

Complimentary Issue

GEM

MAGAZINE

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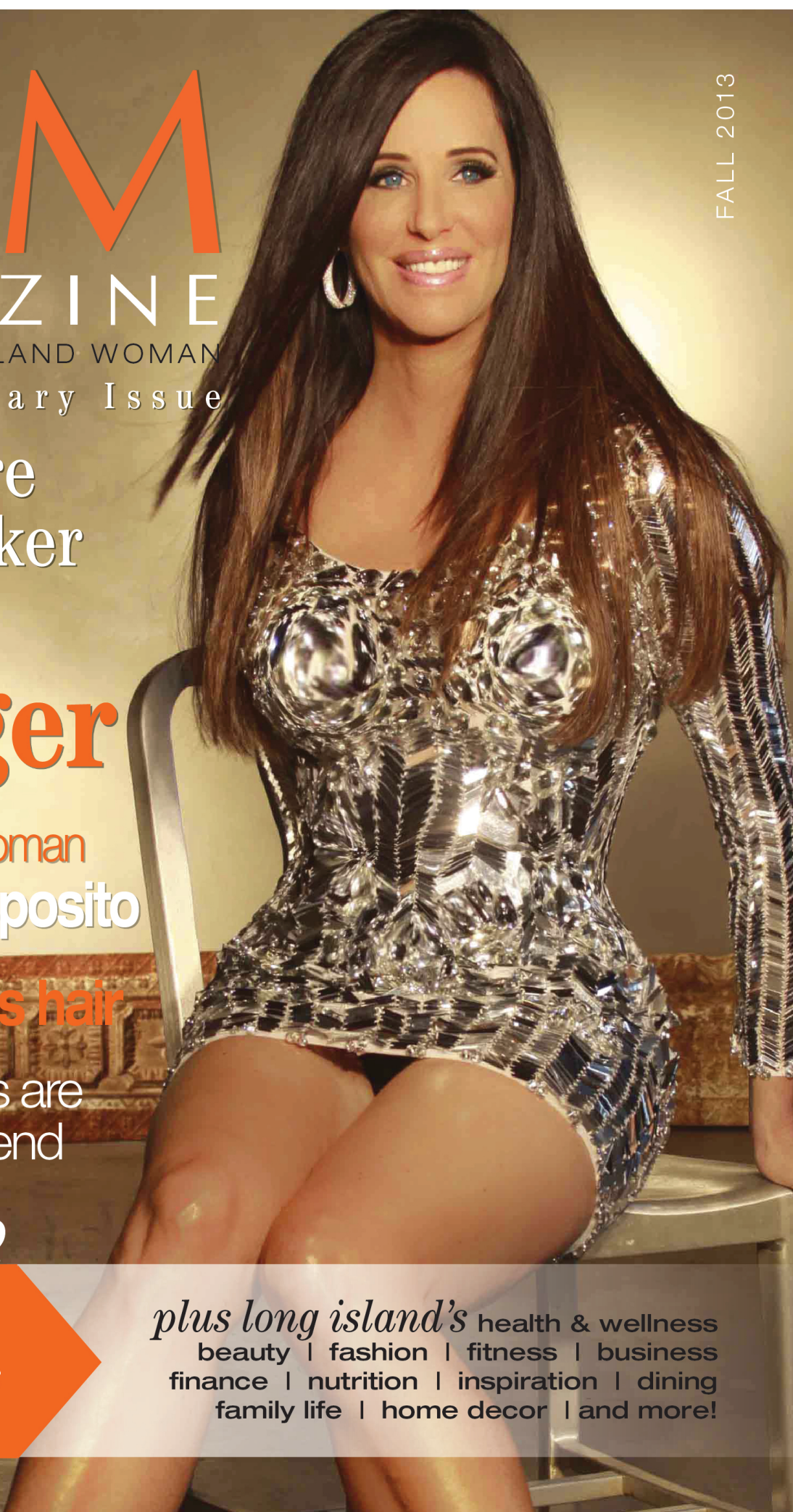
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millionaire matchmaker patti STANGER

Interview and article by Rosemarie Kluepfel

Patti Stanger is the founder and CEO of Millionaire's Club International Inc., a professional matchmaking service for millionaires. However, Patti is best known as the star and television producer of her own Bravo TV show, *Millionaire Matchmaker*. *"People think that the show's mixer is my business but actually it only makes up 10% of the company."* *"I also do business consulting everyday. I do branding for clients, matchmaking, mixers, and weddings."* *"Most people do it privately, one at a time"*, Patti explained. Behind the scene is where the true work of matchmaking is done.

Patti grew up in the affluent town of Short Hills New Jersey, a popular commuter town of NYC but her childhood was far from picture perfect. *"I was adopted, my mother was married three times, my father was an alcoholic and they made money and lost money so, keeping up with the Jones, and life in Short Hills was not easy,"* Patti stated.

Patti was introduced to the idea of match making at a young age, as both her grandmother and mother were matchmakers. *"My grandmother fixed up my mother for her first and second marriage, and from there it parlayed into doing it for free for the rabbi and then the whole neighborhood."* explained Patti. It has her own struggle with abandonment issues because she had been adopted that led Patti to search for her own perfect love. She felt she was never good enough. *"The key to the kingdom of matchmaking was this whole world where I wanted to understand how men ticked. I wanted to understand why they pick who they pick."* *"It fell into my lap when I ended up becoming the director of marketing at Great Expectations, an international match making company."* Patti left Great Expectations when the management refused to take the business on line after her warnings of the growing trend.

After several years in Florida, some personal and business setbacks, led her to seek a change. Patti, who holds a degree in theatre from the University of Miami, had wanted to become a film writer so



she settled in California. It was there that she became reacquainted with some in the matchmaking industry. Patti felt most of the matchmakers did not truly care about their clients and instead were only interested in the money. She knew if “one client got married, he would tell his friends and that’s the best advertising”. What started as a part time business grew as one satisfied client led to referrals and the business expanded.

“Everyone told me I would fail in my first year of business.” “Even my parents were shocked. My mother knew I could be a matchmaker but to go to the millionaire market was no easy feat.” “I was determined not to have to chase the average guy for payments”, Patti said. “I did the research where the millionaires were and worked to make it my signature brand.” However, Patti was careful and saved 6 months of salary before she quit her day job. “I had no cushion. If I was going to make it I had to make it on my own.” She resisted opening up an office in Beverly Hills and instead “met clients out in public otherwise I took a staff member or a friend for protection”. “I never took a loan and instead reinvested money back into the business, taking ads out from the profits”.

Patti explained to be a true matchmaker you need to care about the results. *“You have to be part therapist, part friend, part sister, part mother, part Madame because you have to listen to their sex life too”. “Your matchmaker should be involved in your process.”* Patti believes the traditional roles and expectations are still important, and while the old standard has changed and *“women more and more are the bread winners, they still seek to marry up monetarily and men feel emasculated if the woman is more successful.”* Patti also warned, *“There are a lot of people who are miserable with money. If you are a happy person you will get a happy person but most people mess up the match because they are unhappy by nature.”*

Although criticized for her honest and tough love approach, it has been highly effective for Patti. She stated, *“You are always going to be seen as a bitch if you are a smart and strong woman.” “Barbara Streisand, Oprah Winfrey, Martha Stewart, are all known as tough”. “These women have built empires. If a man did it, they wouldn’t think twice.” “Listen to your gut and don’t pay attention to the naysayers.” “Listen to constructive criticism... don’t be abrasive, and*

practice your pitch and how you deliver it.” Follow your intuition and do what you think is right.

Patti explains that confidence is the attribute that gives a woman the wow factor both personally or professionally when she enters a room. *“I know who I am and you can’t take that away from me.” They deserve that job, that guy, but most women don’t know that about themselves.” “I’m worth more whether it’s a guy, a job...”*

Patti had an idea for a television show that was 13 years in the making. *“Valentine’s Day comes every year and no one is doing Love”. “I had to sell my idea over and over until finally all the pieces came together with Bravo.”* Bravo saw a sizzle reel in which Patti was interviewed as a millionaire who ran a successful career working out of her kitchen. From there, her idea was developed into the Millionaire Matchmaker, now in its 7th season.

“Reality shows are here to stay and cranking the airways, yet they are not recognized enough by the Emmys. The world has changed, we want to see people overcome adversity. Anyone can be famous overnight. Everyone is special in his own way and has a story to tell”.

