



Claudia

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From the discos of Düsseldorf to the covers of more magazines than any other model in history: one could be forgiven for wondering what else there is still to be added to the Hollywood-worthy richness of the Claudia Schiffer story.

There might not be a more recognizable name in the realm of fashion model history than Claudia Schiffer, but she never harbored any ambitions to be a model. It was in 1987, when a modeling scout saw her dancing to “You Spin Me Round” in a disco in Düsseldorf, that her life changed forever: “I thought it was a joke and suggested my best friend, who was a far better candidate in my opinion.” Needless to say, the transition was a whirlwind—in just a few weeks Claudia found herself in Paris and, as they say, “the rest is history!” From growing up in Rheinberg to appearing on high profile magazine covers...30 years later, she is able to reflect on how it began: “Guess Jeans was my first campaign and shortly afterwards Revlon rang asking me to be the face of its debut perfume for Guess. I remember flying around the U.S. to every major city for signings in department stores that attracted huge crowds and appearing on all the major TV shows from Jay Leno and Oprah to David Letterman. After the campaign tour, I returned

to my apartment in New York near Central Park. One morning, sleepy eyed with bed-head hair, I was in the elevator when a person entered and asked, ‘Are you the Guess girl?’ I knew then my life had changed.”

It’s still hard not to mention the “S” word—the “supermodel” set of the 90s, Claudia being one of the models for whom the term was coined. Was she aware of just how zeitgeisty that moment in fashion industry history was, and her central role in it? It would have been hard not to, Claudia says of the experience: “It was insane...like being like a rock star.” Albeit a rock star who, at every (runway) show had to hire security specifically to guard her underwear—underwear that would otherwise constantly be stolen by the most frenzied of her admirers. This clearly was modeling on another level: *supermodeling*.

It was during the 80s that Claudia first fell in love with fashion, but it was in the 90s that she began to learn what fashion really *was*. “There was a movement of change,

as music, fashion, and art were starting to converge more than ever.” And while, looking back, one might imagine Claudia’s life was easier to lead in a time when one’s image couldn’t be instantly and exponentially broadcast across various social media channels, in the heyday of the supermodel, fashion news could remain front-page-worthy for weeks at a time. Despite the high-wattage exposure, Claudia says she didn’t “feel the pressure to share everything with everybody; you could still have a private life and create a mystique around you.” Today, while she enjoys sharing fashion moments on her own channel, Claudia misses “the clear line of the public figure versus the private one” that has now been blurred.

In this new world, what advice would the icon offer to the new

generation of models starting out? “Take pride in being professional—working hard, being punctual, polite, and disciplined. Do have a good lawyer right from the beginning. Know what you want and where you want to be. Make a long-term plan and never give up! Treat everyone as you would like to be treated and don’t be scared to make mistakes; as long as you learn from them, you will be OK! Also, tell the truth and try to live in the present.” Most importantly, perhaps, given it’s what Claudia most credits her own success to: “Trust your instinct.”