

Fabulosity- Claudia Ross: Mother, Socialite, PR Superhero

Written by Written by Corbin Chamberlin

When I think of modern elegant American woman, Claudia Ross glimmers in my mind. Ross, owner of the San Francisco-based marketing and public relations firm Cross Marketing, lives a stunning life. She is what girls dream to be when they grow up: a Birkin-wielding, Blackberry-worshipping chic publicist. My first encounter with Ross was at the Chado Ralph Rucci show in New York during fashion week the darling sat front row looking blissful! Later, I was formally introduced to Ross at an event she organized in Scottsdale, which like her was seamlessly structured. The PR powerhouse is also a mother of two as well as being a magnificent philanthropist who is the chairman of the board of Raphael House, a homeless shelter for women and children.



In a culture of reality TV publicists, young people want to break into your industry. What does it take to be a PR goddess?

It's a four-letter word, darling...it's called WORK. No, really, I mean I get girls all the time wanting to work for me thinking it's all giggles, shopping, fashion and moments straight from "The Hills." Yes, the perks are amazing—free clothes, jewelry, parties—but the reality is that this is a hard job that takes a certain person to pull off hard work with grace and style always under pressure.

What did you do prior to starting Cross Marketing?

I cut my fashion teeth working for two of the most glamorous women in publishing, Jeanette Change and Cynthia Lewis at "Harper's Bazaar" and "Marie Claire," respectively. I worked for "Harper's Bazaar" and "Marie Claire" for nearly a decade and loved every minute of it. Now, in fashion PR, I have a sales and marketing background that keeps my clients happy that I am also concerned about their sales figures and not just pictures in magazines and on celebrities.

What is the most exciting part of your job?

I would say when my opinion is asked and valued. I am currently serving as a creative consultant for a fashion brand and love giving my input. Everything from the look of a sleeve to the length of a dress. And the free clothes make it even better! Working with dynamic people is also a plus.

You are an outstanding philanthropist. What are some of the charities you support?

I live for giving back. It's something that my children are very aware of, and it is how we learn to feel blessed. I am involved in kids, green [living] and AIDS [awareness]. With children, I am chairman of the board of Raphael House, a homeless shelter for women and children, work on Global Green's Gorgeous and Green Fashion Show every year and am excited to work with AMFAR this year for the first time. We dedicate 25 percent of our PR business to non-profit.

You and I often sit across from one another front row during fashion week. Who are your favorite designers?

Right now, Michael Kors and Max Azria and Carolina Herrera. You always look divine, so you make me want to dress in anything sparkly. I live for fashion and love being feminine. I hosted a lunch for Carolina Herrera here in San Francisco and love her classic sensibility for day and evening. Michael Kors rocks my "ladies who lunch" dresses and Max Azria for those times that I want to step into my sky-high Louboutins and rock a look that makes a statement.

When you are in Arizona, where do you like to visit?

I love Arizona. Whenever I need a happy sunny day, I am here! It is so easy to get to no matter where I am. Who needs a stuffy spa with no cocktails when I can check into any fabulous hotel and have divine service and amazing weather. My aunt Julia Summers lives in Scottsdale so we visit, hike, cocktail and shop—probably in that order. For restaurants, the new one in town is Modern Steak—great food and where everyone goes for happy hour. It is next to Barneys and Banana Republic which makes my life easier. Also FnB (crazy name) is also new spot to go. Petite Maison is country French food with indoor-outdoor seating. When you want the "feel" of Arizona, Greasewood Flats is a kickback place. It's about the music and cool laid back vibe.

You are so chic. When it comes to shopping, where are your hot spots?

Amy Inc.—love her style! It is owned by Amy Yount; she is young and just buys well, always has great clothes. Estello has great stuff too. She has the Halston Heritage Collection which I believe she is the only one to carry it. Divine! I also buy my basics at the new Banana Republic Revolution store. My firm opened the store here, and I can't get enough of the wrinkle-free white shirts. It's part of my travel uniform. When you want to buy dynamite kids clothes especially for boys (I have two), you have to go to Garage Body Shop for Kids. It's the trendy and hip kids store and is decorated so cute with a candy bar. She has all the major designers that do kids stuff; Dior, Galliano and a lot of European lines. I have boys but all my nieces need to get into their designer clothes early on. Training can never start too young!

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What do you do after a long day at the office?

I have two answers: I usually slip into an evening cocktail dress for dinner with friends or flip flops and cut-offs if I'm home with my boys.

Any thrilling future projects that we should know about?

Yes! I am writing a book on how to do your own PR. It's about self-promotion and making it all work to your advantage and a new skin care line called LAFACE that I am developing with a partner. I just finished with QVC and Judith Ripka so I am working on wrapping it all up together and having a great year.