

# DIVA

DECEMBER 2010  
L.E 10

EXCLUSIVE  
INTERVIEW  
WITH  
**GOSSIP GIRL**  
KELLY RUTHERFORD

**BEAUTY KIT**  
LOOK FABULOUS  
ON THE 31ST AND  
THE MORNING AFTER!

**PARTY  
LOOKS**  
pages and pages  
of glamorous  
fashion

**2011**

WHY YOU WILL KEEP  
YOUR RESOLUTIONS  
THIS TIME

**HAIFA  
WAHBY**  
ON BAGS, DIET  
AND LOVE

**GUILT FREE**  
**HOLIDAY SEASON**  
EASY WAYS TO KEEP  
YOUR WEIGHT UNDER  
CONTROL



DIVAFeature



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# GET

THE GOSSIP  
ON GOSSIP GIRL  
STAR  
KELLY RUTHERFORD

By Mona El Yafi



It's easy to see why we're all obsessed with following the lives of Hollywood stars: we just can't get away from them! Try standing in line at the checkout counter without being sucked into the latest Hollywood scandal on the magazine covers. Truth be told it's a he said, she said world because we all collectively, almost instinctually, gravitate towards one basic human need: DRAMA! TV is undeniably one of the most successful and popular types of drama you can get. Let's face it; If you've got jaw dropping plot twists, cliffhanger finales and that one character we all love to hate, chances are you've got yourself a hit series. And no doubt about it, one actress who's had a well deserved taste of the success of the Hollywood hit show is Kelly Rutherford.

From the West Coast's internationally famed Melrose Place to the trendy Upper East Side of Manhattan, Kelly sure seems to have a knack for finding drama. But not just any kind of drama; the kind that makes for highly addictive, prime time television viewing, and gives us our much needed weekly dose of guilty pleasure. Who can forget Megan Lewis, the sexy, blonde, ex-call girl with a heart of gold, on a personal quest to redeem her disreputable past and build a better future as Michael Mancini's wife, in the long-running and hugely popular Melrose Place? The show not only became a TV sensation but has as well left its mark as the ultimate 90s pop cultural phenomenon, impacting, not to mention defining, an entire generation.

Post Melrose Place, Kelly stayed busy with roles on The District, Homefront, Brisco County Jr. and Jerry Bruckheimer's E-Ring opposite Dennis Hopper and Benjamin Pratt. Moving easily between television and feature films, she also snatched a series of roles in major motion pictures such as Scream 3, Swimming Upstream and I Love Trouble with Julia Roberts and Nick Nolte. Yet it was another TV drama that would not only put Kelly back on the tube but catapult the fabulous forty-something actress back to fame and back onto Hollywood's A-list.

Stepping into the New Yorker shoes of Lily Van Der Woodsen on The CW Network's hottest TV show, Gossip Girl, Rutherford has done it again, proving she still has what it takes to capture the heart of a whole generation of drama addicts. Created by Josh Schwartz, the mastermind behind The OC, and his business partner Stephanie Savage, Gossip Girl (based on the best-selling young adult books penned by Cecily von Ziegesar) is now entering its fourth season. Featuring a cast of fresh-faced young Hollywood actors including Blake Lively, Penn Badgley, Leighton Meester, Chace Crawford, Ed Westwick and Kristen Bell (as the voice of the gossip girl narrator), the one-hour drama series - filmed in New York City - revolves around the lives and personal dramas of privileged Upper East Side private schoolers. While the show has raised some eyebrows among critics for its forthright depictions of teenage sex and drug use, it has, nevertheless, consistently remained a sure-fire television success.

As for Kelly Rutherford, she is riding high as primetime's sexiest Birkin clutching matriarch. C'mon... don't tell me you Gossip Girl friends haven't noticed Lily's oh so trendy-chic sidekick!

While the multiple divorcee has had her share of scripted drama, off the screen, Rutherford - with the exception of her obvious fashion flare - is nothing like her television character. The bi-coastal mother of two - three year old son Hermes and one and a half year old daughter Helena - is as down to earth as can be; literally. A true green queen, Rutherford is an environmentalist at heart and is more frequently to be found at the recycling bin than out shopping!

Diva Magazine caught up with the Gossip Girl actress to discuss motherhood, Hollywood, the Big Apple and her plans for the New Year. So let the gossip begin!

#### **What attracted you to the role of Lily?**

I had originally read for the show The OC and then I got another job. Later, having met the writers on that occasion, they asked me to come in to read for Gossip Girl. I went in with my son who at the time was only 2-3 months old. After I read on camera for the role of Lily, they asked if I wanted to do it and I said yes. I had to figure out the logistics because it meant moving from Los Angeles to New York, but it was such a wonderful script that I couldn't turn it down.

#### **Gossip Girl is entering Season 4, why do you think the show has such a huge international appeal and popularity?**

I think first of all New York is a very international city. I also think the show has a certain sophistication and is very contemporary. At the end of the day, it's also about family and I think most people can relate to that. The show deals with so many topics that speak to young viewers, from going to school, to friendship and love, etc. But it also shows that adults too are still trying to figure it out - there are no perfect families!

#### **The show is based on the bestselling young adult books by Cecily Von Ziegesar - did you read the books and if so how different is the script from the original story line?**

I read the first book. One of the differences is that in the book, the



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parents weren't quite as involved as in the show, so it's nice that they created these wonderful characters for us. Also they made it a little more contemporary.

**Do you think the relationship between Lily and Serena is a typical mother/daughter relationship?**

Well the funny thing is that Blake – my daughter on the show- and I are the exact same age difference that my mother and I are and it is a lot like our relationship when I was growing up. So yes there is a certain amount of cross over. The thing I love about my character is that she is not afraid to say “I’m Sorry” – she’s very human and doesn’t paint a perfect picture of motherhood. It also shows how obviously our parents are still figuring out how to make relationships work, whether they’re in a marriage, in a relationship or divorced. We all make mistakes and I think for the younger generation to see that is wonderful.

**You’ve had regular roles on two major hit shows – Melrose Place and Gossip Girl – what’s the secret to your success?**

I don’t know [laugh]. I think it’s just about appreciating it and just enjoying the moment. I’m very grateful – I love being in New York City, I love working with all the people on the show and I love playing Lily; I think she is very contemporary and quite a groundbreaking role model for mothers in that she is sophisticated and fashion forward and yet also possesses something very classic and old school at the same time.

**But that’s very close to who you are in real life, isn’t it? You also seem to exude class, sophistication and style.**

Well you obviously don’t see me taking my kids to school! But thank you. I must present well!

**So what is it about fashion that appeals to you?**

It’s how we express ourselves. Whether you like clothes or you don’t, whether you’re into fashion or not, you are still expressing who you are when you dress. It’s the first thing people see and to me it’s always been fun. I would look at the pages of the magazines and it was a way of creating the life I wanted – that’s why I became an actress. I was always making a collage of how I wanted my life to be or what was possible.

**How did you get the acting bug?**

I moved around a lot growing up and I think that forced me to play different roles. You get to realize that all we do all day is sort of role playing – I mean one minute we’re a mom, the next minute we go to the office and we have to play that role, etc... It’s basically changing hats! It’s all the same person but we’re capable of expressing different sides of our personalities. Acting is the same; you take on certain attributes of other people. It’s about understanding who these characters are and where they’re coming from. And I love to people watch! My mother growing up used to tell me to stop staring!

**So how different are you from Megan and Lily?**

I think I’m very different from Megan. I don’t even feel like I ever got a hold on that character. She was very fun to play but that was all. Now with Lily on the other hand, there’s an amazing connection. But don’t get me wrong, I loved being on Melrose Place, it couldn’t have been a better experience on all levels. It was actually very similar to Gossip Girl in the closeness of the cast and the whole vibe of it which was very much like a family, and very

supportive - in the same way that Gossip Girl is.

**Melrose Place became a cultural TV phenomenon; do you think Gossip Girl is doing the same for this new generation?**

**What differences do you see between the two shows?**

I think Gossip Girl is this generation’s version of Melrose Place, except that it is set on the Upper East Side and is a little more cultural. I think both shows were mixing different forms of art, like fashion and pop culture. It really was about presenting all that into a sort of package along with our modern dilemmas and issues. It basically shows what today is like. I think a lot of shows did that, like Sex and the City which showed what women talk about when they come together. I think really great shows somehow lift the veil on things that are not being talked about. It’s sort of a look into something that we all understand but haven’t quite put our fingers on – and these writers are able to articulate that for us.

**What do you love the best about Gossip Girl?**

I love that it’s a great place to go to work! It’s just a wonderful group of creative people and it’s a lot of fun. They all really inspire me. I love who I work with along with all the other obvious things: great clothes, a great script, and it’s also a great time in my life to be in New York as a working mother.

**Talking about New York, was it hard for you to adjust to the city life coming from Los Angeles?**

No, I’ve lived in New York on and off my whole life so it wasn’t a huge adjustment. And now it really feels like home to us. And city life is great for kids because they get exposed to more cultures. There are such a mix of different people in New York.

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**Talking about fashion, in recent years there's been a trend among celebrities to endorse the green movement – what motivated you to go green?**

I think that anybody today who's not somewhat concerned about our environment should be! I'm just somebody who's interested in making the world a better place. Obviously, I want my kids to have the best quality of life possible and part of that is doing my part for the environment whether I am a celebrity or not. Of course by being a celebrity I can raise some awareness so I just try to do my best.

**So what simple steps can people take to protect the environment and be more environmentally friendly?**

I think there are several things you can do. For instance use a water filter, avoid toxic products and eliminate things that are causing cancer. We're moving at such a pace that we tend to waste a lot because we overproduce. Most of it has to do with trying to avoid waste and recycling. We're not treating the world in a natural way anymore, so a lot of it has to do with getting back to nature. It's really more about a mind-set than thinking "Oh god! What am I going to do to save the environment today!" - that seems like a lot of work and too much pressure.

**How do you balance motherhood and Hollywood?**

Well, how do we balance anything in life? I think it has a lot to do with knowing how to prioritize. And I do my best to come from a loving place and keep myself balanced so that whatever I do and wherever I am, I am present in that moment.

**In Egypt the divorce rate is skyrocketing, what advice can you give to women on how to handle being a single working mother?**

Again it's about prioritizing. Being a mother comes first and the actress part of me is second. Right now for me my kids are what's important. Because my kids are so little, it's crucial that I am there for them. They're going to reach an age when they're going to be out with their friends and mommy is not going to be number 1 like I am right now. Of course, I also love my work because that's my creative outlet. Whatever it is, we all need a creative outlet to express ourselves. Women do so much and take on so many responsibilities, it is important to be able to stop and take time for yourself.

**Speaking about Egypt, have you ever been there or to any part of the Middle East?**

No I haven't, unfortunately, but I have a good friend of mine who is Egyptian so I'd love to go and take the kids there. I think it's just beautiful and has so much history and culture. We're a very young country, which is sort of why we're kind of running around like kids; but when you go to Europe or the Middle East and you see all the history you slow down. You take time to look at and appreciate what's around you – the art, the cultural heritage, the architecture, etc. Everything moves so fast here in the US, it's nice to change pace.

**What's the best piece of gossip you've ever heard?**

Oh gosh, I can't even think of anything right now. I don't know because I don't really listen to it so much.

**Do you think our society is addicted to gossip?**

Yes definitely! But I think it's a medium to feel better about ourselves. I think it's a form of therapy because if you can laugh at someone's woes it makes us feel better about ourselves.

**The Holiday Season is approaching, where will you be spending Christmas and New Year's Eve?**

I don't know yet! I'll probably be on the East coast but nothing is confirmed yet. Mommy has to figure that out!

**What's on your bucket list for 2011?**

I'd like to learn French. I'm fluent in French 101 but I'd like to be totally fluent. Also I'd love to write more – I think there's a book there. Overall, I'd like to be more focused on the solutions rather than the problems in life – and you know what, kids are such great teachers! I learn so much from them all the time about living in the moment. And obviously, to keep learning as a mom and hopefully being better at it all the time!

**We should have conducted the interview in French so you could have practiced!**

Yeah, it would have been about a five-minute interview [laugh] After "Bonjour" I would have been in trouble! But maybe next time?

**Yes, definitely next time!** In the meantime on behalf of Diva Magazine and its readers I would like to say: Merci beaucoup Kelly!

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