

STAR CENTRAL

NOVEMBER 2022

INTRODUCING ASHLEY DULANEY

GET TO KNOW A RISING STAR
TO WATCH OUT FOR THIS
YEAR AND ONE OF
THE STARS OF 'THE ACT'

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT JEWEL

ONE ON ONE INTERVIEW
WITH SINGER/SONGWRITER
ACTRESS, AUTHOR AND
MUSIC SUPERSTAR: JEWEL



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW:

IVAN THOMAS

AN ENTREPRENEUR
TO WATCH OUT FOR IN 2022



MAKE WAY FOR

DJ Jazzy

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Cover

Dj Jazzy

Find out more about one of the rising stars to watch out for in 2022

DJ JAZZY



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In a year that has pushed us to new heights and tested our limits, I would like to sincerely thank our fantastic business partners, staff, and supporters for bearing with us in these trying times. This year has taught us that human interaction and face-to-face communication remain precious. For all the lessons that I have learned throughout 2021, I praise and thank God for another year - it may have had its fair share of ups and downs, but all in all, I feel blessed to know that our brand is still alive and kicking.

As the year draws to a close, may the coming Christmas season take away all the pain and unhappiness you may have all experienced in your lives and instead shower you all with love, peace, success, prosperity, happiness, and joy. God bless everyone and keep safe.

Mike Ilagan
Managing Director

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Cover ModelQuest 2022
Introducing the 2022 StarCentral Cover-girl finalists

EDITORIAL

Editor-in-chief
Victoria Adamson

Managing Director
Mike Ilagan

Marketing Director
Joselito Ilagan

Advertising Manager
Krissy Anderson

Photographic & Art

Kevin Gomez, FIN Photography, Ash Narayan, James Mao, Brooke B, Tony Palliser, Dave Choo, George Azmy, Eric Fonacier, Raphael Flores, Thang Villanueva

Marketing

Alex Abella, Eileen Maynigo, Barnes Luz, Jason Harris, Lovely Washington, Charles Chan, Albie Pri, Joshua Hu, Annabel Garcia, John Esquerra, Michelle Palmer,

Writers & Contributors

Anjelica Whitelaw, Shiwani Gurpah, Renae Smith, Holly Phillips, Charles Chan, Scott Murray, Vanessa Jensen, Leanne Harrison, Patricia Higgins, Judy Flynn, Angie, Rommel P, Christine Claire dela Pena, Dasein Catedrilla

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Jojo Almazora Sebastian Pg.34

EDITOR'S NOTES

StarCentral Magazine's journey began in 2005 in a mini garage with three people. As our company has grown, so has our belief in StarCentral's role and vision for impact worldwide. Today, we're proud of our long history of helping create a platform for emerging talents from all over the world.

Our strong values have guided us through this past year. As I write this introduction note, we continue to navigate a global pandemic which has been a defining moment for the whole world – and definitely a defining moment for StarCentral magazine.

Today, we begin our next journey to 2022. Our goal is and always has been, to establish a publication that informs and promotes local artists, models, actors, creatives, and entrepreneurs from all over the world. At StarCentral, we'll never stop striving to be the best. Our purpose will always guide us in our decisions, and our values will always inspire us to keep pushing forward. God bless everyone, and happy new year.

Victoria Adamson
Editor-in-chief

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Diana Omuoyo Pg. 36

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COVER MODEL QUEST

Meet the 2022



Rachelle



Taylor



Helin



Paige



Margeriville



Maddy



Hallie

Covergirls



Abbas



Peter



Kaan

MEET THE 2022
Coverguys



Seatt



Akmal



Tariq



MEET THE 2022



JUNIOR
*Covermadel*s





RISING STAR SPOTLIGHT: ASHLEY DULANEY

After starring alongside Patricia Arquette and Joey King in Hulu's 2X Emmy nominated series "The Act," breakout star Ashley Dulaney is taking Hollywood by storm leading two upcoming feature films Passionflix's first romantic comedy, *SEDUCTION & SNACKS* and *A TASTE OF LOVE*.

Based on USA Today bestselling author Tara Sivec's 3-part book series, *SEDUCTION & SNACKS* tells the story of Claire, a twenty-something single mom that grudgingly helps her best friend Jenny (Dulaney), sell sex toys while she attempts to make enough money to start her own business to give her foul-mouthed, but extremely loveable (when he's asleep) toddler a better life. *SEDUCTION & SNACKS* is Passion Flix's first romantic comedy project.

Struggling to find her culinary voice as a Network TV star, *A TASTE OF LOVE* revolves around Taylor and her world of friends as she returns to her hometown to visit her parents. She must choose between her renewed relationship, saving her family restaurant, or her dream career as a worldwide-known chef. In the film, Ashley brings to life 'Linda,' one of the leading ensemble cast members.

Growing up in Tupelo, Mississippi, Ashley knew she was destined to be in front of the camera and took to acting at a very young age while in preschool. Ever since her first role as a caterpillar in a local school production, she caught the acting bug and dedicated her life to her craft. After graduating from high school, Ashley attended and graduated from Ole Miss with a BFA in acting. After being scouted by agents and managers, Ashley made the big move to Los Angeles in 2009 where she began auditioning and taking extra gigs to pay the bills. Ashley got her first big break on FX's "Justified" with a strong character arc throughout the final season. From there Ashley continued booking gigs and started as the co-lead in Lifetime's *BABYSITTER BLACKBOOK*, and later went on to portray the evil 'Rebecca' in Lifetime's *THE HOUSE SITTER*. Ashley has also worked on popular series including NBC's "Brooklyn Nine-Nine," FOX' "9-1-1,"

Lone Star," ABC's "The Middle," ABC's "Scandal," as well as NBC's "Days of Our Lives," to name a few.

When Ashley isn't busy in front of the camera, she loves to work out regularly by hiking or taking aerial yoga classes. Ashley is also a fierce advocate for animal shelters and has a white rescue cat named Posey Parker, named after one of her favorite actors, Parker Posey, and a black cat named Bella. StarCentral Magazine recently caught up with Ashley to discuss her journey in the acting industry and here's what went down:

Can you tell us more about yourself? How did you get started in the entertainment industry?

Hill My name is Ashley Dulaney. I was born and raised in the South. I moved out to LA after college and got lucky enough to be cast in a national campaign opposite Joan and Melissa Rivers and it kind of all kept going from there.

What do you like most about acting?

Freshness. I never know what role I'm going to get to bring to life that day or what sides are coming my way. Watching a character develop over the shoot, it's just always fresh. You never know what is gonna happen.

What are your weak points when it comes to acting? How do you try to improve them?

I would say my big weak point is relying on things I have learned to do well. I am personally really quirky and as you bring yourself into each role you do, it's very easy on me to lean into that and that can be a trap of mine. I balance it by doing the script the natural way I feel and then doing it totally different and the opposite of what I think I should do. By doing this you end up unlocking little things that I would have never naturally noticed. So then each role has different layers than that of my natural tendencies.



What are your strong points as an actor?

On technical notes, I memorize very, very quickly. I can easily tap into emotions and get a pretty quick read of the character in the first pass. I also would say my biggest strength is I have a lot of fun with every role. It doesn't matter the size I love every audition and every chance I get to perform.

What have you learned from the directors that you have worked with throughout your career?

Vision. I love watching directors talk to each actor in totally different ways to convey what they need from us. You see the world from the directors' eyes so the way they communicate is key and it's a very unique skill set. Also, I love the collaboration aspect between the actors and the director. I've had directors tell me a word and somehow that word hit me in just the right place and got us where we needed to go in a scene. Directors notice the smallest details and how we use those to bring the world to life and that is so fascinating as an actor to witness.

What are some of the difficulties of the acting business?

There is no laid-out plan. You can't just think "oh I go to school, I graduate, and I get a job". It's very much a paint outside the lines kind of world and there is never a guarantee. It's a very long road. It's not an overnight success and it's years and years of yes and no and maybe and not for us and sometimes you win and sometimes you lose. I think that's also compacted now with social media and the comparison game and I think if you buy into that world and let the no and not for us break you it's a very lonely place. But it doesn't have to be that way. That is part of it. It's a big part because it's a fact but I think when you look down the road and you realize it's not gonna be short it's going to take work and you're going to have disappointments and high highs and low lows and when you accept that and you LOVE what you do and you have FUN with it, it changes that difficulty into just a part of the journey and part of what you love. When you love the uncertainty because the work makes you happy, you change that narrative. Learning how to change that narrative is the biggest difficulty of all.

What's challenging about bringing a script to life?

Not getting lost in trying to "do it right". The project I have coming out right now is based on a book, so we were given access to these characters on an even deeper level than the script. We had all the colors and layers to choose from with the book and the script. I think this is where it's so important to trust

your instincts and remember your unique look at this role is what brings it to life. I think we as actors want to get it right and we focus on what they would want to see but that is a big trap. So remembering that no one is going to have your unique life experiences and how you see the script from those eyes, and keeping that alive as you bring the role to life

What do you do when you're not filming?

Any and all things that involve my cats and my husband. Time is very important to me and my work is something I love very much but when I'm not working I want any and all time to go to those I love the most in this world. I don't care what we are doing as long as I'm with them.

What has been the most memorable experience of your career so far?

There was one day on set that really changed my career but out of respect to some people involved I will stay vague. I had been hired to come on to a show to do seven lines, such a fun role but a one-and-done kinda thing. I was sitting in my trailer for a really long time on the day but man I was loving it. All the fluffy robe pictures you could ask for and I was ready for my lines so I just chilled. When I finally got called to set something had happened and as soon as I walked in I could feel the tension. In TV and Film EVERY MOMENT MATTERS. EVERY MOMENT IS MONEY. The EP approaches me and asks something I will never forget "how quickly can you learn lines" without missing a beat I said "really quick" I didn't know what was happening, but I got taken into a room and in 30 minutes tops we rewrote the scene and started rolling. I didn't get to go back to my trailer to prep. I sat there with the EP and we ran it till the cameras got in position, and then we did it. My seven lines went to five pages, and I was leading the scene with the star of the show. Something just kicked in and I was never nervous worried I wouldn't be able to do it. I knew I could, and I HAD A BLAST! I didn't know what that would lead to I just knew I was there and ready and more than anything it was one of the most fun days ever.

Who have been the most interesting people you've met so far?

That's so hard for me because there are so many that have been so impactful to me.

Getting to meet and work with Joan Rivers was a literal dream. She was so gracious and so kind, and my god she was so witty.

Kerry Washington. When I did Scandal, which side note was my first TV credit, not to mention I was a huge fan of the show, came up to me after I wrapped to congratulate me and I couldn't stop smiling. Not only is she stunningly breathtaking but her warmth and kindness were palpable. She is a legend and had zero ego, just total grace.

If someone is going to make your life into a movie, who would play you?

If someone was going to make a movie about my life, I would want to be an all-cat adaptation, because I'm obsessed with cats and I would want it to be styled after my cat Posey with Reese Witherspoon being my voice. I'm obsessed with my cats, and I'm obsessed with Reese Witherspoon

What are your future plans? Inside your career or out of it.

Honestly, I always struggle with this because I love every booking I didn't see coming. I think when we lay out a path ahead, we miss out on all the amazing hidden gems we wouldn't have thought to ask for. So, when I think of my future all I really care about is still being happy. Enjoying the journey, the work and all that comes with it. Getting to explore the world. Waking up with my husband and our cats and down the line hopefully kids and getting to do the job I love surrounded by the people I love. Those are all my future.



ONE ON ONE WITH MUSIC SUPERSTAR

JEWEL

Photographed by: Dana Trippe

By Allison Kugel

The first thing I noticed when I sat down with Jewel was her beautifully sculpted cheekbones and trademark smile, but I was instantly redirected toward her glow; a warm and welcoming glow emanating from that same place where, no doubt, her poetic music and lyrics originate. I wanted to learn more. It hasn't been easy for Jewel, the daughter of a single father who experienced post-Vietnam PTSD and self-medicated with alcohol. The impoverished father/daughter duo, knocked around bars in Jewel's home state of Alaska, crooning to just barely pay the bills. On her own by age of fifteen, to escape an abusive home environment, the multiplatinum, multi-award-winning artist poured her pain, anxiety, depression, and confusion into some of the most lyrically potent and widely listened to music of the past two and a half decades. She became a music icon in the process.

Discovered in a Southern California coffee house with little more than her guitar, Jewel would go on to sell more than thirty million albums, and it all started with her breakout 1995 album, *Pieces of You*, which just celebrated its 25th anniversary last year. Hits like *Standing Still*, *Hands*, *Who Will Save Your Soul*, *You Were Meant for Me*, and *Intuition*, reflect Jewel's evolutionary inward journey and continue to resonate, worldwide, throughout our human culture. It's no wonder *The Voice* producer, Mark Burnett, calls Jewel "One of the greatest singer-songwriters in history."

Now, the forty-seven-year-old mother of one has devoted much of her public platform to mental health advocacy and what she gleefully calls her ongoing practice of "being consciously present" with her experiences. Jewel's *Never Broken* (an nod to her hit song, *Hands* and her New York Times bestselling memoir) movement offers free mindfulness and mental health resources and what she calls "actionable exercises," while her second annual World Mental Health Day Summit and Concert, is taking place, virtually, on Sunday, October 10th at TheWellness-Experience.com.

Jewel's anticipated upcoming album *Freewheelin' Woman*, which reflects her personal and musical evolution of "being on this side of life," as she lovingly calls her current chapter, will be released in Spring 2022.

Allison Kugel: Tell me about your name Jewel. Is there a story behind your first name?

Jewel: It's a family name. My grandfather's name was Jasper Jade Jewel Carol, my mother's name was Lenedra Jewel Carol, and my other grandfather was Yule. The feminine pronunciation of that name was Jewel. It kind of came from both sides.

Allison Kugel: Interesting. Tell me about the three most significant events in your life that shaped who you are today.

Jewel: I don't really think that way, but the interesting thing I find about healing is that our stories can't change. We can't go back and change our history, but we can change how we relate to the story. We can change which features we make salient and important to us, and we can change which memories we draw on. A good example would be, growing up as a child I didn't think I was lovable because my parents didn't seem to love me or care for me. So, if you had asked me that question many years ago, I would have said a big part of my story was that I felt unlovable. Through time, and through healing, you start to realize it's not that I was unlovable and it's not even that my parents didn't love me. It's that my parents didn't know how to love. Again, it's not how your story changes, but how you relate to the story that changes. Realizing that my parents didn't know how to love builds empathy, it builds a different sense of self-worth because it's not suddenly about me, or from an ego perspective, about my lack of ability to be loved or lovable, and it allows room for a different narrative.

Allison Kugel: At what age did you come to that conclusion?

Jewel: I've been studying for the last couple of years, sort of a system of misunderstandings, and realizing that a lot of conclusions we draw about ourselves are based on a misunderstanding. It's about looking through it through fresh eyes and saying, "Is that true?" and challenging that truth. It's kind of a process I've always been interested in but looking at it in terms of misunderstandings and updating misunderstandings has probably been more in the last couple of years.

Allison Kugel: For me, personally, I always say that my parents raised me the best way they knew how, and then when I became an adult, I re-raised myself. Does that resonate with you?

Jewel: Yes. I remember at some point thinking wouldn't it be embarrassing if I spent my whole adulthood getting over my childhood (laugh). At some point, how do you start to transcend your story? You do have to heal and reclaim a lot of that narrative, and then you get to start saying, "Now, what do I want to do with it?" In my book (New York Times bestseller, *Never Broken*/Penguin Random House), I called it "an archeological dig back to my true self." My life had a lot of drama and a lot of trauma. My mom left when I was eight. My dad was a Vietnam veteran who was trauma-triggered. He was abusive and an alcoholic. I moved out at [the age of] 15 and was paying rent. I was homeless by 18, because I wouldn't have sex with my boss.

I was living in my car and then my car got stolen. So, I knew, statistically, kids like me ended up repeating the cycle, and I didn't want to be a statistic. But if your nurture was really bad, how do you get to know your nature? That is what I've spent my life dedicated to, is figuring out what causes happiness? Happiness is a side effect of choices. Our choices are usually stimulated by misunderstandings. We have to examine those and rework them so we can go where we want in life.

Allison Kugel: You and I have this in common because I had also struggled with anxiety and panic attacks from the time I was eight years old. My feeling is that you don't get "cured," but, rather, you heal from it. What do you think?

Jewel: In my book (Never Broken/Penguin Random House) I write about a really difficult thing that happened with my mom in my thirties, and it really set me back. I was thinking about how to heal again while I was in my thirties, and I had this sort of flash or inspiration come to me, that we are not actually broken. No matter what trauma we suffer, I always came at it like I had to fix myself as if I was broken. That is a really daunting and really depressing way to go about it. I realized that a soul is not a teacup. It can't be broken. It exists perfectly and whole. A lot of the exercises I developed during that time in my life, that are available on www.jewelneverbroken.com, are the little exercises I used to help distinguish the self and the other. And, yes, it is something you heal from. Anxiety does not have the grip it used to have over me. I hadn't had an anxiety attack in probably twenty years. But interestingly, a couple of weeks ago I was totally triggered and had a panic attack. It was fascinating.

Allison Kugel: It is an empowering perspective to, instead of being scared by it, to become curious about it.

Jewel: I had the skills to care for myself, and in retrospect realize what triggered me. It was really fascinating what triggered me and I learned a lot. I don't live in fear that I'm going to keep having panic attacks. The money that we are going to try and raise from this wellness experience all goes to my foundation where we teach these skills to kids that don't have access to therapy and traditional support groups. Resiliency is just a fancy word for having multiple tools to handle life as it happens. If this tool doesn't work, try this one. If that tool doesn't work, try that one.

Allison Kugel: You and I both have sons. Your son is ten and mine is twelve. I feel like we are pioneers in that we are both raising young men who will eventually be grown men, and we want them to be more in touch with their emotions, and how they relate to their emotions, than previous generations of men. How do you speak to your son about his emotions and how he identifies with them?

Jewel: My son is a very emotional child. He is very creative. Something I've really been working on with my son is differentiating between a genuine emotion and a reaction.

Allison Kugel: Good one.

Jewel: If you look at things generationally, if you have really strict parents that child will grow up and be really lenient. Uber religious parents sometimes will cause the opposite reaction and the child will become the exact opposite.

Allison Kugel: Over correction, yes.

Jewel: But it's the same. It's just a different side of the same coin. Looking at emotionality and how we raise boys, for me it has been going back and really studying masculinity among indigenous cultures; the rites of passage from a male perspective,

and not putting my female perspective on it. But instead learning about masculinity in an indigenous way as well as realizing I would have a tendency to want to over empower my child's feelings. Learning that you can't use your feelings as a tactic is really important for a child, especially for a child that has a mom that's like, "I care about your feelings (laughs)," which I do. But right now, the world isn't having a lot of authentic feelings, it's having a lot of reactions. It's using volatile and highly emotionally charged reactions to bully people into behavior. That's the role type of being woke now. I find that really interesting, and something I'm thinking about right now with my son is, "How do I implement him learning to self-assess because we don't want to have a reaction. We want to have a thoughtful and centered response. That's powerful. That where you're in your body and in your heart, and you're forming a response. That's focused and intentional, versus just a reaction that is highly emotional. It's a little nuance, but I think it really matters.

Allison Kugel: What do you think you came into this life as Jewel Kilcher to learn, and what do you think you came here to teach?

Jewel: I think that a lot of us feel this huge obligation to see why we're here. Something I learned from my Native American uncles is that the purpose of your life is to be happy. It is your birthright to be happy, and if you are not happy, you need to do something about it. Nobody owes you happiness. The obsession with meaning; meaning is a side effect of experience. It's like the teaching of Buddha, looking at the flower. Flowers don't go around going, "What is my meaning?" They exist, and existing gives meaning. Ask yourself, "Am I happy? Am I doing things that make me happy?" I think one thing would be to start reframing it and coming back to meaning as a side effect of experience. What is your experience? Are you happy? Great! If you're not, what would you be willing to change? And are you willing to be accountable for that?

Allison Kugel: If you could travel back in time and change or witness any famous historical event, where would you go, and what would you attempt to change or bear witness to?

Jewel: When I was young, I was very obsessed with philosophy and the dialectic, and I was very influenced by Socrates. I realized I could think, and I didn't know that before. I was a dyslexic, really poor kid and so the power of learning through questioning something, and the knowing that two people coming together can create something that could be known by a third person was powerful for me. When I realized I could do that to myself, where I realized I could ask myself a question and I would hear an answer that I didn't even know I knew, that got really exciting to me. I became obsessed with that era, although it wouldn't have been good to be a woman back then (laughs). Other than that, I've never really given much thought to what time period I would go back to in history, because what if, for me, that moment is now?

Allison Kugel: One day, when a movie is made about your life, what is something you hope and pray they get right?

Jewel: Something I've been surprised about in my own life is that what I thought were my talents didn't actually help me in my life. The talent that really helped me was my persistence. That's not a real sexy word. It's not a word most people aspire to, but when I look back, just not quitting ended up being my best talent. Whenever I was faced with a challenge, just being willing to stand up and be willing to do something different today than I did yesterday and standing up again and trying something different today than I did yesterday. Again, it's not a very sexy thing, but it's why I have the life that I have. It's the quality and the trait that led me to where I am. Everything else was sort of a dressing around it.



Photographed by: Dana Trippe

Hear the extended interview with Jewel on the Allison Interviews Podcast. Allison Kugel is a syndicated entertainment journalist and host of the Allison Interviews podcast. Listen on Apple Podcasts, Spotify and YouTube. Follow on Instagram @theallisonkugel.

DJ Jazzy is an emerging artist, singer, songwriter, producer, and dancer based in Sydney, Australia.

The talented musician is quickly making waves with the younger generations through her unparalleled sound, style, and message. Through her emotion-filled vocal performances, DJ Jazzy radiates raw emotion through upbeat instrumentation that delivers empowering messages. The Australian multi-talented artist seeks to connect intimately through her music with young people and radiate a message of confidence onto them. DJ Jazzy will have listeners engulfed in the musical world she creates with her realness.

Founder of the development program Day Dreamers, DJ Jazzy trains young aspiring dancers and singers to achieve their dreams. Moreover, her video series Chase the Dream takes the audience on a journey of DJ Jazzy's experiences within the entertainment industry. She is an all-rounded entertainer to watch as she is set to cement herself in the music industry and in the hearts of many for years to come.

StarCentral Magazine recently caught up with DJ Jazzy to discuss her journey in the music industry, and here's what went down:

How did you get started in the music industry? How were you actually 'discovered'?

I have been in the music industry since I was 4. Both my mom and dad were creators of a kids' pop group called "The Star Girls," which I was a part of. The Star Girls were Aria Nominated and had number 1 hits in Australia, plus toured across Australia and The United States. I was Twinkle Star in the group, and ever since then, I knew that I wanted to be a performer.

What do you like most about singing?

It's funny because the thing that I most love about singing is the part where I get to perform! I love singing, but I love being on stage the most.

What inspires you to be creative?

So many things inspire me, and they can happen at any moment. I can be inspired by other artists when I see a live show while listening to music, and the list goes on. I am filled with creativity.

Is there anything special that you do to get into a creative mindset?

Creativity just happens naturally, and when you get that spark, you need to focus on it. But there are many moments where I have to force creativity as my work revolves around being creative. Depending on what it is, I have different techniques to get a spark going. If I am songwriting, I love looking at quotes on Pinterest. If it is producing music, listening to samples really get the vibes going for me. If it's photography, again, Pinterest is my best friend in giving me ideas.

What message, if any, do you try to put into your work?

I am filled with positive messages! I'm super passionate about mental and physical health, and I try to get these messages across through my lyrics and shows. I really love embracing being different, being who you want to be, loving yourself, and feeling confident. So many people have adversities that can be tough to deal with. My messages are not about focusing on the things you can't control but looking at the things you can.

What has been the most memorable experience of your career so far?

Nothing has been able to beat touring Australia and the United States when I was a part of "The Star Girls." I loved being in different places, staying at different hotels, and performing non-stop. I hope I can do that as DJ Jazzy very soon, and it's 100% a goal of mine!

Do you ever find yourself unable to express your creativity to the fullest? What kinds of things inhibit you?

I have an amazing team behind me, especially my parents, who support me in everything I do. I have never felt there has been anything holding me back from my creativity, and I am very lucky to be able to say that.

Who is your greatest influence?

My mom and dad are my biggest influence. Without them, I wouldn't be where I am today. I take after them in everything I do.

Do you feel that you chose your "passion," or did it choose you?

It chose me. I have been singing, dancing, and performing before I could even walk and talk. I was always songwriting, scriptwriting, filming, animating, creating music, and so on. I naturally gravitated to it all from such a young age.

If you hadn't chosen your field, what would your alternate field have been?

I love designing and creating concepts for homes. I probably would have been some type of interior designer.

What is your future? Inside your career or out of it.

I plan to make 2023 the biggest year of my life. I want to build up my development program, "The Day Dreamers," for young performers. I want to pack out the year with live shows and also get my body feeling the fittest and healthiest it's ever been! I want to feel strong, feel healthy and take my career to the next level!

DJ JAZZY



"I plan to make 2023 the biggest year of my life. I want to build up my development program, "The Day Dreamers," for young performers. I want to pack out the year with live shows."

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white wide-brimmed hat, a white short-sleeved dress with ruffles, and brown leather boots, is sitting on a sand dune. She is holding a brown leather crossbody bag and sunglasses. The background shows a beach with wooden posts, waves, and a blue sky with light clouds.

studio49
photography

49 Johnston St, Annandale NSW 2038
Phone: 0416 095 875



**PEDRO
VIRGIL**
P H O T O G R A P H Y

SPOTLIGHT: MEET IVAN THOMAS

Ivan Thomas is a visionary and lifestyle connoisseur who has helped to manage the brands and reputations of some of America's top companies and individuals such as Xerox, Nielsen, Cancer Treatment Centers of America, Urgent Care Group, rapper Waka Flocka Flame, NBA player Michael Beasley, NBA champion and coach Bill Cartwright, Rev. Jesse Jackson, music mogul Devyne Stephens and many others. The entrepreneur, author, and motivational speaker owns Intrigue Media Group, a PR and brand management agency, as well as a credit repair company, Credit Savant LLC. With a history of elevating lives, building connections, and garnering press coverage for companies and public figures, Ivan empowers entrepreneurs and youth through his motivational platform "Defy Gravity," - which helps people overcome mediocrity launch into their own personal and professional greatness. As an owner of three successful companies and the author of the powerful book "Defy Gravity: Unleashing Your Greatness Within" Ivan has spoken to thousands nationally and internationally at events ranging from entrepreneur and empowerment conferences to elementary schools and colleges. His goal is to motivate, equip and empower millions, and he plans to make Defy Gravity one of the most influential motivational movements globally.

StarCentral Magazine recently caught up with Ivan to discuss his journey as an entrepreneur and here's what went down:

What are you currently doing to maintain/grow your business?

I am being extremely active and intentional. Boldness, strategy, and activity bring in the business. So, I am constantly engaging potential customers, having powerful conversations with potential partners for business collaborations, and promoting myself and my business through content creation.

What social media platforms do you usually use to increase your brand's awareness?

Instagram and Facebook are my favorite social media platforms to use for my brand. However, I will be increasing my use of YouTube in the future and establishing a larger presence on Tik Tok.

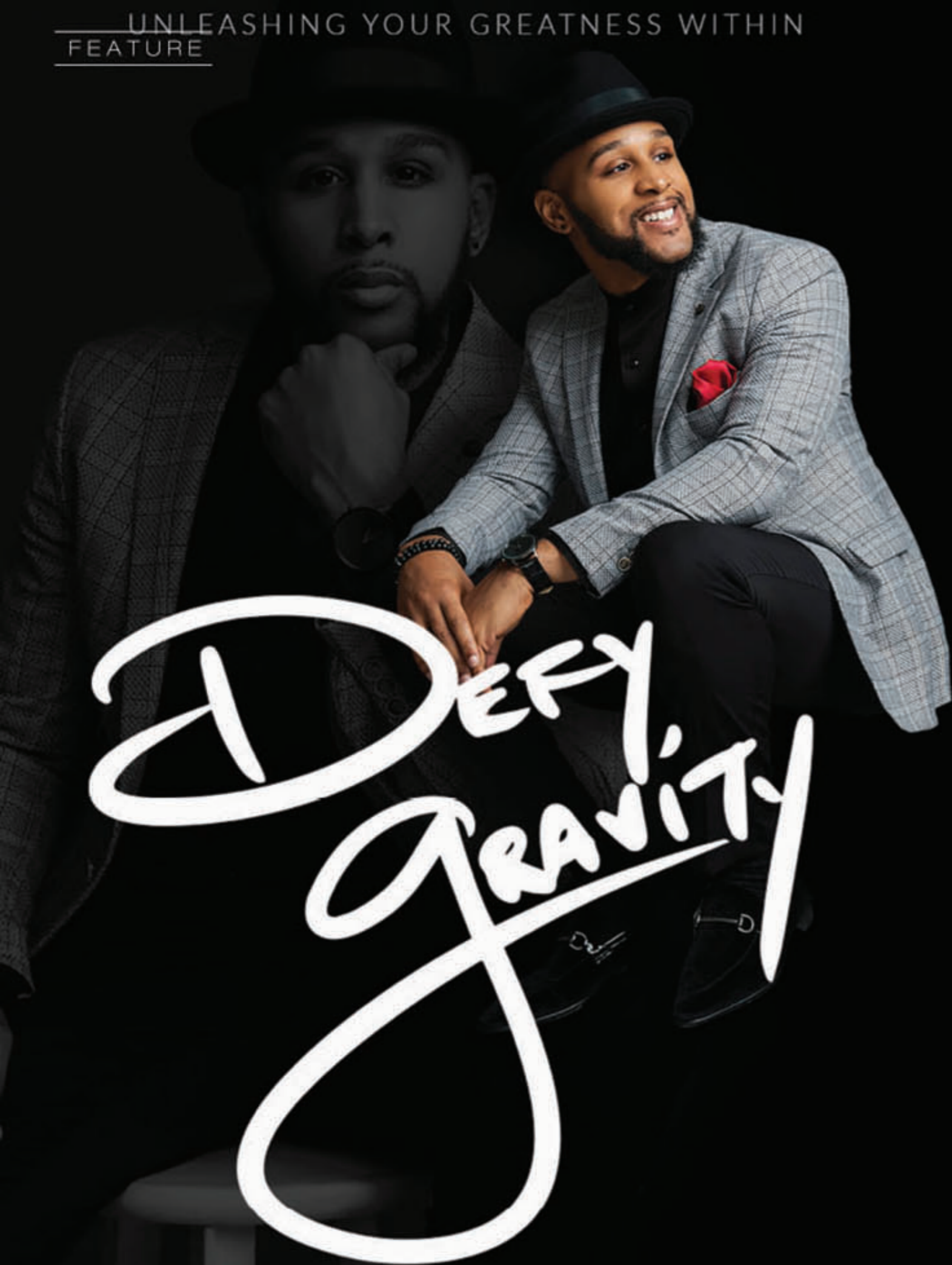
What is your experience with paid advertising, like PPC or sponsored content campaigns? Does it work?

I do not have much experience with PPC. However, I have benefitted from sponsored content campaigns because they get you in contact with a broader audience in a place they are already looking, so it doesn't feel like they are being sold to. It doesn't look like traditional advertising. They have been useful when promoting my book and other products and services, such as with my credit repair company.

What is your main tactic when it comes to making more people aware of your brand and engaging your customers? How did your business stand out?

Generating results. Nothing matters without the results. In my line of work, people want to be inspired and uplifted. They want access to opportunity, access to media, and access to people they do not currently have access to. Succeeding at doing those things draws attention to my brand and has allowed me to stand out. It attracts customers, and when those customers are satisfied with the results, they refer others to me. I also share some of my personal successes. Sometimes, you can show people better than you can tell them.





DEFY GRAVITY

IVAN THOMAS



What form of marketing has worked well for your business throughout the years?

Although I own a PR agency that promotes others, utilizing my experience in publicity for my own business has proved vital. It has allowed me to establish a strong presence online. People can read up on me and my work in numerous articles, on multiple podcasts, and on other platforms. When people want to know more about me and my business, I can simply refer them to Google, my website, or my social media. Content creation has also been instrumental in showing people more of my personality and what I do behind the scenes.

What is the toughest decision you had to make in the last few months?

The toughest decision I had to make was firing a client I have worked with for several years.

What money mistakes have you made along the way that others can learn from (or something you'd do differently)?

When I started my very first business, I was so anxious to get clients and make some kind of money, that I charged for less for my services than I should have to avoid losing out on a deal. I also took on any and everyone that requested my services, whether they were a good fit or not. The result was, I ended up working myself crazy and still struggled to maintain the health of my business and my life.

Although I knew those were not my ideal clients, I had a fear of not getting paid, and by continuing to make this mistake, I was compromising the integrity of my brand. I was creating the wrong expectation of what was required to work with me. My advice to others is that even if you have to work yourself up to the price point you desire, it is imperative that you value yourself enough to grow and sustain your business. All money is not good money, and if you sell yourself short, your sales will be short - bottom line.

What new business would you love to start?

I would love to start a real estate business. This will likely be the next area of business I will venture into.

If you could go back in a time machine to the time when you were just getting started, what would you do differently?

I would sell my talents and skills much more. When I was getting started, I thought my work alone would speak for itself and that by looking at my website and seeing what I'd accomplished, it was enough to secure the clients I desired. I didn't want to appear overly "tooting my own horn" or name-dropping too much, so I was modest about promoting myself. That was until I saw people with half the talent, achievements, and professionalism capturing opportunities that I had missed out on. They did exactly what they were supposed to do, make themselves sound like the best thing around.

If I could go back and do it differently, I would be bold and unapologetic about promoting who I am, what I do, and why I am great at it, if you want to instill confidence in your potential customer, you must show supreme confidence in yourself and make what you have to offer crystal clear.

What is the best advice you have ever been given?

"You don't need permission from anyone to be great." This bit of advice helped me start my entrepreneurial journey and recognize that I was in control of creating the future I wanted for myself.

Another one is: "In order to get business, you must stay in business." This was great advice for an entrepreneur because it is inevitable that you will endure challenging times and periods of adversity. For me, I was able to remind myself that it didn't matter if I was holding on by a thread with only one client. If I killed it with that client, they would spread the word, or someone else would take notice, enabling me to bring in more clients.



SNEAK PEEK: CELEBRITY HOMES UNLOCKED CAMILA CABELLO

Her heart might be in Havana, but the exotic pop singer Camila Cabello has been living a big, bold, beautiful life with her best friend and now ex-partner, Canadian singer Shawn Mendes, in Hollywood Hills in a home that has everything, including a recording studio. She has recently put her home on the market priced at \$3.95 million.

Though together for two years, the couple has separated but are still each other's best friends, according to USA Today. Was the split the decision-maker to put her house up for sale? Only clairvoyants know the answer. In anticipation of all the new changes in her personal life, selling her charming Hollywood Hills home is a major next step.

Perched above Sunset Strip, the 3,579-square-foot home brings a taste of the Mediterranean with its walled garden and wrought-iron gate, arches and brightly tiled fireplace surrounds. The four-bedroom, four-bath home was built in 1977 with all 21st-century updates while still retaining its original charm. With complete privacy in mind, the wall that encloses the rear yard and saltwater pool welcomes indoor/outdoor living. Kitchen and baths are sleekly modern with loads of character in the public rooms. Glass doors stack out of the way to create a vanishing threshold between the family room and outdoor terrace and greenery. Ideal for performers or wannabes, the house has a complete recording studio with professional equipment and a vocal booth. The split-level house has distressed wood floors and tile throughout. The master suite has its own dreamy fireplace. In addition to the pool there is an outdoor fireplace, grilling and dining area. There is also an attached two-car garage and laundry room.

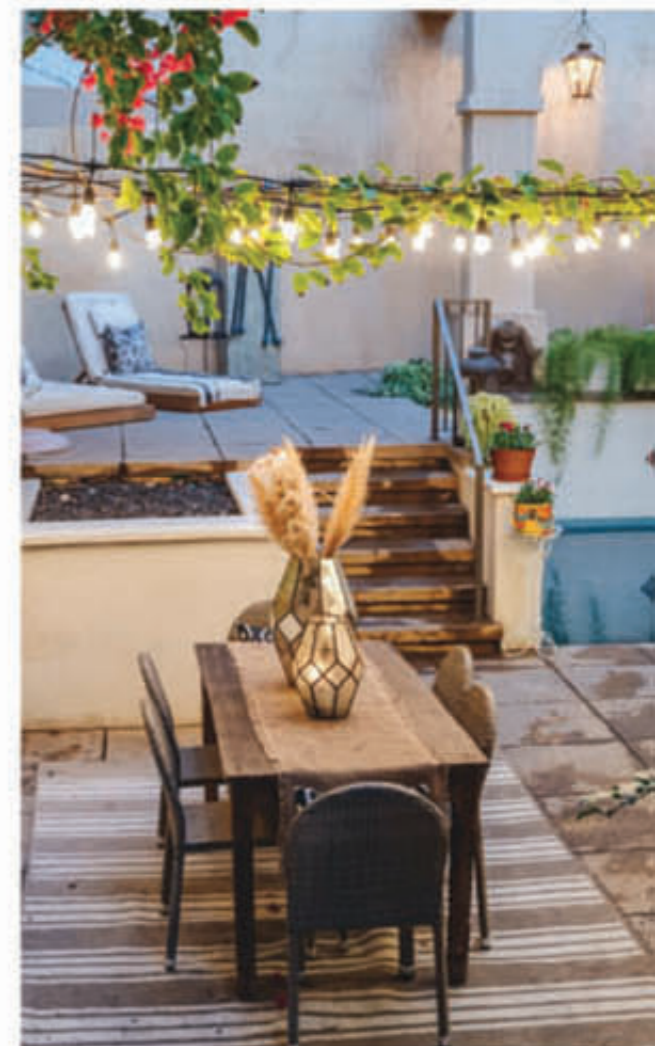
Born in Cuba but raised in Miami, Cabello's career was kick-started when she appeared on The X Factor in 2016 and became part of the group Fifth Harmony, created by Simon Cowell, where she stood out from the group. From there she branched out on her own with her mega-hits "Havana" and "Senorita," winning almost 100 industry awards, including two Latin Grammy and four American Music Awards. At only 24, Cabello is likely just warming up for a wildly, successful future.

Hollywood Hills is the ideal location for easy access to the studios, a magnet for star-seeking tour buses and as the backdrop location for many films. Celebrities who have lived and do live there include Katy Perry, Ben Affleck, Kevin Costner, Britney Spears, Bryan Austin Green and Justin Timberlake.

Denise Rosner of Compass, Beverly Hills, holds the listing.

Source: www.compass.com

Photo Credit: Neue Focus | Source: TopTenRealEstateDeals.com





JOJO

ALMAZORA SEBASTIAN

Jojo Almazora Sebastian is a Filipino-American from Kapolei, Hawaii, based in Sydney, Australia – he's a devoted and compassionate frontliner and nurse who works in the Operating Theatre at a busy Metropolitan Hospital in Sydney. However, on weekends, this orthopaedic nursing unit manager transforms into a charming and dashing tuxedo-attired fashionista, singer-entertainer, and master of ceremonies.

Jojo has been an awardee in Sydney's Best Dressed for the last two years due to his excellent dressing sense and confident personality. For 2021, Sydney Best Dressed Organisation has awarded him the Top Male Fashion Icon of the Year. This landed him an award for the Inaugural Ceremony of World's Best Dressed. He was nominated for Manila's Best Dressed for 2020-2021 to represent Australia in the prestigious Annual Event in 2022 and was awarded at the 2021 Australian Modelling and Fashion Awards. He was also named an ambassador for Sassy and Company Clothing in 2020-2021, which endeavours to teach everyone in the community fashion sustainability and to breathe new life into old clothes through recycling and repurposing.

Jojo been quite busy in the Catwalk for the past 2 years – he participated in the runway at the Sydney's Best Dress 2020, Australian Multicultural Fashion Festival 2021, Sassy and Co Fashion Runway 2021, Australian Modelling and Fashion Festival and Awards 2021, Australian Fashion Preview 2021 and 2022, This Is Me Fashion Show 2021 and 2022 and Miss Earth Australia Fashion Show 2020 and 2021 amongst other. Jojo recently walked for Trinity Dawson – a Sydney Designer, in the New York Fashion Week last February 2022, LAKME Fashion Show in June 2022, and the Australian Multicultural Fashion Exhibition in August 2022. He was invited back to grace NYFC in September 2022. The Australian Multicultural Fashion Exhibition 2022 is a concept that Mr. Rox Molavin – the CEO of RGEM Promotion and Jojo, came up with, which aims to promote social awareness and cohesion in the multicultural community through fashion.

We recently caught up with Jojo to discuss his journey in the fashion industry, and here's what went down:

How did you get into the modelling industry?

I started in the industry at a very young age. At age 5, I was already asking my parents to see and audition in the Philippines. Unfortunately, it did not come easy because of the unrealistic standards that the industry used to expect from young kids. I remembered it being ruthless. At the age of 7, my parents explained that it was because of various reasons why I was not getting any bookings. However, since I was adamant that I really wanted to pursue this, my parents did not give up, and it was just a matter of time before I finally booked a print ad and runway modelling gig. So that is how it all started.

What do you like most about being a model?

What I like the most about being a model is the ability to express my uniqueness and individuality in someone else's design. I believe that this form of expression is very much alive and something that will never go old.



Ryan Aguas
PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY

What is the best advice you have ever been given?

To ignore the noise and chaos that others create while I reach my dream. I believe that if I mind the noise and chaos, it hinders me from reaching my goal.

What are your future plans? Inside your career or out of it.

I am learning to sew because I am planning to get my designs out there, hopefully.



Model: Jojo A Sebastian
Photographed by: Ryan Aguas
Skin Care: Chocolate Day Spa
HMUA: Benz Reyes

Ryan Aguas
PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY



Diana OMUOYO

Diana Omuoyo is the reigning Ms. World Universal 2022. She's a multicultural and multi-lingual IT professional passionate about promoting inclusion, equality, STEM, and quality education.

Diana's involvement and commitment to the community have always been a key part of her life because it gives her purpose and a sense of belonging. She stays active by supporting socio-economic causes globally, being an ambassador to change, and continuing to raise awareness on critical issues.

Because of her deep passion and aspirations in the community, a friend suggested that she enter a pageant as a way to expand her dimensions in philanthropy. She had never imagined joining a pageant before, so she was initially surprised by the recommendation because of her lack of industry knowledge. She then researched pageantry, got a better understanding, and gained insights into how most platforms are founded on service to the community and philanthropy.

So, when the opportunity to join Ms. World Universal came up, it was an easy decision for her primarily because the platform's mission and vision aligned with her goals, passions, and values. The rest, you can say, is history.

We recently caught up with Diana to discuss her journey in the pageant industry, and here's what went down:

What do you like most about being a beauty queen?

Winning a title is a humbling experience; most people don't realize that it is synonymous with leadership and service to others. As a modern woman of colour, I am navigating the world amidst the challenges of social & cultural norms that continue to divide the community. As Ms. World Universal and a beauty queen, I am

privileged to have a platform I can leverage to promote causes, spread awareness, and impart change.

Pageantry has also afforded me great opportunities to participate in the community, charity, and social events where I have met like-minded individuals. Throughout this journey, I continue to grow and learn a lot about myself as I interact and share with people from all walks of life.

Downside to being a beauty queen?

One of my personal challenges is juggling a demanding full-time job, personal/community commitments, hobbies, family/friends, and the title holder's duties. However, because this role is very important to me, I always make time to be present and committed, which simply means multi-tasking and better time management.

One of the downsides I experience regularly is that, while pageants continue to gain popularity, there is still some lingering stigma about beauty queens and pageantry. So, I constantly debunk myths and educate others about my title and platform. I stay grounded in the knowledge that even if I may fail to change the perception of some, it is still important for me to continue to stand in my truth for my purpose and the vision for my title as a beauty queen.

What has been the most memorable experience of being in the pageant industry so far?

I have had many monumental experiences and milestones on the journey to Ms. World Universal. The most memorable one so far was at a charity event where I met and chatted with mothers from a minority community who expressed the hope that their daughters – by seeing someone that looks like them on a platform

like this – would be inspired to believe that they too can dare to dream big and chase their dreams. This highlighted the importance of representation and just how impactful it is for our under-represented communities. At that very moment, I knew that my decision to join the pageant world was right.

Who have been the most interesting people you've met so far in the industry?

I have interacted with so many people over the last couple of years across various domains – NGOs, Fashion, Media, Pageantry, Founders, Sports, Leaders, and Community Advocates, among others. Everyone brings a unique view of the world and diverse perspectives. The one thing that has been a common denominator in many of these interactions has been the shared passion for giving back – that was unsurprising yet an interesting discovery.

What has been the most valuable lesson you've learned while in the pageant industry? This can be about the industry or about yourself.

I started my pageant career comparatively late, so gaining a deeper understanding of the meaning and power of the crown was one of the major learnings on my journey. I always thought that in order to enter or even win a title, I would have to change to become 'pageant worthy' [Whatever that means]. But, throughout the process, I realized I just needed to be my authentic self and showcase the strengths and leadership traits I already have that make me a great title holder.

While the quest for the title is, in fact, a competition, the title[s] do come with a lot of responsibility. So, on a personal level, it has forced me to map out my primary focus and the goals I want to achieve with this title. I now represent Ms. World Universal, myself, and the organizations I support, and I want to be remembered as a selfless person, fearless in the pursuit of her dreams, a great friend, someone that was a positive role model that used her voice to influence positive change that made an impact in other people's lives.

Working in an industry whose only emphasis is on the outside characteristics of a person, how have you stayed grounded?

To stay grounded, I remind myself why I joined pageantry and the goals I strive to achieve. This keeps me focused and motivated to navigate the daunting aspects of the industry. Focusing my energy on the positives, the learnings, and the road ahead has been a constant 'saving grace.' It has also become extremely important for me to maintain overall mental wellbeing and good physical health instead of trying to fit into a superficial mold. I wake up every day and choose to love the space I occupy and the body I am in, and this journey of self-love is one I am hoping others will learn to embrace as well.

Is your family supportive of you being in the pageant industry?

My decision to join the pageant world surprised a lot of people, but I am lucky to have had a lot of support from friends and family along the way.

What are your future plans? Inside pageantry or out of it.

On a personal note, I plan to spend more time mentoring and advocating for & mentoring women of color, underrepresented communities, and young adults to pursue Technology and Engineering careers. My ultimate goal and ambition are to have a seat on a board of a charity organization / foundation where I can leverage my experiences and passions for philanthropy to continue to support Education, Equality, Inclusion and STEM initiatives on a local and global scale.

I stand firm in the belief that Education plays a key role in socio-economic wellbeing within our communities and that technology is one way to create a pathway for everyone to access quality learning. Another aspect of this is understanding that Education is not just limited to textbook/school learning but also includes knowledge sharing around cultural & societal issues. It is important to continue to create awareness around the dangers of exclusion, discrimination, the single story, and bias.

For my year in reign, I also look forward to continuing to work with the Ms World Universal Director and pageant network to support their plan for the year and fulfill all other duties as defined by the pageant organization, leveraging my network and social media platforms to promote my cause[s] and expand my reach.

Retiring early can seem impossible for most people, but did you know you can retire long before your 50's if you start investing now in property?

More and more Australians are finally understanding a new way of thinking – not just buying a home to live in but actually buying properties to build wealth that'll enable them to retire at an early age. The typical first homeowner now considers purchasing an investment home instead of a house to live in, rent it out and then either move in (when weekly expenses are less than rent), leverage to eventually buy their own home, or rent in their desired area.

That's right, Australians are now investing in property to achieve their future financial goals. They are buying property in strategic locations and leveraging bank finance. More and more Australians are also becoming aware that rental income can pay down their mortgage, leaving them with an asset(s) that delivers a passive income stream that can sustain them well into the future. With every investment, there are inherent risks and rewards, particularly when it comes to borrowing funds or making off-plan purchases. That's why it's essential to do your homework and consult independent legal and financial advice before making any property purchase or investment. Below are four reasons why you need to start your journey of building a killer property portfolio.

1. It's actually easier than you think

Let's say you've done your suburb research, you know how much your budget is, and you understand the negative gearing benefits... so what's stopping you??

Getting your finances sorted is crucial, so you know your borrowing capacity. Now you just need to find the right property.

2. You use 'other people's' money to pay off your off-plan investment

This is where the "Buy and Rent" model really pays off. Despite the initial deposit (i.e., you leverage current home equity or savings), you borrow funds from a financial institution. Interest rates are currently the lowest we've seen in over 50 years, meaning lower repayments, so now is definitely the right time to take advantage.

Tenants pay down your mortgage through weekly rent. For positively geared properties, rental income exceeds your borrowings. For negatively geared properties, your rental income will be slightly less than borrowings. All while you sit back and watch your investment grow. You can then use the equity in this property, from capital growth, to fund your next investment.

This leads me to the next great reason to invest in property; The ATO (Australian Taxation Office) will allow you to claim a range of tax deductible expenses through your investment property, including depreciation. The newer a property, the greater the depreciation levels. This serves to reduce your tax bill and improve your cash flow. Talk to your financial advisor or tax accountant about how you can reduce your tax bill through a property.

3. Property can offer greater predictability and certainty as an investment

Your investment choices are endless, and you should always discuss your circumstances and future financial goals with a financial advisor. Bricks and mortar (houses) are generally long-term investments, and no matter what happens, you'll still have a disposable asset at the end. Property is more predictable than other investment options, and the market cycles follow a fairly consistent trajectory – particularly in high-demand Eastern states such as Sydney, where property growth has been steadily growing over the past 50 plus years.

Given the current demand levels for housing and rental accommodation, property with strong cash flow can weather you through uncertain times because it meets the basic need for housing. Rising population and drops in average household size mean that people will always need a place to live, even during difficult times.

4. Property can lead you to greater financial security and wealth

Will you have enough super to retire on?
How stable are my super investments?
Will your current employer contributions be enough to live out the retirement you've planned?
Will there be an aged pension when you retire?
What can I do to retire comfortably?

These are all questions to ask yourself in considering your future financial goals.

A balanced approach to your retirement and investment is a solid strategy. Property can lead to great wealth – we're forever reading about property moguls and how simple it is to get started and make millions. Where property is concerned, capital growth can lead to great asset value, and rental income leads to a passive income stream once your investment is paid down.

This article has been sourced from the Property Investors Alliance

HOW TO BUILD A KILLER PROPERTY PORTFOLIO





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