



Photography by Tracey Morris
Styled by Angel Lee

KATHY'S MIDAS TOUCH

Kathy Ireland is not your ordinary mom. The former supermodel is now an author and philanthopist, and last year alone, her businesses grossed over \$2 billion. She shares with LISA WAYNE about the passion that drives her and about her extraordinary friendship with Dame Elizabeth Taylor.

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Art Direction: Stephen Kamifuji
54 GENLUX SPRING/SUMMER 2012



Decor de la Route
Shoe, \$4890
Sole 18th Avenue
Beverly Hills,
310-275-4211
South Coast Plaza
714-540-3233
Aldo diamond
and emerald
necklace, \$90,990
ashleywinkler.com
Living, Kathy's
own collection,
created by
Pete Smith of
luxury jewelry of
Beverly Hills,
310-250-0073
Bob, Kathy's Dad

SPRING/SUMMER 2012 GENLUX 53



Glenn Martin
Wall covered towel
jacket, \$3925
Glenn Martin
Wall covered
dress, \$2975
Sole 18th Avenue
Beverly Hills,
310-275-4211
South Coast Plaza
714-540-3233
house sewing
with house
pink top and
coral sequins
bustier in 18E
gold, \$4250
tracystudio.com
Mikio 10E gold
and diamond
ring, \$4600
whispering.com
Lillian 10E white
gold and diamond
ring, \$34,795
lillian.com

by Lisa Wayne

I arrive at Kathy Ireland's sprawling home in Montecito and am greeted by a pack of scruffy dogs. There are ornate, comfy couches with big pillows and tapestries overflowing with family photos. Kathy lives here with Dr. Craig Olsen, her husband of 24 years, and their three children, Erik, 17, Lily, 13, and Chloe, 11. I'm led to the kitchen, the heart of their home, where Kathy is in hair and makeup for our *GenLux* shoot. On the counter are lots of sugary treats—packages of marshmallows, kid cereal, and lots of cookies. A giant fireplace is the centerpiece of this warm space.

Top hairstylist Robert Strinken is teasing and spraying her hair, eyelashes are being applied, and her manager and creative director are standing by to make sure everything goes smoothly. Kathy's supermodel good looks haven't changed, just softened a bit with time. At 40, she's still a muse, standing 5'10" and very fit. Over the next few hours she will slip into five different outfits and five different hairstyles, and take three important business meetings on the phone.

"Grace under fire" comes to mind to describe Kathy. The lovely housewife calmly confronts the crew with food and drink—all the while running her empire from the kitchen table. I overhear her talking to the heads of Raymond & Panigan furniture, Window World, and Badcock furniture before hopping on a call with Bill Buxton, to whom she profusely apologizes for an autographed photo that...oops, was never sent. "I'm so sorry, Bill, I'll make sure that goes out right away," promises.

Today, Kathy is CEO of Kathy Ireland Worldwide, a company that she owns lock, stock and barrel and which, according to Forbes, grossed over \$2 billion last year alone.

Kathy opens up with me about life growing up in Santa Barbara. Her mom used to make clothes to sell at the open markets for extra income. "She was an artist and designer, a true entrepreneur. I would spend time with her, pointing over the fabric and colors, watching and learning from her as she sewed everything on her little machine—they're some of my fondest memories. Then when I got a little older, I started making handbags to sell alongside her, giving sparkles on them, working with drapage. Design work became my passion."

"I never aspired to become a model," she says. "In fact, we were all surprised when a local talent scout invited me to New York for the summer to try out. I was a beach bum, seventeen years old, always in the sun, my nose burnt and peeling, my hair as usually messy—never did I think of modeling." But Kathy appeared in *Thelma Houston Sports Illustrated* swimsuit editions and on three of their cover covers. Throughout the 80s, she traveled the world working with the biggest photographers like Herb Ritts, Francesco Scavullo, and Patrick Demarchelier. In the back of her mind, though, Kathy had a different plan. "I never felt comfortable with the 'shut-your-mouth-and-gone' mentality—I knew I could start my own company someday."

Her father was also a tremendous influence. A labor union representative, he instilled in Kathy a strong work ethic and compassion for the less fortunate. "I've always worked, and still work every single day. I knew from the time I had my first paper route at age 11 that I wanted to be an entrepreneur, and I've spent every day working toward that goal. I've had many ideas along the way for companies that did not succeed, but I kept pushing through and asked myself over and over, 'What is it that drives me? What is my passion?' When I understood that, everything fell into place." That passion, Kathy's referring to is her unwavering Christian faith. "My drive is to be of service to my faith, my family, and mankind. My first meeting in the morning is with God, and so is my last in the evening."

Her other motivations are the 40 or so different foundations that she's involved with. "The larger we grow our company—and I say so because it truly is a team effort—the more that can be done for all of our philanthropic affiliations."

While the stylist searches for some jewelry, Kathy dashes to her room, and returns with a pair of beautiful earrings. They were a gift from Elizabeth Taylor, she had originally received them from Richard Burton. Kathy had a close friendship with Elizabeth, and, in a way, she still does. She often talks of her in the present tense as though Liz could come strolling into the room at any moment. "She taught me so much about beauty and glamour. I feel like I learned from the best. We worked together often in the studio—Elizabeth inspired many of my jewelry creations."

Kathy lights up when going into detail about her upcoming family trip to Hawaii. One of Kathy and Elizabeth's favorite pastimes, believe it or not, was to relax with the sharks. While there, she'll celebrate and honor Elizabeth's life with a small service, placing floral leis out on the water to celebrate the special friendship they shared. **5**