

The Empowered Women

Eight Women Who Have Met the Challenge
by Dorothy Cline-Metz

It used to be that power was part of the Boys Only club. Men used their power to prevent women from claiming their own. But now, more and more women are discovering, and embracing, their own power. And they're doing it naturally, as part of their sense of self, without relinquishing the essence of who they are in order to use it.

The spirit of the empowered woman is tempered by a wisdom and higher consciousness that the life she leads is of her own creation. She is a full circle. Within her is the power to conquer, create, seduce, nurture, and transform the world. Her strength and generous heart set her apart from the rest.

Salon City journeys with eight of these women as they share with us their vision, power, passion and wit.



Sue Wong (inset)
and her design



Sue Wong

Turns Women Into Goddesses

With a success story spanning nearly four decades, Sue Wong has internationally achieved the distinction of “every woman’s couturier.” From Dubai to Singapore, Santiago to Madrid, Wong’s designs are transforming women into glamorous goddesses. Drawing on the experiences of her vibrant and varied life, Wong bridges Old World style and technique with contemporary verve. In an age of expediency, where style and workmanship are often sacrificed, Sue is a powerful, exuberant soul that strives for excellence.

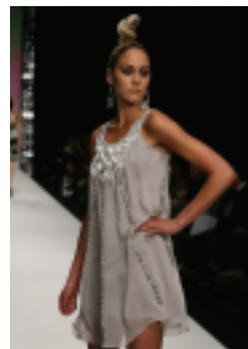
“Real beauty comes from within and is defined by quality of soul and spirit,” Wong said. “For me, a woman’s beauty is defined by her character with strength, wisdom, and grace chief among them. I live my life in harmony with yin and yang, two primal opposing but complementary principles of the universe. Also, being constantly creative has been a tremendous enlivening force. Love, beauty, and a sense of aliveness are great transformers.”

Her philanthropic ventures start at home and extend out from there.

“I’m a democratic leader by nature and so my community begins with my family, friends, employees, and neighbors—and I support each of them wholeheartedly,” she said.

In addition, she supports Planet Hope, Sharon and Kelly Stone’s organization for disadvantaged youth; What a Pair for breast cancer; and Divine Design, benefiting Project Angel Food.

“I believe in magic, passion, beauty and the pursuit of one’s bliss,” she said. “Embrace life with open arms. Be open to all of it—the ecstasy as well as the agony. It’s all part of the rich mystery. Maintain focus and meditations on beautiful dreams.” ■



Ming Fung



Hsin-Ming Fung

Is Living and Designing the Dream

Hsin-Ming Fung is an architect, educator, and principal/co-founder of Hodgetts + Fung Design and Architecture. Having lived in several countries, her comprehension of the human experience in various urban environments adds a unique perspective to Hodgetts + Fung designs. This universal approach allows for accessibility without compromising vitality.

As director of design, Fung has been engaged in the execution of all of the firm’s projects, including the award-winning Towell library at UCLA; Blueprints for Modern Living, a dynamic exhibition on case study houses at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles; the renovation of the Egyptian Theater on Hollywood Boulevard; the new design of the famed Hollywood Bowl; and the 35-story mixed-use glass tower for Yamano Gakuen in Tokyo.

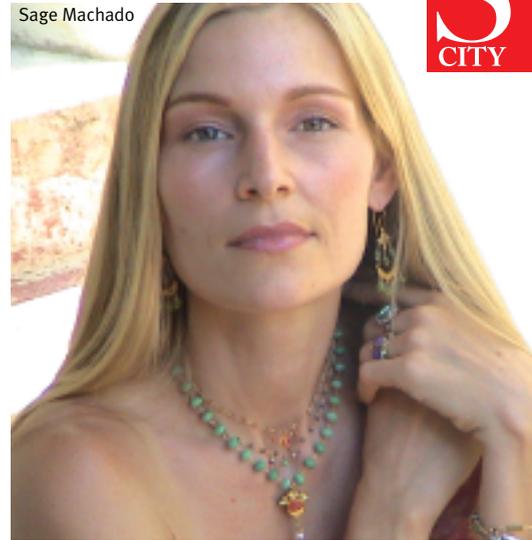
As director of graduate programs at the Southern California Institute of Architecture, one of Fung’s passions is spreading the message that women can change the world by educating the next generation of brilliant architects

“You have to know and accept your strengths as well as your weaknesses, to know your goals but also to be patient,” she said. “Otherwise you can get disillusioned pretty quickly. Everything is an experience, even failure, because you learn from it. Listen to people and you can learn a lot about human nature. It helps you become who you want to be.”

“I believe that fear is the most destructive feeling,” she continued. “It inhibits your creativity, your self-confidence, your independence. I’ve learned not to always look at the dark side of things.” ■



Sage Machado



Sage Machado

Creative and Charmed

Kamikaze clothing designer, jeweler, boutique owner, and perfumer Sage Machado has been designing and manufacturing earthy, ethereal, one-of-a-kind treasures and art-to-wear for over 12 years. Machado's inspiration?

You don't grow up in a house full of hippies, with your mother painting on your clothes in the middle of the night, and not come away with an inspiration to create something!" she said.

Her secret? "Fear nothing. Do what you love and, oh yeah, be good at it and look fabulous doing it! Encouraging my own creativity and sense of self really helps me stay focused

and continue to develop my inner strength."

"I did not choose a career, it chose me," she continued. "My charmed existence is more a product of my ability to pay attention to the direction the universe has pointed me in. My life is my work; there is no line between the two of me. I do what I love and I do it with passion."

For Machado, leading a charmed life involves helping others.

"I believe in giving back," she said. "I am getting behind breast cancer initiatives by featuring products from my Pearl line that will give proceeds to Breast Cancer Research." ■

Christabelle Carathanassis

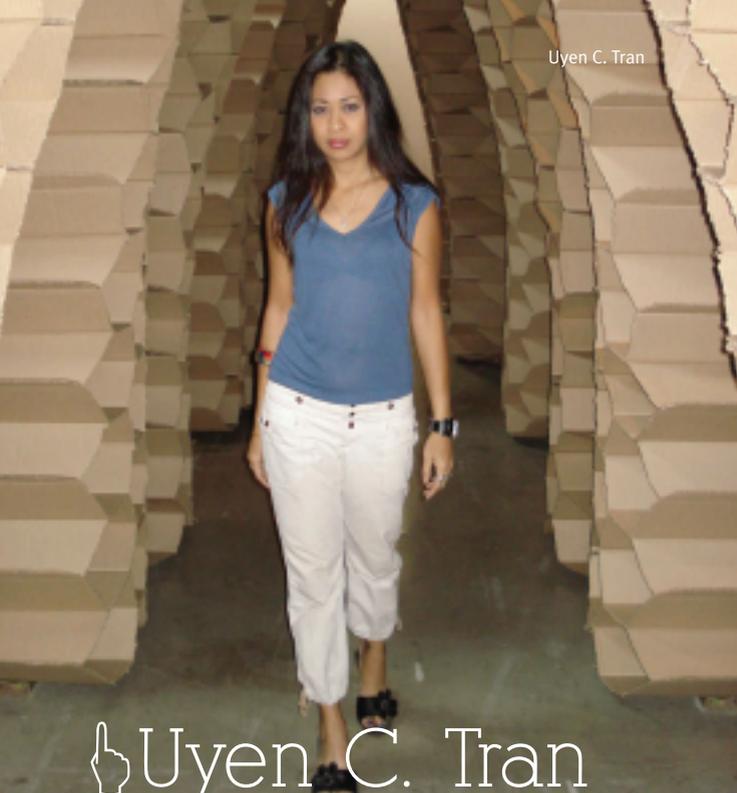


"I walk through life always thinking there is a way to make it better," Carathanassis said. "An eternal optimist, I truly believe that we can change the world if we all just pitch in."

To maintain inner strength in the ever-changing business world, Carathanassis stays connected to the lessons of her past.

"I have come through many pivotal benchmarks throughout my life," she said. "I flag them and don't forget where they got me, how I grew from them, and what lesson was attached. It keeps me grounded and helps me maintain a sense of self. I never want to lose that."

Her advice: "Never live a life where you have to utter the words 'I wish I had...' You have the world at your fingertips. Juice your potential every day and hold tight to your dreams. If you don't grab them, someone else will." ■



Uyen C. Tran

Transforms the World of Art and Design

Growing up in Saigon, Vietnam, Uyen C. Tran observed Indian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, and Cambodian artisans hard at work hand-crafting jewelry, a skill she adopted for herself. Now she produces many one-of-a-kind pieces under her exclusive collection, Transform Jewelry. Her inherent understanding of both Eastern and Western culture, as well as a keen sense of edgy fashion, is exemplified in her distinctly diverse designs.

In addition to a vast knowledge and genuine passion for world cultures and art, Tran has an epic sense of humor and is truly a work of art herself. She is an eclectic, eccentric, powerful, visionary artist in the truest sense of that word.

"Beauty is your soul, your uniqueness," she said. "Power is to be able to in-

fluence people by doing good things."

Some of those good things include charitable endeavors. "I like to help with any and all animal charities and organizations," she explained. "It breaks my heart as these poor creatures cannot speak for themselves and they are crying out to the human soul for help and love. I am also active in organizations raising money, food, and clothing donations for orphanages."

Maintaining inner strength is accomplished by, "believe it or not, positive thinking and being happy," Tran continued. "If you stay focused you can train your mind to do this. My advice would be to ask yourself, 'What makes me happy?' and follow life's basic lesson #101—learn from your mentors, family, and elders." In addition, "I believe in God and the power of the gifts that I create in the universe and that love exists in everyone." ■



Dr. Gina Danesh

Beauty That's More Than Skin Deep

Beverly Hills' Own Dr. Gina Danesh

Gina Danesh grew up in Santa Monica, Calif., with dreams of bringing physical and spiritual support to people in need by becoming a doctor. Most men in her family had gone into the medical field, and she was eager to join them. Now she's the only female physician in her family!

Danesh specializes in dermatology and laser surgery, and along with her husband, Dr. Sid Danesh, M.D., runs a thriving clinical practice in Beverly Hills. She gives back to her community through pro bono work, and contributes to Looking Beyond, an organization that assists special needs children. She also plays domestic diva at home with her children: Noah, Eva and Jonah.

Danesh credits her own mother for inspiring her. "She moved forward against all obstacles," Danesh said. "She was a graphic artist as well as a top agent for New York Life Insurance Company. She was also awarded the honor of Woman of the Year for all that she had done for my father, for us, and for our community. She is the epitome of beautiful, inside and out."

"For me, true beauty comes from confidence," she continued. "Confidence comes from life's experiences, both positive and negative. Maintaining this is done by positive-thinking; constantly knowing that I am trying my best, whether professionally or with my family, friends, and the community.

"Power is having control of what you want in life and being able to impact other people's lives in positive ways. Everyone has the capability of being and doing what they want with hard work, persistence and dedication. No barriers can come in the way of success except barriers that we create ourselves. Don't let anyone tell you that you are not strong enough to follow your dreams." ■

Kristy Wingfield UnVails Entrepreneurial Success

Kristy Wingfield began her entrepreneurial journey in 2001 starting a marketing and public relations company called Liquid Compass that became one of the largest streaming media and web design providers in America and eventually an online music portal.

Soon, Wingfield was ready to move on to a new and exciting venture and returned to her passionate roots in marketing and small business start-ups by launching her company, GraphiK LLC. She also helped create a brand new line of high-quality candles and body products called UnVail, which was picked up immediately by over 300 stores across the United States and Canada and continues to grow like wildfire.

All this success and power might go to some people's heads, but Wingfield has a different view.

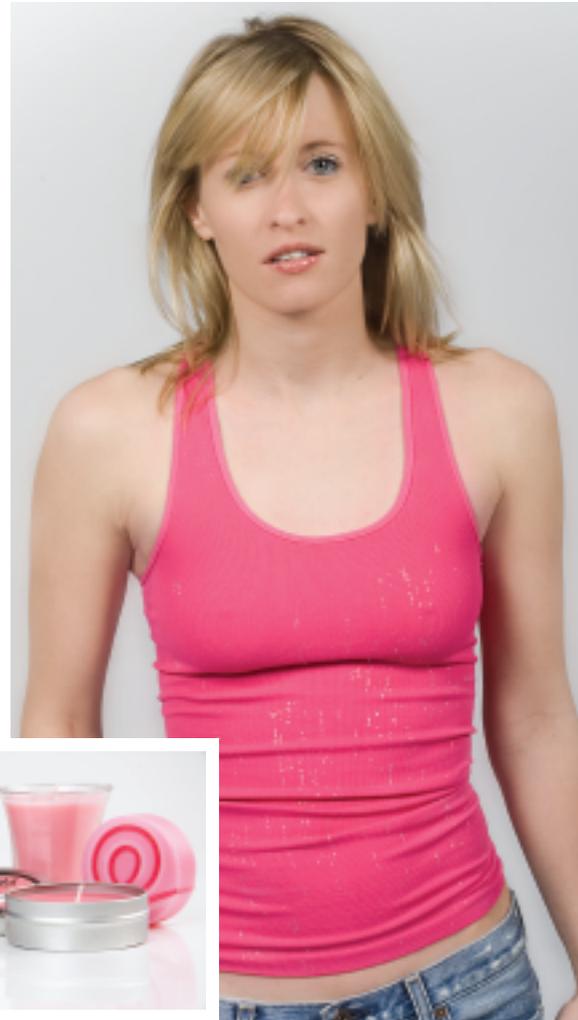
"Power is having the ability to let others shine," she explained. "When you've reached a level of self-worth and comfort that enables you to step back and give others the spotlight—that's power."

But with power comes responsibility, and Wingfield does her part by giving back.

"I love working with non-profit organizations and learning about all types of causes that others believe in," she said. "Throughout the years I have worked with, or supported, various non-profits including Junior Achievement, Make-A-Wish Foundation, Junior Symphony Guild, the Colorado Restaurant Association, and more."

Her knack for smart business moves is part of an overarching wisdom and positive outlook on life.

"I believe there is good at the core of every person," Wingfield said. "Beauty is having the confidence to be exactly who you want to be at any given moment. Some people measure beauty from the inside out; others measure from the outside in. Whatever your attributes are, simply have the confidence to wear them well." ■



Christabelle Carathanassis Virtual Closet Full of Goodies

When Christabelle Carathanassis opened the doors to ChristabellesCloset.com in 2004, she not only strived to offer women the opportunity to buy designer clothes online at a very low cost, but also to participate in raising money for Parkinson's disease. Her mother was diagnosed with the debilitating disease in 2001, and since then Christabelle has been fighting to find a cure.

Christabelle's "Clearance Closet" is a full-service, online resale boutique featuring high-end, one-of-a-kind designer fashions and accessories. Customers can either shop for, or sell, designer duds at consignment prices. Additionally, Christabelle donates half the proceeds from her sales to The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's research. Any way you look at it, visiting ChristabellesCloset.com is a win-win experience for everyone.

FredaLA.com



👉 Freda Kunin Has Success In The Bag

The product of a workaholic father and a shopaholic mother, **Freda Kunin** proudly proclaims herself a “working shopaholic.” Fusing the epic business and artistic talents of her parents, she has created the booming online one-stop-shopping site, FredaLa.com, for the woman who craves luxury for less.

Her vast and varied experience in sales and marketing, and her education in law, economics, and fine arts have contributed to her success as well. Sought after by celebrities, fashion editors, and a global clientele, Freda’s work ethic is exemplary and she soars her way to success through integrity, passion, and the sheer joy of loving her work and doing it well.

“I am a genuinely happy person and I strive to be the best that I can be to myself and others,” Kunin said. “This keeps me on course.”

As a member of Women in Film, Independent Film Projects West, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Kunin has a full schedule but she still finds time to think of others.

“I want to help others who are less fortunate than I,” she said. “I give to several charities, from those assisting single pregnant teen mothers to those seeking cures for AIDS, cancer, and heart disease.”

Her advice for achieving your dreams?

“If you are honest with yourself, follow your passion, and believe that you really do deserve success, you will succeed,” she said. “Have patience and be kind to yourself and others. It is impossible to be all powerful, but we can decide how we want to react to the unexpected. And the unexpected can be a good thing. It is the spice of life.” ■