

## The Vogue Closet

I had a fledgling business on my kitchen table on Bleecker and McDougal and had a few accounts in the village. One day I decided it would be good for business if I got my jewelry into the magazines. My work was new and fresh and you never know! With a flash of courage I looked at the editorial pages to find who was the accessory editor. It was a woman name Madeline Parrish. I called Madeline Parrish, the accessories editor answered herself, " I've seen your jewelry around town and like it allot. Come up to the office with some pieces and we can talk".

We hit it off right away. She was smart beautiful and busty with a 5 inch wide leather belt tall and elegant. I was impressed.

She looked at each piece with care, remarking how no two looked alike. She encouraged me to make earrings too as they needed them for beauty shots. It was a good idea Madeline had. A few years later we were doing a million dollars a year with crystal clusters clip back ears at Nordstrom's alone. I was called in one news story "The Queen of the Crystal Cluster". One time a few years after my line débuted I counted 60 booths at the FAE ( Fashion accessory Expo) that were copying my concept. Some from Korea at slashed price, some young mothers trying to make a living using bits of their own ideas, some downright knock offs. One was a former customer from Cincinnati who pretended to be my friend, who studied my production line , I wondered innocently why she was spending so much time in production in stead of the show room. and she knocked me off, piece by exact piece even selling her line right next to mine at Sax firth Ave at reduced prices.

I was pleased I had such a big impression on my industry and pissed off at the same time. I couldn't foresee the implications to my companies survival. There were die hard accounts like Bloomingdales who never sold a knock off next to mine and I was grateful. But there were plenty who went for the cheaper version.

When I would get a cover credit which was time 5 times in one year I would send Madeleine a gorgeous flower arrangement. We would take each other to lunch at some garmento hot spot. One day I was having a salad and we were chatting along when I felt something funny in my mouth. I took a look at it and in disgust discovered I had been chewing in a used band aid.

Madeline and I were horrified and shocked. She ordered 3 rounds of tequila to kill the bacteria and by the time we left we were both smashed. She was sent home at Vogue by car service and my assistant designer Scot gay as a hoot owl put me in a taxi as I told him we should get married. I was afraid I'd never get to see Madeleine again. But the next time we met she had a special surprise for me. I was at their office for a design meeting and she said have you ever seen the Vogue closet? (Think The Devil Wears Prada. )

We walked down rows of couture fashions so beautiful and original in all my life I had never seen anything like it. Embroideries and jewels colors that could make you dizzy. " And now she said the best of all our Wendy Gell Closet!!!"

She opened the double doors wide with reverence like she was opening the doors of the Torah .and inside were shelves and shelves of trays of my most awesome creations. I guess one of my secrets of success at Vogue was I never demanded anything back until the season was over. I'd get a project like the "New Flatness", or "Carmen Miranda" or anything they had in mind.

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I'd stay up all night and inspired as could be make wristy after wristy or necklaces ,earrings , military metals for an Oscar de la Renta dress. The next Day Lynn McCarty and Scot Smith my assistant designers would finish them and they get messenger over to the Conde Nast building. I'd let them keep them as long as the wanted .So an editor with a story would go to the Wendy Closet and pick out what ever jewelry enhanced the shoot. I had no strategy it just worked out like that. I'd get page after page after page, of credits especially from the European magazines who liked to do things in series even with naked models Every month was like Christmas and the best one where you 'd get a Beauty shot, usually just a head shot and jewelry, the Best!

My favorite was Isabella Rossellini wearing two wristies on one wrist with her hair in a top knot. The first time I saw that it was a life changing experience.



After my success with American Vogue the international press invited me into their pages.



My dog Zircon and I in Paris Vogue.

I had a big fan of Liz in publicity at Warner Brothers. She was Madonna's best friend and confidant.

She collected hearts and when ever I'd go to her office I would hide some heart stones to surprise her.

We got cool photo credits with Madonna.

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More to come.