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Gossip Girl's **Kelly Rutherford**

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Talk of the Town

Kelly Rutherford, the matriarch of the hit show *Gossip Girl*, is a Manhattan mom with serious style.

BY BILL KEITH PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEPHAN WÜRTH

Silk dress, **Bottega Veneta** (\$1,850). *Americana Manhasset, 2060 Northern Blvd.; bottegaveneta.com*. Belt, **Bally** (\$525). *628 Madison Ave., NYC; bally.com*. Trinity de Cartier bracelet, **Cartier** (\$4,875). *Americana Manhasset, 2060 Northern Blvd.; cartier.com*. Gold earrings, stylist's own



“IT’S FUNNY—I guess The Beach Boys made California seem so beautiful and glamorous, and maybe it was. But you go to the Hamptons now and it’s *wonderful*,” says Newport Beach native Kelly Rutherford, unapologetically. Now filming her fourth season of *Gossip Girl* in Manhattan, she has officially put her Los Angeles house on the market and is hoping to spend much of her downtime on the East End.

She’s hardly a recent transplant. Though she spent three notable years in Los Angeles starring in the ’90s hit *Melrose Place*, as she explains it, much of her childhood was bicoastal, in a life not far removed from a *Gossip Girl* storyline. “My mom was a model for Bill Blass, so we were always between New York and California,” says Rutherford. “Then I studied acting in New York and was back in LA for work, but I kept being drawn back to New York, which I love.”

Did bouncing between coasts with a model mother give her some quality source material for embodying her role as Lily Bass, the most sought-after socialite on the Upper East Side? “Oh, definitely. I draw on my mother and her friends a lot for this role,” Rutherford, 41, laughs. “After certain episodes air, my mom will say, ‘That part wasn’t me, was it?’ And after any of the bitchy scenes, she’ll say, ‘I never acted like that.’ Blake [Lively, her on-screen daughter] and I are the exact age difference that my mother and I are, so I understand my mother a lot better these days.”

On a show where the median age hovers somewhere around 21, one might think Rutherford would feel protective of the show’s young stars, who could single-handedly keep *Us Weekly*, *Gawker* and *Perez Hilton* in business. But she brushes that notion aside to give them credit. “Yes, they’re adorable and I love them all. When I’m getting my makeup done and listening to them, I smile thinking, Wow, these young adults—grown-ups, practically—are just so smart, have great senses of humor and all these other talents they’re pursuing. Do I worry about them? No. I think they can all take care of themselves,” she says.

And anyway, Rutherford doesn’t have time to worry about her on-screen charges—she has two children waiting for her at home on the Upper East Side: son Hermès, three, and one-year-old Helena, who are clearly her focus.

“My job isn’t work. When you have two kids at home, being around all these adults and playing dress-up with somebody doing my makeup a few days a week, you’re like, ‘This is great!’” she says. “I really focused on my career when I was younger so that I would be in the place where I am now, not worried that I’m not going to Europe every five minutes. This summer Blake and Leighton [Meester] were filming in Europe,

Telly sweater, **By Malene Birger** (\$235). *25 Park, 2415 Main St., Bridgehampton; 25park.com.*

Earrings with white topaz in rose gold, **Pomellato** (\$4,020). *London Jewelers, 47 Main St., Southampton; londonjewelers.com.*

Sutra bracelet, **Diane von Furstenberg by H.Stern** (\$15,200). *London Jewelers,*

SEE ABOVE. Ring, **Casato** (\$1,930). *Rose Jewelers, 57 Main St., Southampton; rosejewelers.net*

and I thought, If there’s one time I’ve ever been happy about not going to Paris, it’s now.”

Though she says she never imagined herself raising kids in Manhattan, Rutherford sees life as a mother in the Big Apple as a blessing with a wealth of conveniences and opportunities: She often shuttles her kids among art classes at East Side museums, play dates in the West Side’s Hippo Playground and Super Soccer Stars, often grabbing meals at *Le Pain Quotidien* while on-the-go. “The day-old organic bread is perfect for Helena’s teething, and Hermès can get his organic Nutella,” she says, which doesn’t sound entirely unlike Lily Bass. “We love to go to *Via Quadronno* and *Serafina*, too.”

Though clearly recognizable, in person Rutherford also looks nearly a decade younger than her onscreen persona, opting for a more casual—though no less fashionable—mien. (Today at The Surrey’s Bar Pleiades, she wears no trace of makeup, a white sundress and a floppy straw hat.) “There is some cross-over in our wardrobes, but I would say I’m sort of *J.Crew-meets-Hermès*. My accessories are really nice and my day-to-day clothes are pretty casual. I have to be able to throw everything in the wash,” she notes.

And yes, her son’s name isn’t so much a nod to the Greek messenger of the gods as it is a testament to her love for the French luxury-goods house she favors. “I was just in there the other day and thought, I have to keep reminding myself that I should really only shop here,” she says. “I shouldn’t spend money anywhere else.”

Now we’re back to sounding a little more like the mother Bass, which perhaps explains how she landed the role so easily. “My son was about six months old and I didn’t have a babysitter, so I called my friend Francine and I said, ‘Can you please just drive me over there?’ They just want me to read on film and then I can run out,” she explains. “And that’s basically what I did. I ran in, read off the page into a camera and left.”

Though she’s been spared most of the TMZ-style stalking her costars have been subjected to, she hasn’t been entirely immune. In December, while four months pregnant, she filed for divorce from the father of both her children, someone she breezily mentions when I inquire about a person who has been falsely tweeting under her name. “It’s probably my ex-husband,” she says, and then jokes, “I haven’t caught up with my character yet; she’s five in a row now. I’m still good, thank you.” **H**

KELLY'S
HAMPTONS
FAVORITES

MIRKO'S RESTAURANT

THE GOLDEN PEAR

THE MONOGRAM SHOP

MAISON 24

THE MILL HOUSE INN

SUPER SATURDAY



Styling by Amanda Weiner
Hair by Amoy Pitters of Amoy Couture Hair
Makeup by Daniela Shappee
Photographed on location at The Panoramic View Resort and Residences. *272 Old Montauk Hwy., Montauk, 668-3000; distinctiveventures.com/panoramic-view*

Embroidered dress, **Oscar de la Renta** (\$3,450). *Americana Manhasset, 2060 Northern Blvd.; oscardearenta.com.*
Hoop earrings, **Ippolita** (\$1,175). *London Jewelers, 2 Main St., East Hampton; ippolita.com*