

SMALL screen SIREN


MEGAN GALE
CHANNELS ONE
OF THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL ACTRESSES
IN FILM HISTORY

PHOTOGRAPHY CARLOTTA MOYE
STYLING NICOLE BONYTHON HINES
WORDS NICHOLAS FONSECA

Dress, \$1290, by Collette
Dinnigan. Earrings,
\$2950, by Jan Logan. Cuff,
\$85,700, by Bulgari.




Dress, \$790, by
Collette Dinnigan.
Earrings, \$40,800,
by Bulgari.



Top, \$399, and Pants, \$399,
both by Lisa Ho. Necklace,
\$14,300, and Bracelet,
\$16,300, both by Bulgari.

FRAGRANCE NOTE Dahlia Noir
EDP, \$68 (50ml), by Givenchy



Dress, \$790, by Camilla and
Marc. Shoes, \$750 by Dolce
& Gabbana at David Jones.

Earrings, \$65, by Peter Lang.

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0999



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FEATHERS"

Dress, \$199, by Lisa Ho.
Shoes, \$169.95, by Tory
Burch. Necklace, \$53, by
Aston Martin at Lisa Ho.

Dress, \$199, by Sofia Zampatti.
Earrings, Y&A by Bulgari.

Hair by Lauren Company 1
using Redken.
Makeup by Jody Olivieri/
using M.A.C.
Manicure by Ziv Waks/OMG.

See page 126 for stockist details.

The comparisons were inevitable, the small talk unavoidable. As she perched atop a bed in a Sydney mansion, Megan Gale crossed her legs, crossed her shoulders and pouted as if her life depended on it. And more than a few onlookers evoked Elizabeth Taylor's name. The last of Hollywood's living golden-age goddesses may have passed away, but her legacy seemed to live on in the room. No surprise, really: the inspiration for the shoot was Taylor's portrayal of the vampyris Maggie in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. The resemblance was, to say the least, a tad spooky.

Gale made it work. She's a pro, after all: about 20 years as a model, loads of TV appearances, *la dolce vita* in Italy, and a new stint as designer of her own swimwear line are the proof. She may not boast the stratospheric star wattage of someone like Taylor (who could, really?), but she can certainly relate to the public scrutiny of her private life. Gale's said she's sick of it, that she'd love to take a year off and recharge. But won't her new role as host, judge and producer of the *Fox* reality show *Project Runway Australia* negate all that? Won't the press keep hounding her?

"They have already — haven't you noticed?" she laughs. "You just have to roll with the punches. The press, especially recently, has really blurred the line — kind of rubbed it out — for people who do what I do. I have journalists who don't even know me asking me questions that my mum wouldn't ask me, I'm sure people feel I'm difficult, but my job is so public that I've got to keep something for myself. There's not a lot I can do except try to protect those things as much as possible."

Gale says she has no interest in trying to emulate previous *Runway* host Kristy Hume, that "it's going to be vastly different because I'm completely different to Kristy. It was important to find a balance between connecting with the contestants and appealing to the audience. I had to be able to be firm without *perhaps ruffling the feathers* of viewers." And as a budding designer herself, she relishes the chance to give an up-and-coming Australian designer a shot at international exposure. "We are so far away from the rest of the world and our cycle of fashion is always a season behind, but in terms of quality, we hold our own," she says. "The beauty of Australian designers is that... everyone sits alongside each other and compares, but they're all so different. I can spot a Lisa Ho dress just by looking at it. Same with a Collette Dinnigan, an Alex Perry, a Willow... I can see it in the cuts, the fabrics, the trims and the details. It's really definable and that's what we wanted to see on the show — that you can tell as soon as it comes down the runway where it is."

Gale sounds excited about the job, ready to talk shop and, in the process, remind people that she's more than just a knockout bod and a headline in the making. And besides, it can't be any worse than at least one of the jobs on her CV which... she might still hold? What's this about? "Checkout chick," she says. When Gale was a self-confessed "lady 16-year-old", she worked in a local supermarket. "I applied just casually, after school for a couple of afternoons a week, but the boss would ask me to clean up the staffroom or spills in the aisle, and I probably didn't have the best attitude towards the job. One afternoon, he said to me, 'All right, we'll call you when we need you again.' To this day, I still haven't gotten a phone call, so technically, I'm still employed!" **m**