

The Changing

By Dona Sturmanis



Which cover do you have? Okanagan Life Magazine has depicted the startling and exciting new approach to beauty with two separate covers for Spring 1993.

Yawn.

Such format changes haven't been enough to save many beauty pageants. Miss Teen Canada was axed in 1990. Miss Rossland was cancelled because of lack of contestants. Hamilton's Miss Winterfest was almost chopped because aldermen thought it was outdated and a waste of \$20,000 better spent elsewhere.

Finances were another reason Miss Canada bit the dust, though the owners are rumored to be looking for another buyer. The broadcast tab alone increased from \$60,000 in 1970 to about \$300,000 last year in 1992.

Loyalty and national pride didn't save the pageant either. Nicole Dunsdon attracted major media attention because she is the perfect Miss Canada, but also because she is the last. Try this, however: What Miss Canada was crowned Miss Universe in 1982? Karen Baldwin, but who remembers?

The traditional beauty pageant is just not in step with modern times. "Sponsors have figured out it's just not hip anymore," wrote Liane Faulder, a staff writer for the Edmonton Journal. In fact, another reason for Miss Canada's cancellation was because it was "a little dated."

The New

If beauty to you is a skin-deep issue, or a matter of the empress' new clothes, then it is easy to be a "new beauty." The women's magazines tell you how for 1993:

1. Starve your figure back to the ideal shape of 1970. The robust buxom look is out and the starving waif look is in.
2. Throw out your post-modern corporate look outfits with the short skirts. Wear outfits that are long and gauzy, transparent, or bell-bottomed. Go for the Bonnie-and Clyde 1930s look, the ethnic look, the silent movie star look, the 1970s hippie look.
3. Trade in your neat little shoes for platforms. Ouch – remember them?
4. Get a shag cut or grow your hair to your waist and part in the middle.
5. Pluck your eyebrows into a thin line. Either wear "nude" makeup or dark, heavy Theda Bara/Vampirella makeup.

There, kidding or no? Not. Beauty is many things to many people. It is definitely in the eyes of not just the beholder, but the beauty wanna-be, her women friends, and of course the media. Let's look through the eyes of the beholder for a moment.

On first thought, we often think of the word "beautiful" as applying to a physically attractive woman, usually a young one, and seen through male eyes. When men are asked about what makes a woman beautiful, they will often first refer to her physical features. "I look at her hair and her eyes," says one young real estate agent from Peachland. "She has to be slender and in good shape," says a middle-aged automotive writer visiting Vernon from Vancouver.

Such comments about beauty being strictly physical, however, seems to

Face of Beauty

Negative experiences associated with high-profile beauty pageants haven't helped. In 1984, Vanessa Williams had to resign as Miss America when Penthouse published nude layouts of her taken two years earlier. When Miss Vancouver Chinatown Natalie Loo participated in the 1992 Chinese International Pageant, she reported to the press that contestants were forced to parade in skimpy bathing suits and high heels for judges in chilly weather and that their measurements were broadcast on television and published in newspapers. Gloria Steinem would not approve.

Beauty pageants still thrive in small communities, even if the larger scale events are waning in popularity. Local B.C. newspapers polled their hometown queens a couple of years ago and found out that most contestants don't want them to disappear. These contests provide the girls with training in public speaking and presentation, and sometimes the moral and financial uplift they need to go on to succeed in the bigger world out there.

Their continuing popularity is the case throughout the Okanagan. On March 5, for example, nine teenage girls nervously displayed their songs, monologues, and piano concertos at Summerland's Centre Stage Theatre during that community's Blossom Queen competition. Going since 1945, the event is in no danger of disappearing, judging from the packed auditorium and the effort put into fund raising for the program.

All year these girls receive community sponsored training in public speaking, deportment and self-esteem. They tour B.C., Washington state, and have twice been to Japan representing Summerland.

"These are the girls who sell our community," said mayor Bob Shewfelt at the podium. "I'm too old and ugly for that."

It's hard to imagine a Blossom King, though.



Models Katrina Watterworth and Jayson Taylor change roles for our reversed magazine covers. The new beauty is changing the way society looks at men and women.

Beauty

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personality and intelligence," says the real estate agent. "And what makes a woman beautiful really varies from person to person."

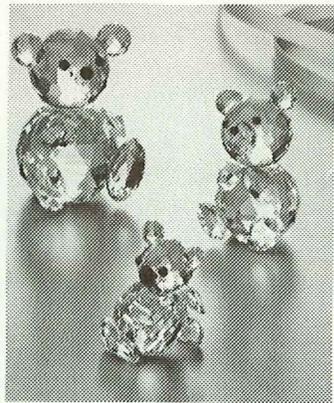
The automotive writer likes intelligence, confidence, and grace in a woman. "A beautiful woman is sure of her own identity without being pushy about it. Contrary to what many women think men don't usually go for dumb blondes. There's nothing more lonely or depressing to me than a woman who can't carry on a conversation. I don't care how pretty she is."

Whoa. Are these New Men saying what New Women want to hear about what's beautiful in 1993? Be assured that these two men are very "male" – the automotive journalist, for instance, bristles at the mere mention

give way quickly to something deeper – from the man, from the horse's mouth, so to speak. "Well, she's got to have

of the word feminism, and rails against women he knows who "cop an attitude just because they're a woman." And yet both will claim they've always considered beauty in a female to be a combination of things – physical beauty, yes, but mixed with strong inner qualities which don't seem to include subservience or silence.

This is what we've come to know as the New Beauty in women. This is how most women today define beauty. "Someone who looks like she is self-contained, has a certain joy and it shows . . . far beyond a gorgeous figure and features. A self-assured woman looks like she is self-contained, has a certain joy and it shows . . . far beyond a gorgeous figure and features. A self-assured woman looks great in clothes," says a middle-aged fashion boutique owner from Kelowna. A thirty-something aesthetician from Penticton calls the New Beauty a mixture of happiness, confidence, fulfilment, and independence, mixed in with physical qualities like naturalness, health, softness



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and simplicity. "A beautiful woman in the '90s is one who's independent and knows who she is. She's fit, alert, and natural," says a Summerland massage therapist in her late 20s.

Here's the paradox. Has what the media portrayed as beauty all along been different from what many men and women have always believed it to be? It cannot be disputed that centrefold magazines, movies, television, and commercial have left their mark – that the desirable woman – the "babe" – has pouty lips, gorgeous hair, and a



Elizabeth (Kangyar) Minns of Oliver with husband George: an 80 year old former newspaper columnist who drives for meals on wheels.

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Barbie's body. And yes, there are men out there who will drop a girlfriend because her breasts aren't big enough. But there are also women who value "hunks" – more beefcake than brains, more hair than heart.

So let's look at the Ultimate Babes portrayed in last year's hit movie Wayne's World. Two young, not-too-bright regular guys host a cable RV show from their basement. They let the audience know, in no uncertain terms, the kinds of women who are to die for. Garth, the bespectacled redhead, thinks Guess Jeans model Claudia Schiffer is "babe-a-licious.." Wayne, his baseball hatted friend, falls for an oriental rock 'n' roll singer. Both women are gorgeous, true, but what's interesting is that Claudia Schiffer in real life is known not to be a dummy. She speaks three languages and sues publications for printing photos of her breasts. In the movie, Wayne's girl-

message is well-received – how can a woman have true outer confidence if her inner confidence is just a ghost?

What's big this year is Clarissa Pinkola Estes's book *Women Who Run with Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wolf Woman Archetype*. Sounds scary, but it really isn't. A psychoanalyst and story teller, Estes is merely telling women that their true selves have been buried by the expectations and denials of a mostly male society. She wants women to connect with their inner identities through the many myths and folk stories they have learned as children.

She compares women to wolves, not just because they've been traditionally regarded as dangerous, devious, and ravenous. A healthy woman, writes Estes, is like a wolf in the sense

that she is "robust, chock-full, strong life force, life-giving, territorially aware, inventive, loyal and roving."

If this is what the New Beauty is all about, the the Okanagan is full of beautiful women. A few examples that come to mind:

- Elizabeth Minns, an 80-year-old lady in Oliver who has remarried fairly recently. A long-time newspaper columnist, she is pretty, slender, and wears bright, fashionable clothes. She drives a meals-on-wheels car and has just self-published a cookbook of Hungarian and Canadian recipes.

- Jennifer Stewart, a Penticton aesthetician in her 30s with a healthy but elegant look. She does nails by day and ranches by night and weekend. Looking at her nails, which she does herself, you'd never know she pounds a lot of fenceposts. She's

also an accomplished artist and collector of southwestern art.

- Inkeri Vaisanan, a Finnish blonde who grew up in the orchards of Summerland. In her 20s, she's a New Beauty with translucent skin and an ethereal Joni Mitchell look. She's also an agricultural economist, world traveller, and partner in an import business.

- Donna Dennison, a Kelowna store manager in her 40s who's famous for her incredible ability to make everyone feel good about themselves. Statuesque, brunette, artistic, she knows everyone in the Okanagan. Everyone knows her.

Here in the Okanagan, we only have to look around us to find women with the New Beauty. There's very little to change: it's always been here. ■

I would like to thank all my clients and friends for the wonderful opportunity of serving their needs for the last 6 1/2 years. It has been a rewarding experience, and the trust and loyalty shown towards me has been truly appreciated. I trust these friends will continue their support of the Merle Norman Studio and our staff.

It is with great pleasure I introduce the competent and



Susanne Woehrle

highly skilled, new owner, Susanne Woehrle recently moved here from Germany where she was the manager of a cosmetics store for 11 years. Susanne was trained as an esthetician in Germany and has always wanted to own a cosmetic studio.

Kelowna has been her second home for the past 7 years spending 3 to 4 months here every year. She would like to invite all Merle Norman clients to come in and make her acquaintance and is looking forward to making many new friends and serving them with her exceptional training and knowledge.

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