, I knew what to expect. The doctor knew how much Clomid to prescribe. I scribbled my notes, circled my dates, followed his instructions to the letter. It only took two cycles of Clomid to become pregnant again.

Six weeks in, over a holiday weekend, I started to bleed and cramp. The doctor said there was nothing he could do. What will happen, will happen, he said. On Monday, I was back in his office for an ultrasound. There was no heartbeat. It didn't look promising, he said. Defeated, I went home. The cramps started at 9:45 that evening. Within 10 minutes, I miscarried; my dreams shattered again.

I mourned my lost baby. But I knew we would try again. When the first round of Clomid didn't work four months later, I began to doubt I could carry another child.

One morning a few days after Christmas, a sudden wave of nausea hit. Odd, I thought. I didn't feel ill at all. By the middle of the day, it hit me: a home pregnancy test confirmed my suspicion. Sitting in the doctor's office several days later, I asked how I could be pregnant, when the blood test earlier that month had shown I hadn't even ovulated.

He shrugged. It's the season of miracles, he said.

My elation was short-lived. An early screening indicated the baby was at high risk for Down's Syndrome. We were offered amniocentesis to find out for certain. But amnio can trigger premature labor – I couldn't risk that. And what if the baby did have Down's? Would I terminate? After all I had been through?

I cried for my baby night after night, fearing the worst. I cried so much, I worried my heartache would harm her even more. Then one day, I stopped crying. I decided I would accept my baby on her terms – no matter what.

She was born via C-section, this one planned, four years and one day after my first child was born. And she was perfect. Our family was complete.

During a follow-up visit a short time later, my doctor discussed birth control. I laughed. "Accidents" don't happen to infertile women.



My heart goes out to women struggling with infertility. I know the pain and helplessness of infertility, and I know the despair and grief of a miscarried baby. But I also know that miracles do happen, especially when you least expect them

One night eighteen months later, that familiar wave of nausea hit. I ran to the store for a pregnancy test, then called for my husband to come and verify the positive result on the test strip. Neither of us knew what to say. I was forty, he was forty-three; we thought we were done with babies. Our marriage was rocky and another baby was not what we expected. Neither of us was sure it was even what we wanted.

I didn't have too much time to think about it. Physically, the pregnancy was exhausting – I was older, and had two small children to care for, plus a full-time job. But I wasn't consumed with worry this time. Whatever will happen, will happen, I thought. It hit me when my third child was born how *(continued on pg 77)*

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Confessions of a late bloomer



My first kindergarten memory is bizarre, abstract, but reminiscent of my early school years. I'm in a dark room, looking out at the other children play. I'm not sure why I'm in this room. Perhaps a form of punishment for something I did? Or perhaps inflicted by my desire to cringe away from others, from *strangers*. Regardless, my memories shift to another place. I'm in first year in primary school. I'm straining to see the blackboard charred with chalk, white and glaring. Some parts green. Some parts red. There's a diagram, I think. The other children are looking on intently, only I can't see much, and I'm wondering what the fuss is anyway. So I did what was natural to me, I dazed off distractedly. I was tallest in my class then, sitting at the very last wooden desk, furthest from the blackboard. I was under little scrutiny.

Another isolated memory appears. I'm in standard one *D*. Obviously I'm in the class with slow learners. My remarkably skinny, "hairy-foot" teacher plays a game with us every morning. She pretends that we have a mailbox, and every day the mail comes in. One student is randomly appointed each time to collect the letters and read it to the class. Nothing happens to me directly in this memory but even now an extremely disconcerting feeling wells up within me when I think of it. Remnants of the fear that one day I would have to collect and read to the class. Might I stumble? Would they laugh at me?

What my parents didn't realize until I was placed in the *D* class, was that, it wasn't that I refused to learn, or that I had no ability or propensity to excel. It was simple. I suffered from continuous ear infections. If I heard properly at all back then I don't recall. Further, it was discovered that I was practically blind, and was born that way. No wonder I could not see the blackboard or discern that coloured chart my teacher was trying to demonstrate in first year. And whatever cues I had missed as a result of these conditions coupled with my distractedness earned me last place in class.

The adverse reaction to my peers could have been a genetic response, a result of my innate introversion, or perhaps just shame from being so *dumb*, or self-consciously lanky (towering over everyone else). I had gotten used to the idea that unlike my brother and sister I was never going to be the *A* student. I had gotten used to the idea that some students did well, and I wasn't one of them. This recognition became part of my awkward, timid personality.

And in standard two my skinny, angular face, popping undecidedly above my neck was blessed with gold-rimmed big-framed glasses with inch thick lenses. I still recall a boy in the savannah heckling me as rain descended from nowhere, "Wipe your windshield!" Behind me, a cacophony of laughter.

But somehow I focused and climbed the academic ladder. In my last string of primary school memories, I'm now in standard five *B*. My teacher is reading our end of term report. He smiles as he announces, "In 15th place, none other than..." He was so happy, like it was his own personal triumph that I had made it to the middle and not the absolute back of the class. He was surprised and proud.

By the time high school rolled around, I was growing into my own. Though I could not learn a foreign language to save my life, and math and physics weren't friends, I was in fact one of the smartest students in class. When we were finally allowed to choose our

...so it is with the late bloomers, who like slow-boiling pots, need time to gather wisdom and make sense of the world

subjects, I was grouped into modern studies – a combination of arts, science and business subjects. On graduation day I'd earned a trophy for excellence, and by the time I moved into 6th form I was practically teaching the West Indian history class.

By then too I had the discipline to reorganize myself. I analyzed my weaknesses. The main one was that I could pay more attention in class. And when that failed me, I started learning by myself at home. I had the will. By then too I had gotten contact lenses, and though I wasn't as cute as a pixie, I wasn't bad looking either. Most of the other kids had leveled out to my height by then. In fact, I discovered that I was a bit on the short side. My degrading thoughts about how I looked were fading; it became less and less important.

But I realized, in the university years, that though my life had turned around drastically, it's hard to escape your childhood. For no good reason I would well up with fear if called upon – though I knew my smarts by then. I still avoided my peers, those I didn't know very well, those who seemed different from me. I would not participate unless openly invited.

Thus I made few friends, but those friends I did make, were real, were true. They are friends, who I have in my life till this day. I'd fluffed the crowd it seems to find that core.

And years later, though I still recall the tragedy of my formative years, I know that I've made more of myself than my early teachers expected, perhaps more than my parents expected. And though I'm a writer, have published tons of articles, have made a prominent name for myself in the media landscape in the Caribbean, have written a novel, have produced a talk show, have made significant headway in the fashion and beauty industry, etcetera - I know even now that my high school friends must think, "Is that the same girl I knew?"



Truth is, I'm a late bloomer.

In a tutorial at University, my Literature professor asked a question about the text we were analyzing. When others clamored to answer I remained silent. He said, "I want *you* to answer." His intent eyes showed that it wasn't a dare. It sparkled with the knowledge that I knew the answer.

When I finally spoke, he was dazzled; so was I. "Slow to come up with the answer," he said, "but when she does, it's a darn good one."

This summed up for me everything I've been trying to say in this article: That whilst I was slow in the early years, and my abilities took their time to develop, I had observed, learnt and gathered. And when I was ready to put my talents to use, they unleashed in a way I never thought possible.

So it is with the late bloomers, who like slow-boiling pots, need time to gather wisdom and make sense of the world. (*continued on pg 77*)



JAMBOREE

RED ARMHOLE DRESS (US\$40); CARNABY STREET
GOLD, SEQUINNEED BELT (US\$39.60); CARNABY STREET
FLOPPY HAT (US\$39.60); CARNABY STREET
CHRISTMAS TREE AND GIFTS; DECORATOR'S DREAM



(MIDDLE) KHAKI LONG-SLEEVE THROWOVER
(US\$55.50); CARNABY STREET
HALTER TIER DRESS (US\$83); CARNABY STREET
(RIGHT) RED LONG-SLEEVE THROW-OVER
(US\$59.50); CARNABY STREET
BEIGE SEQUINED, GENIE PANTS (US\$67.50);
CARNABY STREET

(LEFT) BLACK AND WHITE POLKA-DOT GEORGETTE SHIRT DRESS WITH SEQUINED SILK CHIFFON TOP (US\$876); CLAUDIA PEGUS (RIGHT) BLACK AND WHITE POLKA-DOT GEORGETTE SHIRT DRESS WITH LACE OVERLAY ON SKIRT (US\$876); CLAUDIA PEGUS JEWELLERY; PETER ELIAS CHRISTMAS TREE AND GIFTS; DECORATOR'S DREAM



ON HER: ASYMETRICALLY DRAPED SILK
JERSEY PETER ELIAS GOWN (US\$237.30);
PETER ELIAS
AFRICAN INSPIRED BRACELETS (US\$23.80);
PETER ELIAS
ON HIM: STRETCH-TWILL TAPERED SHIRT
(US\$46.80); PETER ELIAS
SKINNY POLKA TIE (US\$15.70); PETER ELIAS
TWILL ELEGANT SHORTS (US\$46.80);
PETER ELIAS
PLUS-SIZED WATCH (US\$31); PETER ELIAS
STEEL AND LEATHER BRACELET (US\$12);
PETER ELIAS





PREVIOUS PAGE: (LEFT) RED LONG-SLEEVE
THROW-OVER (US\$59.50); CARNABY STREET
BEIGE SEQUINNED, GENIE PANTS (US\$67.50);
CARNABY STREET
(MIDDLE) KHAKI LONG-SLEEVE THROW-OVER
(US\$55.50); CARNABY STREET
HALTER TIER DRESS (US\$83); CARNABY STREET
(RIGHT) RED ARMHOLE DRESS (US\$40);
CARNABY STREET
GOLD, SEQUINNED BELT (US\$39.60);
CARNABY STREET
FLOPPY HAT (US\$39.60); CARNABY STREET

THIS PAGE: HERVE LEGER INSPIRED PETER ELIAS
BANDAGE TOP (US\$110.31); PETER ELIAS
LAYERED FLOOR LENGTH SKIRTS VISCOSE
MATT-JERSEY (US\$47 EACH); PETER ELIAS
INDIAN ROCK CRYSTAL CHOKER AND
BRACELET SET (US\$2,380); HOUSE OF JAIPUR



ON HIM:

STRETCH-TWILL TAPERED SHIRT
(US\$46.80); PETER ELIAS
SKINNY POLKA TIE (US\$15.70);
PETER ELIAS
TWILL ELEGANT SHORTS
(US\$46.80); PETER ELIAS
PLUS-SIZED WATCH (US\$31);
PETER ELIAS
STEEL AND LEATHER BRACELET
(US\$12); PETER ELIAS

ON HER (OPPOSITE):

GREY BOW-TIE DRESS; PHILIPPA
TASSELED NECKLACE; HOUSE OF
JAIPUR (*contact respective retailers for prices*)







DIAPHANOUS SKIRT HELD
BY A BARE TOP, TUCKED
AND SUBTLY DISTRESSED
(US\$79.40); MEILING



SILK CHARMEUSE
COLD-SHOULDER
BIAS GOWN;
PETER ELIAS
LEATHER AND
CLEAR LUCITE
CARVINGS NECK-
LACE (US\$31.80);
PETER ELIAS





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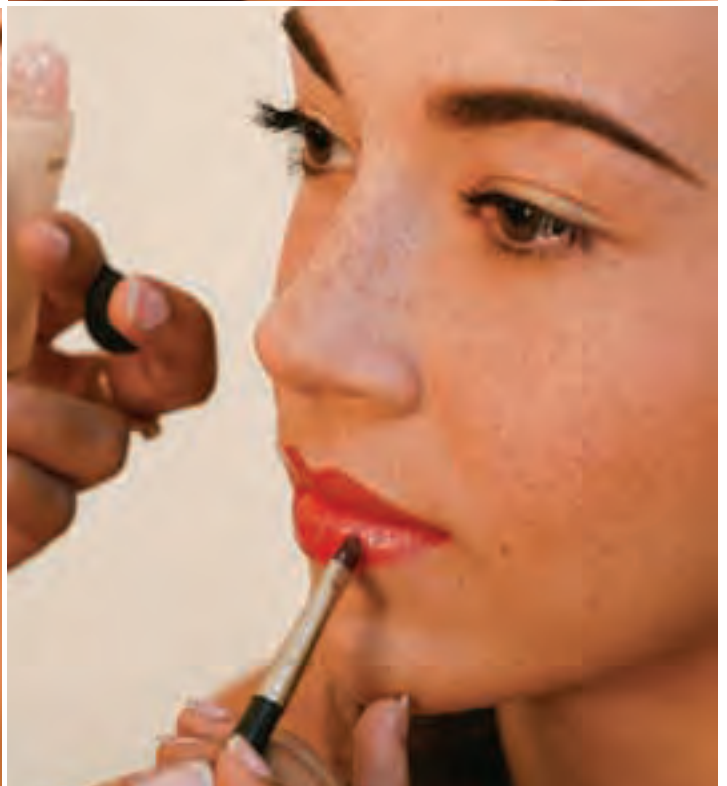
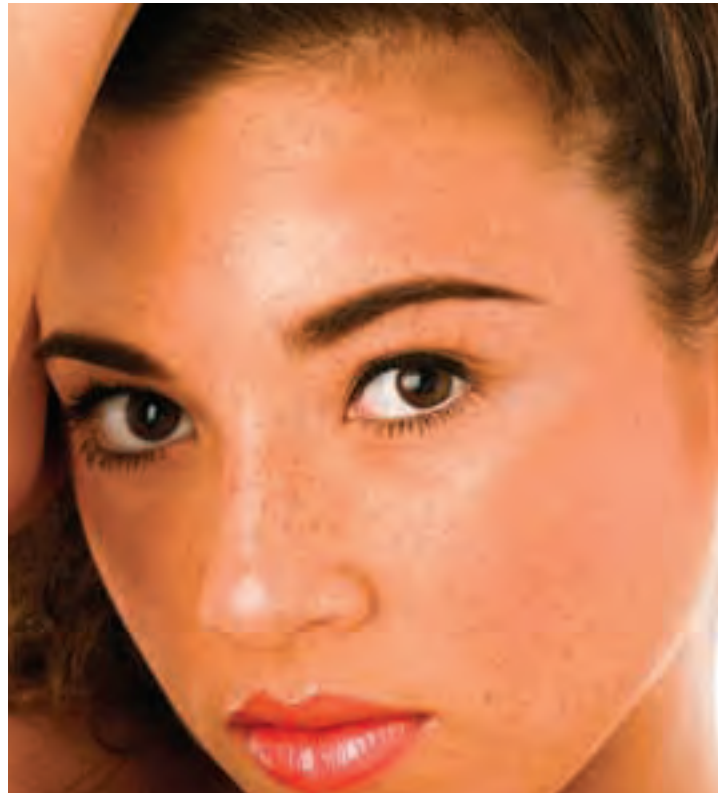
beauty

B | EYES ON YOU

Fresh Simplicity by day, Dramatic Diva by
night, with make-up artiste Sandra Hordatt



Get the Look Product Guide



day ahead:

Base: Fluid Master Primer, *Giorgio Armani* **Foundation:** NW35, *Mac* **Powder:** Dust of loose medium, *Mac*
Blush: Virgin Isle Cream Blush, *Mac* **Eyes:** Wash of Melon, *Mac* **Mascara:** Obsidian Black, *Armani*
Bronzer: Silver Dusk, *Mac* **Lip:** Lip Shimmer 21, *Giorgio Armani*

fete mode (opposite):

Shadow: High definition loose paint in yellow, hot pink, and turquoise **Liner:** Macroiolet Fluid Line, *Mac*
Lips: Viva Glam, *Mac* (Use *Mac Diva* for a deeper red) **Gloss:** Totally It, *Mac*



STECHEERS

FINE GIFT STORES TO THE CARIBBEAN
SINCE 1945

ATTITUDE
EXTREME

GIORGIO ARMANI

MRSEB

Sean Kingston, catapulted to the top of the international charts in three minutes
Usain Bolt; catching up with the world's fastest man
Gregory Mills and wife, Coline Baptiste-Mills shape Millhouse Menswear



Sean Kingston

catapulted to the top of the international charts in the space of three minutes

In the hot summer of 2007, no matter where you were in the world, from Thailand to Turkey, London to Louisiana, there was a certain something in the air – a melody which you couldn't quite escape. It was somehow familiar, yet new. An upbeat R'n'B vibe riding on the back of Ben E. King's 1961 classic *Stand By Me*, topped with what, at first, seemed like the usual schmaltzy sugar coated lyrics of the standard commercial track. Albeit, there was a dark twist in the chorus as the singer told how he would be suicidal if a girl left him.

Beautiful Girls was – as well as being the most recognizable hit record in recent memory to happily talk about killing yourself – composed by then seventeen year old reggae/crossover artist, Sean Kingston. In the space of three minutes he found himself catapulted from a smooth voiced teenager from Jamaica to the top of the international charts.

It wasn't a bad effort, for something Sean penned in a matter of minutes. Whilst working with producer J.R. Rotem – who's made cuts with the likes of 50 Cent, The Game, Rihanna and Snoop Dogg – he heard the song *Stand By Me* on the radio and asked if anyone had ever flipped it.

"He (Rotem) made the beat right there on the spot! And I

wrote the song's lyrics in a few minutes," Sean expounded. It's hard when you're in love and a girl tells you that it is time to end things. I know everyone can relate to that, so that's why I had to write about it."

The song got massive airplay, but its lyrics caused controversy in some places, due to the inclusion of the word *suicidal*. Some radio stations banned the song outright, others replaced *suicidal* with *in denial* and MTV cut the word from the song completely. This didn't stop the single from hitting the number one spot in the United Kingdom, United States, Australia, Spain, and elsewhere, though.

But Sean, who now boasts sales of six million downloads, five million ringtones and one million albums to his name, didn't get to the top merely off the back of a fluke single. Sean's eponymous debut, which accompanied *Beautiful Girls*, pulled together influences as wide as pop, reggae, Latin and soul and helped cement his success. Now he promises that with his second record, *Tomorrow*, the world will see the full extent of his diversity.

Tomorrow includes collaborations as diverse as Wyclef Jean and rockers Good Charlotte on *Shoulda Let U Go* – which Sean has marked as one of his favourites on the album. Although he takes huge steps across genres, Sean benefits from an incredible knack for finding hooks and applying them to the sonic situation he's in – which is probably one of the reasons he's also such an in-demand producer.

We caught up with Sean to find out what he thought about playing at the Playboy Mansion, get the scoop on his new record, and decipher if there's going to be any corners of the globe left to conquer by the time he hits twenty-one.

CB: Hi Sean, how's the summer treating you?

SK: I just performed at the *Teen Choice Awards* and that was crazy! Performing live is amazing; when I see the crowds and the smiling faces it's the best feeling ever.

CB: Well, the Teen Choice Awards are all well and good, but we hear you played at the Playboy Mansion - how was that?

SK: Yeah [long laugh] – I did a three song performance there, it was crazy. It was my first time at the mansion and they had this, kind of, lingerie party and there were a lot of beautiful women. I was having big fun. Shaquille O'Neal was there. Hugh Hefner was there. It was a big party.

I got to meet Hugh. He said he likes my music and that was cool. When I played I got a great reaction; people were feeling the vibe and lots of people told me I was tight, they were all going crazy, it was cool.

CB: Sure, but did you see anything, um, untoward while you were there?

SK: [Laughs] Whoa! It was a crazy place, but really, I didn't see anything out there that was, y'know, out of the ordinary.

CB: You're working with Rihanna at the moment, what's that like?

SK: They're looking for some new stuff baby! I'm a songwriter so I can easily step outside the box, and we're going to give her some

great music; me and my whole team have been coming up with some great stuff and hopefully people are going to love it. Rihanna is definitely going to have a hit record.

CB: What kind of sound is she aiming for? We hear she's working on a drum and bass track?

SK: It's definitely going to be more diverse. One of the songs I'm doing for her is like crazy soul. It's like pop, but it has everything in it. And it's got a futuristic sound. And that's the sound that I worked for with my new album. People are loving the record so, y'know, it's all good.

CB: When you're writing songs, are you sometimes working on something for somebody and think, 'Actually, this is too good, I'm going to keep it for myself?'

SK: Nah, when I make a record for someone and listen to what I've made, I usually think that the song should be for that person – I write the records and then I just know who it's going to work with.

CB: Your new album features some diverse artists – Good Charlotte being one of them.

SK: I love Good Charlotte man. We cut a song on the album, it's called *Shoulda Let U Go* and it's basically a mix of rap, reggae and pop. It's up-tempo, it's nice, it's got a catchy melody to it. It's all about having fun man.

Good Charlotte had this beat with a hook and it builds up to this, like, crazy high – orchestra with electric guitar – and it's like a movie man, it's a crazy record, I love it. They were actually signed to the same label, so basically, I told my manager 'Yo – lets do a record with them.' He phoned their manager and he was like, 'Yeah man, they love your songs, you can put it together.' And we got like three tracks out. All the three tracks were crazy, but of the three there was one that stood out and that's the one we've put on the record.

It's different to what my fans normally go for, and I haven't started performing it yet, but I can't wait to, it's one of those type of records where everybody's going to be jumping.

CB: You've sold so many records and singles, I've heard Beautiful Girls all around the world, what do you want to do next?

SK: I want to start doing movies, and right now I'm actually behind the scenes, because I got my own artists. It's called *Time is Money Entertainment*. I can't wait, I'm just going to be like the CEO, so I'll be sitting back like, chilling...

I reckon I'll make another three or four albums myself. I think. As far as the style goes I like all the up-tempo stuff, I want to keep making the upbeat numbers, that's the vibe I'm feeling.

CB: What inspired you to come up with 'Beautiful Girls'?

SK: So I wanted to do an R'n'B song that'd never been done before. And that song had an edge to it. I like writing songs with a little bit of edge, and a little bit of twist to them. Like all the way through, the song is looking for fun, so I thought, I'm going to put "suicidal" in there and like yo, this is it, this is the first single, I know it is. And whoa, it was crazy, it just took off fast! (*continued on pg 77*)

B | SPOTLIGHT

“I did not have the ability then that I have now, yet people were swarming in because I would give them that quality – I would examine the construction of good clothing and emulate and improve upon it”



AE: So you started Millhouse in early '97?

CM: We started off in 1997 as *Millhouse*, but before that we were *First Cut Original*; just Gregory Mills operating out of a tailor shop on Charlotte Street in Port of Spain. Prior to 1994 we were based south of the island and Gregory was part of a label called *Cutting Crew*.

GM: *Cutting Crew* was a group of guys fresh out of school. They were good tailors and I hanged around enough to pick up the skill. I started pushing the borders from there.

When I came to Charlotte Street we were operating in a tiny, sweltering shop, where I would spend many nights. I did not have the ability then that I have now, yet people were swarming in because I would give them that quality – I would examine the construction of good clothing and emulate and improve upon it.

AE: So Gregory, before Coline came on the scene, did you think about branding and creating that fashion niche that is now Millhouse? What strengths did you both bring?

GM: There was this guy named Trevor Cragwell with a store called *Cragy's* on Frederick Street back in the 80's. His was the most prominent male shop in Trinidad (carrying locally made clothing). I wanted to have a shop just like that. So *Cragy's* was actually my benchmark coming out of San Fernando.

Conversation

with Gregory Mills and Coline Baptiste-Mills of Millhouse Menswear



CM: I started the process of creating an identity for *Millhouse* when I joined Gregory. I actually named the company *Millhouse*.

AE: Good name!

GM: Everybody says that! It was really a combination of our surname; it was an easy catch, and a familiar phrase. I felt it represented something like work and diligence and purposeful activity.

AE: Was breaking into the fashion market (in terms of being involved with fashion shows locally and regionally) a challenge?

CM: I think we always saw the link. Making it as a design house and a unique entity began when we started out with Denise Belfon. Denise was the first entertainer that we outfitted. Her career was really jumping at that time and she would always mention us in her interviews, unknown to us too. Other celebrities and local entertainers started coming to us, and we started getting invited to show our collections at different fashion shows and events. That's when we started to break out...

AE: What is your 2010 collection called?

CM: It's called *Tie Marie* to be launched in October at *Islands of the World Fashion Week* and also in Trinidad at the Carlton Savannah (venue not yet finalized).

AE: Do you think that there's enough scope for the fashion design business in Trinidad and the Caribbean?

CM: Well the Caribbean and that tourist industry is thirteen million people strong. If we have quarter of that market right now we'd be very happy and I think we'd be very successful. So I do see the Caribbean as a viable option. I think most local designers have been successful because of that regional reach.

AE: So you are available in Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada...

CM: Grenada, Tortola, and Barbados (to some extent). We've been having talks with someone in St. Lucia and Guadeloupe as well. The Cloth, Meiling and Heather Jones are already there (in Guadeloupe), funded by the European Union.

AE: What do you think is Millhouse's design edge?

CM: That tailored, nicely fitting garment. We're about fit, finish, detail and continuous improvement.

AE: What kind of person do you see wearing Millhouse?

GM: The Millhouse stylist is edgy. We go after the person who does not want to look like everybody else. We don't want a set of mini-me's walking around.

AE: What about women?

GM: What about women? (laughs)

CM: We love women! (laughs)

CM: We still cater to the professional female on a customized basis. This year we have formalized that part of it and we've started planning and advertising and trying to get

women to plan their wardrobe from the September period.

AE: Has design changed much from when you started off in the 90's to now...?

GM: It has evolved to a more form-fitting type of clothing. What is happening now is catching up with what we've always been doing.

AE: If you had to give dressing tips to a regular male, getting dressed for the office, what would you say?

GM: He'd probably require a whole makeover. One piece of garment won't transform someone. It's a holistic thing in terms of your shoes, belt, pants, slacks, shirts.

We look at the person's lifestyle and tastes. For instance, some people like the ultra conservative pleats in pants and we can give them that with an urban feel.

AE: Do you have a stylist on hand at the store?

GM: Yes, all clients get a free-of-charge fifteen minute consultation with our stylist.

AE: What is your pricing like?

CM: Very moderate.

AE: Something that the average guy can afford?


CM: Definitely. Once you have a BIR number we can afford you.

CM: We do practice some price differentiation but we don't compromise on the finish at all. The difference may be in fabric and cut. We offer different packages, such as a total work package, and so on.

AE: What's a regular day like for you both?

GM: A typical day would start at 5 a.m. in the morning. Our kids would wind down at nine and Coline and I would go till 11. We have very long days. At home Gergory would cut while I discuss strategy and so on.

AE: How does children change the dynamic?

GM: They make us take everything all the more seriously. They demand our success as we now have this much responsibility. 

"The Millhouse stylist is edgy. We go after the person who does not want to look like everybody else. We don't want a set of mini-me's walking around"

along with millions, I'm sure you've witnessed his record-breaking performances, his antics on the track, that wide joyful smile, that trademark dance. With those long, agile legs, puma stamped on his chest and a name like Bolt, how can he not be fast? Thank goodness we were not expected to lace up and keep up with him round the track for this interview, because I don't have to tell you what the outcome would have been. Thankfully, the fastest man has a little downtime and that's the only way we were able to catch up with him. At the starting block. Ready. Set....

CB: To achieve what you have, one can only imagine the level of work. What does your training regime look like on a typical day?

UB: I usually do gym in the morning, go home and rest in the afternoon and then do running training in the evening.

CB: You've been running competitively since your early teens, what was the turning point in your career?

UB: I think the turning point was in the 2007 World Championships in Osaka where I finished 2nd in the 200m. I saw then that with more work I could be number one in the future.

CB: Speaking of being number one, you are known for saying, "My aim is to become a legend." How will you know when you have achieved this status?

UB: I feel like I'm on my way to becoming a legend but there are more things I want to accomplish, like competing and winning at least two more World Championships and one more Olympic Games.

CB: You are surely on your way. At Beijing you dominated both the 100 and 200m, but the 200m is known to be your favorite. Why is that?

UB: I have been running the 200m since the start and I have put years of work into it.

CB: Every time you win, we look forward to your signature "lightning bolt" winning pose? How and when did it start?

UB: I had a bet with a friend who is a dancer in Jamaica that if I won in Beijing that I would do a dance. I adapted a Jamaican dance and people seemed to like it, so it became my trademark.

CB: You started off in cricket and you were known to be a great fast bowler, do you see any future there? Any plans on rescuing the

West Indies cricket team?

UB: I don't think so but I still enjoy watching cricket.

CB: Many athletes move away from the Caribbean when they realize success. Why have you not done the same?

UB: I love Jamaica and will always live here.

CB: With success comes much criticism, and you've had your share of both. How would you respond to those who say that because you're 6 ft 5 inches you're better suited for the 400m?

UB: Most people think my height is a disadvantage for the 100m, especially at the start. I can't change my height so I work with what I've got.

CB: What about those who say that no man can be as fast as you are without performance enhancing drugs?

UB: People who watched my career since I was young saw that I was born with a lot of talent. I have been tested many times and I am happy to be tested to show people that I am clean.

CB: Some say that you're relying on natural talent and not putting enough work in. How would you respond to that?

UB: It is not possible to run as fast as I do without a lot of hard work.

CB: And finally, there was much talk when you slowed down at the end of the 100m in Beijing. What is your answer to those who say that you should not have done that?

UB: [Simply] I was happy to win the gold medal.

CB: Enough profoundness, onto lighter stuff since you do seem to be such a fun loving person. Who are your favorite celebrities?

UB: I like Jamaican artiste, Vybz Cartel and internationally I like Beyonce.


CB: Do you really eat only chicken nuggets and fast food?

UB: I am guilty that way. I also eat pork; it is my favourite meal. I do eat other cooked meals. The Jamaican cuisine offers a lot of variety that I enjoy.

CB: Does the philosophy work hard, play hard apply to you? How do you unwind off the track?

UB: Yes it does. I tend to listen to a lot of music and play video games while I hang out with my friends.

CB: You always seem so full of life. What gets you down?

UB: I am a happy person. (smiles)  - *Pilaiye Cenac*

Catching up with the World's Fastest Man

Usain Bolt



I feel like I'm on my way to becoming a legend but there are more things I want to accomplish, like competing and winning at least two more World Championships and one more Olympic Games.



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STAY STRONG
OVER TIME.
THE OTHER CAN
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can grow more resilient.
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MY GUY

radical designs

white cotton jacket, tur-
quoise shirt (US\$71.25),
black and white linen shorts
and hat (US\$39.60)



millhouse

three button white corduroy jacket (*US\$190.50*); white long-sleeve cotton shirt (*US\$62.75*); white cotton draw string capri pants (*US\$42*); red silk linen skinny tie (*US\$24*); silk striped pocket square (*US\$10.50*)

peter elias

long-sleeve light blue, cotton top (US\$35.75); long-sleeve cotton white shirt with coloured buttons and flower print on collar (US\$62;75) long, grey "topman" cotton pants (US\$47); grey and black patterned skinny tie (US\$15.75)





radical designs

black cotton jacket with
ribstone (*US\$121.75*);
grey and black male trou-
sers (*US\$52.25*); steel grey
pin-striped cotton shirt
(*US\$110.25*) and grey and
black tie by *Peter Elias*

millhouse

three button dark grey wool
dinner jacket (US\$238);
red silk long-sleeve shirt
(US\$83.25); grey wool suit-
ing capri pants (US\$60)



radical designs

white cotton shirt and
white cotton jacket with
silver button (contact outlet
for prices); Mt. Blanc belt
(US\$349) *Stechers*; Seiko
watch (US\$514.25) *Stechers*





peter elias

black two-piece pant suit
with two button jacket
(US\$156); red, long-
sleeve, mission cotton shirt
(US\$47); black and silver
polka dot tie (US\$15.75)
and Ian Flaherty clear crystal
cuff links (US\$162) *Stechers*



millhouse

black wool vest and pant
suit (*US\$397*); black and
red striped cotton shirt
(*US\$62.75*); silk striped
pocket square (*US\$10.25*)

millhouse

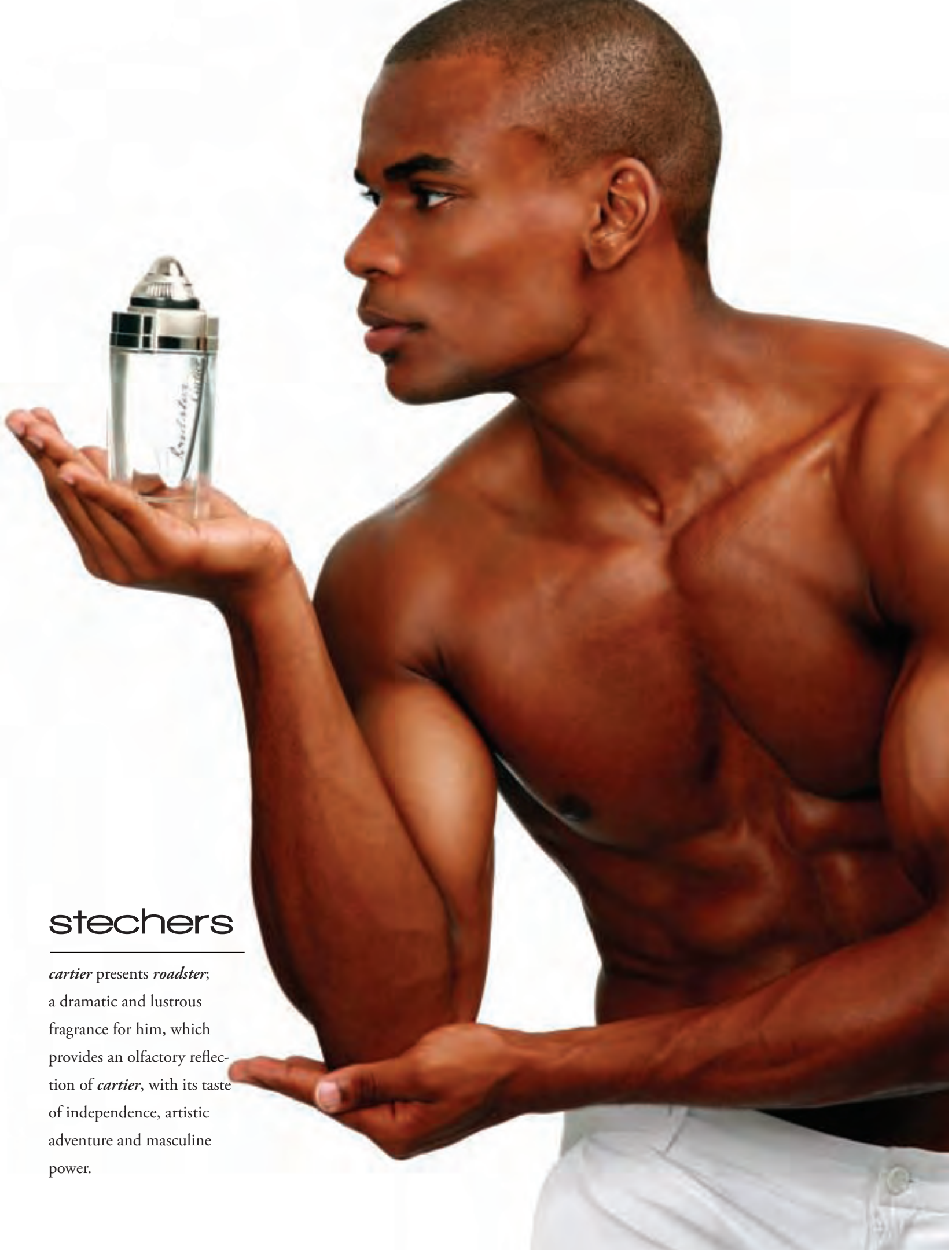
grey silk linen shirt
(US\$75.50); grey wool
suiting ankle-cut slacks
(US\$75.50) ; red silk linen
skinny tie (US\$24).





millhouse

three piece dark grey wool
suit (US\$508); white cotton
long-sleeve shirt (US\$63);
red silk tie (US\$24); silk
striped pocket square
(US\$10.25)



stechers

cartier presents *roadster*, a dramatic and lustrous fragrance for him, which provides an olfactory reflection of *cartier*, with its taste of independence, artistic adventure and masculine power.

stechers

lancome presents *hypnose*
homme for the man who
embodies a certain hypnotic
charm; with the flick of a
smile and lift of a brow, he
hints at mysteries; the for-
mula is spicy black cardamon,
lavender, amber and musk



(continued from pg 59) **CB: And how much pressure did that put on you to follow it up?**

SK: It definitely put pressure on me. But it was the perfect single to jump-start the tour and album and I don't feel any pressure from that song now though, that was 07, y'know?

CB: I heard that you met Michael Jackson?

SK: It's not true. I wish I had met Jackson! I wish I had been able to meet him. He was a pioneer, he was an icon, he paved the way for me – him and Bob Marley.

I was in New York doing interviews on the day he died, I got a call and I was like, 'What?' – and I wasn't even ready to understand. So I asked what happened and they started to tell me and I jumped out of the chair. And I had to call up everybody. I couldn't believe it. He could not be dead, it didn't sound true to me.

The guy was in rehearsals for his new tour as well; it's such a terrible, terrible loss. I think about it all the time. This guy was soul, he had it. That's why I just got to say, 'Man, rest in peace.' And that's why I've got to try my best to carry on my music. I had a *Thriller* jacket and the gloves and used to try to learn the moonwalk and everything.

CB: Will you do a tribute to him?

SK: You know, right now I have a part in my live shows where I pay tribute to him. But I don't think I'd do a song though. Because I don't want to mess something like that up. I want to keep Michael Jackson's memory. I don't want to risk it.

CB: You don't drink or smoke and you don't like hanging out in clubs, what's your idea of fun?

SK: I like to go swimming, I like to ride my ATV four-wheelers, I like to buy sneakers and stuff, I love going shopping, but most of all, I have fun riding my bikes. I have all types of bikes; I have four-wheelers, I have dirt bikes, I have mini-choppers and biking is just real fun, and I have a lot of space to ride. It's great.

CB: What has been your weirdest fan encounter?

SK: I was on the Chris Brown tour and I had a fan that drove, like, two states just to get an autograph and see me and stuff. She was driving behind the bus for like three different cities,

I wish I had met Jackson!
He was a pioneer, he
was an icon, he paved
the way for me – him
and Bob Marley

"Ability is not static property or something hard-wired into the brain by prepackaged genes activated at birth..."

and not just somewhere she was from, she was just driving there and waiting for the bus to stop. That was real crazy. I gave her my picture, my signature, everything.

(continued from pg 39) Ability is not static property or something hard-wired into the brain by prepackaged genes activated at birth. "The genes don't act all at once, but can take years to unfold," says Dean Keith Simonton, a psychologist at University of California at Davis. "We know that the genes are partly responsible for brain organization, but we also know that the brain is not completely organized until well into adulthood." Think of the artist who discovered her calling at 50 years of age!

And, like water to a flower, the environment plays a critical role in the activation of these ability genes. I found it difficult to see and maneuver in my early environment, but I was constantly stimulated by love and learning in my household. In reality, talent emerges over the course of a lifetime of reciprocal interactions between the developing brain and a stimulating environment.

One notable late bloomer is Albert Einstein, who suffered from speech difficulties at a young age. Also, studies indicate that twenty to thirty-five percent of U.S. and British entrepreneurs are late bloomers, Richard Branson is listed amongst them.

So if your child is not doing well in school or your peer is lagging behind – keep in mind that that person is still on the path of growth, and given that potential, the will and a stimulating environment, anything is possible – literally.

(continued from pg 36) much we really did need another baby, another perfect daughter, to complete our family. Like a surprise gift from God, she wasn't expected, but she was exactly what we wanted. She brought us full circle.

My path to motherhood was paved with tears and disappointments. My heart goes out to women struggling with infertility. I know the pain and helplessness of infertility, and I know the despair and grief of a miscarried baby.

But I also know that miracles do happen, especially when you least expect them: They happened to me three times.



surprising sojourn

St. Maarten was imposed by a timeshare going to waste; but the little island charmed us, with its friendly people, great shopping, excellent food, and interesting artifacts – and beckons us to return

I was constantly reminded of the charming fact that St. Maarten is the smallest landmass in the world to be shared by two different nations: a total of thirty-seven square miles are divided between France and the Netherlands Antilles

(left) Philipsburg, St. Maarten

The *Mullet Bay* roadside was awash with oncoming traffic. Skeptical about renting a car, we (myself, my husband, my brother and his wife) waited for any sign of a *Philisburg* taxi that could get us into the city, when suddenly an eccentric woman in a red mini-van pulled to the curb and asked, "Why are you standing here, where are you going?" We looked at her with a terrified expression and her expression read, "My God, do you think I'm going to hurt you!" Skepticism in tow, we all stepped in the van while she sped off, chattering that we would have stood there for hours before we spotted a taxi.

She drove swiftly passed *Princess Julianna* airport and *Simpson Bay* en route to the Dutch capital. As she chit-chatted – her black and white batik bandana moving excitedly on her head – I discovered that she was from the French side of the island, thought the days were too sweltering, and was just doing some back-to-school shopping for her two children. At this point I was uncertain about border restrictions as it applied to moving from the French to Dutch side of the island (and vice versa) but she affirmed that crossing the marked zones was no hassle at all.

I was constantly reminded of the charming fact that St. Maarten is the smallest landmass in the world to be shared by two different nations: a total of thirty-seven square miles are divided between France and the Netherlands Antilles. Soon we approached the capital and parted with our kind stranger as she pulled across at the top of *Front Street*.

Philipsburg held a semblance of little Europe. Only four streets deep and one mile long, the city was laced with the biggest brand name stores – Tiffany, Max Mara, Liz Claiborne, Tommy Hilfiger, Del Sol – and brands like Dolce and Gabbana, Chanel, David Yurman, Tacori, Cartier, Chopard and Mont Blanc among others. Diamonds dazzled from windowpanes of the Caribbean's most exclusive – Colombian Emeralds International, Tanzanite International and Diamonds International. Other Indian owned jewellery stores were scattered along the streets, clamoring for attention – I was actually given a free gem by one jeweller in his anticipation that I would re-

turn. The charming spectacle, seductive prices, bargains and no vat purchases can, no doubt, debauch the unsuspecting shopper.


And I was certainly unsuspecting. The purpose of my visit precluded shopping, but some bargains sucked me in: a Chanel handbag on sale, a Dolce and Gabbana rope bag and finally a pair of Maui Jims.

But shopping is not the most satiable attraction in the Dutch capital. For me, cuisine ranks at number one. We tried *Fusion* restaurant on *Front Street* that looked out to a mile long boardwalk running the entire length of the city's waterfront. I tried fried calamari rings for the first time – a unique and delectable treat with the distinct taste of calamari in an onion ring. My companions also found the tuna steak – well done and lightly seasoned – to be quite a treat.

We returned to the city just once after that, on a tour around the island, but most of our meals were had close to *Mullet Bay*, along the *Simpson Bay* and *Maho* area. *Lee's Roadside Grill* stood out as the best seafood restaurant. We sat overlooking the waterfront where the yachts come in. Apparently the fish are caught by that very waterfront and diners have the option of securing their own catch. (We forwent that option much to the disappointment of the men in our company). I had the snapper fillet, smeared with garlic butter and island herbs and literally grilled to perfection. My companions were also pleased with their whole snapper and mahi mahi experience.

The following night we tried *Skip Jack*, another restaurant in the *Simpson Bay* area. It was here that – after appetizing crab chowder – I had (literally) the most tender and most succulent grilled grouper, oozing with lemon and herbed butter juices, served with rice and vegetables.

On the last night we returned to *Lee's* for their famous mouthwatering grilled lobster dish. We selected our catch from a massive tank – and purchased by the pound. Needless to say, this specialty was the culmination of everything irresistible we'd tasted on the island thus far.

Though St. Maarten was initially imposed on us by a timeshare going to waste – the little island charmed us, with its friendly people, great shopping, excellent food, and interesting artifacts – and beckons us to return.  – *Aliyyah Eniath*

what men want women to know about **men and food**



Though men may be from Mars and women from Venus, when it comes to food you may be pleasantly surprised to learn that we're not that different

When our editor-in-chief decided to dedicate this magazine issue to our men, I was presented with an ideal opportunity to find out what men want women to know about men and food. And so I went to the source – men!

First off, let's get rid of some of the myths:

Myth # 1: Men leave the kitchen in a mess when they're finished cooking; they hate to clean up.

FACT – all the men interviewed for this article confessed that while they may delay cleaning up the kitchen, they do clean up, just not with the speed and efficiency their wives and partners demand.

Myth # 2: Men use more ingredients than women when cooking. For example, if a recipe calls for eight ounces of butter, they will be tempted to use the entire pound.

FACT – some men flat-out denied this but others were unsure indicating that while they do follow recipes, they tend to adjust to suit their tastes and cooking instincts. So yes, sometimes more butter, or pepper, or wine, may end up in the dish.

Myth # 3: A man's cooking is not so much about nutrition and quality but rather quantity – the bigger, the better; the more the merrier.

FACT – No. Absolutely not true. More than fifty percent of those interviewed said that nutrition is very important to their food consumption. Sure they want to ensure that there's enough in case they want to have seconds but definitely not gorge themselves.

Myth # 4: Men like to purchase all the latest cooking gadgets, tools and equipment.

FACT – one responder put it succinctly: If only I had the space for more cooking gadgets. Yes, men love their cooking tools and gadgets, but so do women!

For each of the generalized statements about men, food, the kitchen and gadgets, I can (and I'm sure you can too) easily identify with many women whose responses would have been similar.

So what else did I learn about men and food?

Food presentation is key. We eat with our eyes long before the food touches our lips, and the majority of the men interviewed said that they'd be willing to try foods that they don't generally like if it were presented attractively.

To go along with food presentation, was the desire to try new ingredients and flavours. While they acknowledged the business of schedules and their partners' efforts to place a hot meal on the table, they thought that handing over the reigns of the kitchen to them offered the opportunity for the family to be introduced to new tastes.

It is clear that our men want to step up and step into the kitchen to create and experiment. And they prefer to do so unsupervised! The recipes this month come to you with the compliments of some of our interviewees who know what they're doing in the kitchen.

Ben's Chilaquiles in Guajillo Sauce

(Tortillas in Chili Sauce)

Ingredients

2 - 3 guajillo (dried Spanish chillies) peppers, seeded and soaked for at least 5 minutes in boiling water
2 cups diced tomato
½ onion, chopped
3 cloves garlic
1 teaspoon ground cumin
2 cups chicken broth
Salt to taste
6 - 8 corn or flour tortillas, cut in quarters and fried or baked at 350°F until crisp

Method

Add peppers, tomato, onion and garlic to blender and puree at high speed.
Pour the sauce (blended ingredients) in a medium saucepan over high heat; bring to a boil.
Reduce heat to medium and add cumin and chicken broth. Bring to a boil again, reduce the heat to low and simmer for 10 minutes. Adjust seasoning.
Serve tortilla chips on a plate and pour some of the sauce on top. Let the tortillas absorb some of the sauce before serving. Serve with soft fried eggs sunny-side up, avocado and sour cream on top and enjoy!

Christo's Plum Carpaccio

Ingredients

6 ripe plums
¼ cup blue cheese, crumbled
Extra virgin Olive Oil
Fresh lemon juice

Method

Slice the plums in half and remove the seeds. Slice the plums thinly.



Arrange slices overlapping each other in a decorative pattern on a plate or platter (reserve a few slices to curl into flowers). Sprinkle blue cheese all over the plums, drizzle with olive oil and a squirt of fresh lemon juice and serve.

Kevin's Strawberry & Nutella Crepes

Ingredients

4 crepes (see recipe below)
Nutella (chocolate hazelnut spread)
Fresh strawberries sliced (as many as you'd like)
Pistachios, chopped (optional)

Crepes

½ cup all purpose flour
1 egg
½ cup + 2 tablespoons whole milk
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon butter, melted
A few pats of butter

Method

Add all the ingredients to a large bowl and mix thoroughly.
Heat a non-stick skillet on medium along with a pat of butter. Swirl the butter to coat the pan.
Pour ¼ of the mixture into the pan and tilt the pan and swirl the batter to coat the entire bottom of the pan.
Cook the crepe until golden brown at the bottom (about 2 minutes), flip and cook the other side until golden brown.
Repeat until all the batter is used.

To Assemble:

Spread nutella on crepe, arrange sliced strawberries, fold in half, sprinkle with pistachios and serve (garnish with sliced strawberry).

Cynthia Nelson is the author of the blog, Tastes Like Home. Visit her at www.tasteslikehome.org



in the Caribbean

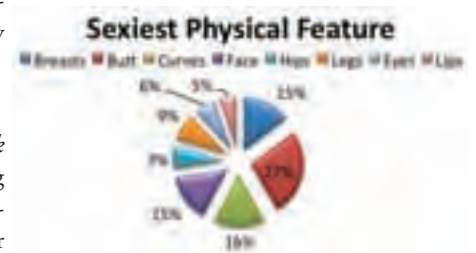
I was engaging in one of my favorite activities – people watching. From the balcony at *Excellent City Mall* in Port of Spain, from a seat at *Grantley Adams International*, from a discreet vantage point at the *Blue Coral* building in Castries, I was watching the eyes of men track women. I was stealthily following those wondering, wandering eyes; the Bond girls had nothing on me (well except maybe that trademark belted bikini, but let's not get side-tracked). Some eyes evaded me behind sunglasses and under the down-curved visors of caps. But many eyes were blatantly shaded with desire, admiration, curiosity, more desire, and obviously other things which I lacked the instrument to interpret. As I surveilled, I imagined a constellation of red laser dots where these trained gazes targeted the female anatomy and I was indeed grateful for protective gear.

Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder, they say. And who are these elusive beholders that I'd been covertly observing? In this case – our Caribbean men. After playing *maco* (which by the way is a valid ethnographic method), I questioned three hundred men hailing from Jamaica, at the

crest of the archipelago, all the way down to mainland Guyana. Call it *zafè moun*, but I wanted to know! I needed to know what Caribbean men found sexy in their women, barring the North American ideals which are presented in the media daily. Of the men I spoke to, many were eager to share, some wanted guaranteed anonymity, but all had some great things to say about us Caribbean belles. Here's the Sexy Scoop...

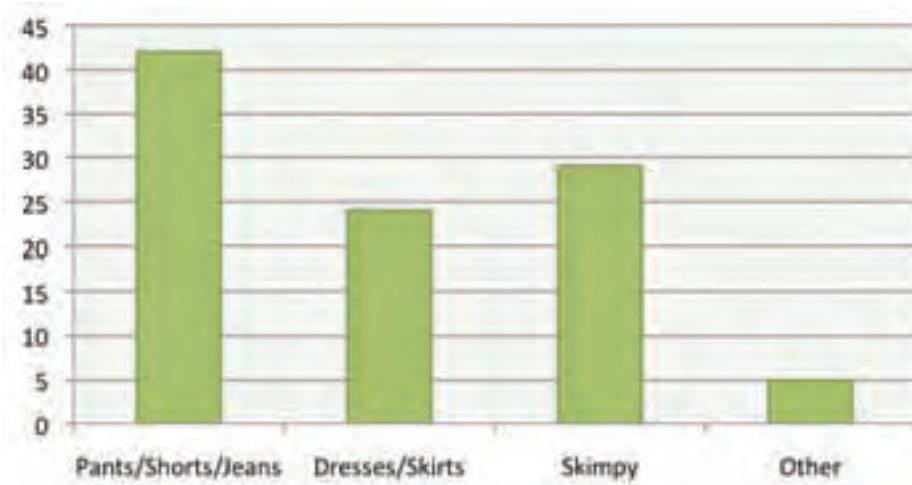
Physically feat

That *junk in the trunk* appears to be nothing short of booty – a treasure! Over one quarter of the men identified it as the sexiest body part. The heavy T-bumper, apple bottoms, the *bam bam* – by any name it still refers to a proud Caribbean derriere. Curves, breasts, and face follow.



Damn those genes!

The information I'm about to disclose does not warrant you emptying your closets and dashing wildly to the mall. Be a smart recessionista, and work with what you've got.



I declare that Caribbean women should wear the pants in their relationships! And this is in no way about emasculation; it's just that our guys really seem to love their women in pants. The most popular forms mentioned were jeans and shorts, and they were preferably tight and white. And despite the 'leave a little to the imagination' notion, more guys chose *skimpies* above skirts and dresses. *Skimpies* include carnival costumes, swimsuits, short skirts and wrap skirts.

Kiss n Makeup

- 58% 'I Prefer no Makeup'
- 38% 'I Don't Mind a Little'
- 4% 'I Like Makeup on a woman'

"Clean skin is good enough for me." Dayne, Teacher, Tobago

No surprise there. Most of the men preferred a natural girl. Makeup wreaks havoc on their clothes (providing evidence of sneakiness), and men worry about who lurks under that mask if you're always made up. The most disliked cosmetics seem to be face powder and colorful/over the top eye makeup and lipstick. Lip gloss, eyeliner and nail polish were generally considered fine.

"A woman does not have to be slim to be sexy."

Johnny, Artist/designer, St. Vincent

Slim = Sexy?

In the US, size 0 is in and women there are struggling to attain or maintain this

weight to be relevant. Most of the guys I questioned (80%) did not believe that a woman had to be slim to be sexy. This further proves that they really love those curves. Besides, how exactly do you fit a Caribbean derriere into a size double zero?

However, many guys did wish to comment on obesity as a growing problem. They advised women to pay attention to their diets, exercise routines and general health.

Importance of Looks

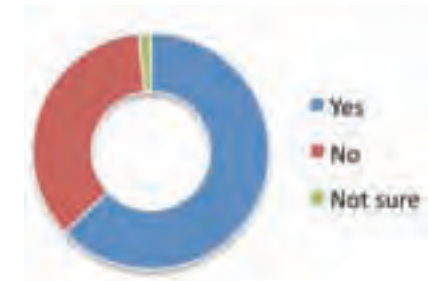
The magic number is 6.6, a little passed the halfway mark in the looks department. In choosing a soul mate most of the guys would prefer an above average looking

woman. Most men made sure to mention that other characteristics were more important though. In the words of a particular gentleman, "After beauty fades, what keeps us men going is the intelligence, sense of humor, support and just the natural flavor of a Caribbean woman."

"It's not all about looks, it's about the heart." Errol, Guyana

Too much Pressure!

Most men felt that the women were being pressured by the North American media to be a version of the "blonde, blue eyed, stick figures." 35% of those questioned, however, felt that there was no media pressure and some went on to comment that Caribbean women should aspire to the ideals presented on television and magazines.



Keep It Real

There was great consistency in the comments or pieces of advice to Caribbean women. The majority said 'Be yourselves' 'Keep it real' 'Stay natural' and 'Love yourself'. This may be an indication that our men like women who are comfortable in their own skins.

"Caribbean women are beautiful and I wish more of them would realize this and stop with all the weave and copying."

Arjaye, Teacher, St. Lucian in Japan

So the espionage is done (for now), the mission is completed and these are my findings. Simply put, we are sexy to our Caribbean men without any drastic overhauls and with a dash of confidence. While we continue to find flaws and pick at imperfections, they're picking us up on their radars and are loving the view.

Pilaiye Cenac- Come lime with me at <http://pilaiye.wordpress.com/>