a little Glamour

Every woman needs it

by Claudia Gryvatz Copquin

Black & White photography by Roger James

PALE-FACED, RED-EYED, frizzy-haired, I'm zooming westward on the Long Island Expressway in my Mom-Mobile (is there any vehicle that screams "mother louder than a minivan?), en dubious route to an ab-fab, totally glam makeover session. There I will be "cosmeticized" to the max and then photographed in glorious black and white. But this is no ordinary fast-flash, shopping-mall-franchise experience. This session lasts three hours and costs $500, a mere pittance for the million-dollar results: a glamour-gal headshot, à la Greta Garbo, Lana Turner and Rita Hayworth.

I can't even recall the last time I looked glamorous. Well, there was the late Irving Lazar's (only outsiders called him "Swifty," you know) post-Oscar bash a few years ago. There I was,

Writer Claudia Gryvatz Copquin goes from Mom (left) to movie star look-alike through the skill and talent of make-up artist Jo-Ann Lynn and photographer Roger James.

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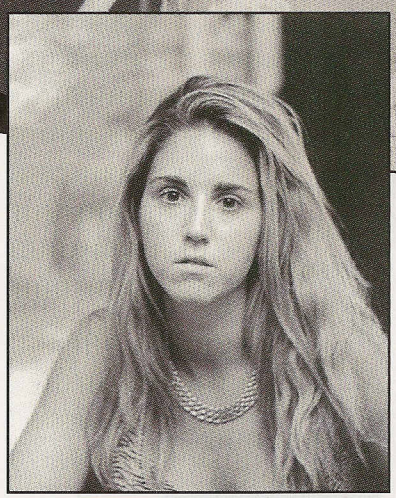
practically stitched into a fabulous Christian Lacroix silver-and-gold floor-length gown, lobes encased in five-carat studs from Van Cleef and Arpel. I was just about to pop a delicate artichoke heart smothered in goat cheese and caviar into my mouth, when suddenly Liz (Taylor) grabs my elbow.

"Darling, Sean (Connery, who else?) has been asking for you," she cooed, adding, "Can you make me a bologna sandwich?"

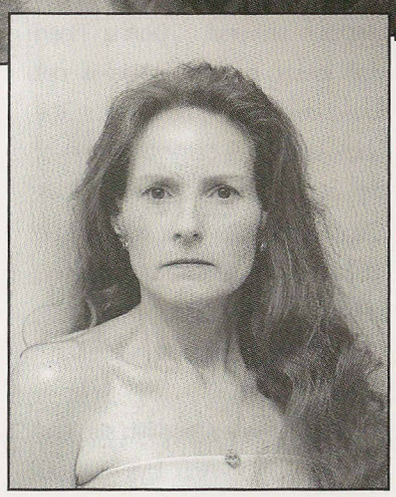
"Excuse me?" I respond.

"Can you make me a bologna sandwich? Do we have any Ring Dings?" I turn to Liz, who had clearly chugged one too many, only to confront my



eight-year-old twin daughters. Rubbing my eyes, I check the clock. "It's six-thirty in the morning. Go back to sleep!" I retreat to the Oscar festivities and Liz, realizing as I do so that it's not actually me in the Lacroix number but Sharon (Stone). In fact, this isn't even my dream, but my friend Shelly's. No matter, time to make the bologna sandwiches.

Who needs glamour in a world comprised of Pop Tarts and Ding Dongs, I sniff petulantly. That is, until I hear about Jo-Ann Lynn of Huntington (385-1019), makeup *artiste extraordinaire,* and Roger James, a California-based photographer who specializes,



Our photo album of incredible makeovers includes (from left to right): Andrea Correale of Glen Cove, Michelle Lerner of East Hampton, Linda Kops of Northport, and Colleen MacAvoy of Brentwood.

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with a flair, in authentically stunning period portraiture. So, it is no coincidence that after I am done pleading to participate, the opportunity for a makeover suddenly presents itself to me.

But getting made-up to look like Joan Crawford is not my intent, although Roger James is in awe of Crawford's classic, ultra-glamorous images, naming Marlene Dietrich and Gloria Swanson as other favorites. "I love Donna Reed. She was incredibly beautiful," I volunteer, trying to get into a retro frame of mind. Silence from Jo-Ann and Roger. Clearly, I am mis-informed on who's who in the glamour universe. Donna Reed was lovely, but her name is not top-of-mind when considering the black-and-white camera masters of the past such as George Hurrell, Clarence Sinclair Bull and Laszlo Willinger, who created Hollywood stills for the likes of Myrna Loy, Norma Shearer and Hedy Lamarr.

So I make like a silent film star and clam up as Jo-Ann lays out her tools with a surgeon's precision, lining up a seemingly endless array of cosmetic brushes, lipstick shades, lip-liners, jars and bottles of foundation, eye-shadows, eye liners – all awaiting her expert selection and meticulous application.

"Can you give me Bette Davis eyes?" I beseech, only half-jokingly.

Photograph by Mary Stipe

Lights! Camera! Make-Up! Jo-Ann Lynn creates a dramatic new look for our writer, then Roger James takes over, composing the glamorous image he will record on film.

"Do you tweeze your eyebrows?" Jo-Ann gently asks, working on my brows.

"Um, not really. Do you think I should?" I respond, as she plucks enough disheveled microhairs to create a Groucho mustache or three.

"Do you use base at all?" Jo-Ann asks softly, not yet aware she is dealing with one of the cosmetically-challenged.

"Uh, well, no actually," I respond shamefully.

"What do you use to wash your face?" asks Jo-Ann with the best of intentions, as she applies a heavy foundation mask on my sun-spotted complexion.

"Hey, look, not a cloud in the sky," I say, stalling, then rapidly murmur lamely, "Soap."

"Have you ever used hot curlers on your hair?" she inquires delicately, as she rolls strands of frizz.

It is then that I feel compelled to confess to Jo-Ann all of my beauty secrets. "I lather, rinse and repeat."

At last, Jo-Ann's masterpiece – my face – is complete. "When I first saw you, I immediately thought of Audrey Hepburn," she says, inspecting her creation. "You have

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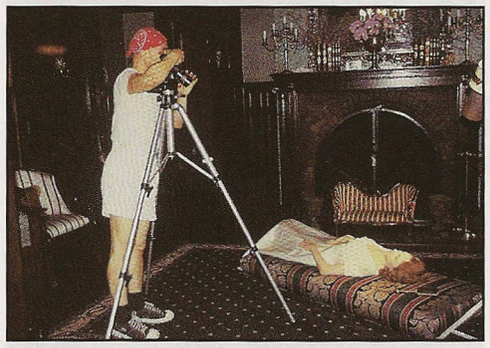
her bone structure . . . some of her facial features." Audrey? My idol?

Ecstatic, I look in the mirror, but find not a trace of the doe-eye aristocratic beauty. Instead, I see a creature who resembles me, but not in any way I can recognize. The glamour-puss in the mirror is no Cheever hausfrau, no car-pooling, grocery-hauling, spider-sweeping mamma. As I sprawl over a settee, Ring Dings and sandwiches are a thing of the past, as am I. The new-and-improved me is now a femme fatale, 1940s facsimile of the 1990s version.

At Roger's suggestion, I have donned a white satin gown; my once frizzy tresses now gently flow and caress my exposed shoulders. I am woman. Hear me howl. I am enamored of myself. Surrounded by lavish antiques in this Glen Cove mansion that serves as a temporary studio, soft, soothing music, lights, Roger and Jo-Ann's attentiveness, I am completely seduced.

"Max, I'm ready for my close-up," I intone.

But Max, rather Roger, the intrepid photographer, isn't ready. There is a hair out of place. Literally, one fine hair, sticking up on my forehead. Roger and Jo-Ann, both profoundly and proudly perfectionists at their craft, don't stand for even one strand standing out of place.



Roger James carefully sets up each pose while Jo-Ann Lynn stands ready to powder a shiny nose or tame a stray strand of hair. Perfection!

Into the frame rushes Jo-Ann, armed with a comb and a spray can. Swiftly, she smoothes down the rebel hair.

"OK, now focus here," Roger instructs, in what is the first of five alluring poses. Swept up in the moment, I toss him a "come hither, you fool" look. Click.

Three hours later, having had a gloriously glamorous time, I depart, taking comfort in knowing I can duplicate this goddess guise anytime, if I am so inclined . . . and if Jo-Ann is in town.

"What a dump," I emote in my best Bette voice, making an entrance into my house. "Is that a gun in your pocket, or are you just happy to see me?" I Mae West my husband, who's busy popping his eyeballs back into their sockets at the sight of me. Most eloquently, he articulates a profound, "Ahuggah!" Indeed.

My daughters stare. They circle me. They look me up and down, backwards and forwards. "Mom, is it you?"

"How do I look? What do you think? Say something," I command, striking a pose.

"Can we have a bologna sandwich?"

Claudia Gryvatz Copquin of East Northport is an assistant editor of Distinction *and a freelance writer.*