

EXTENDED Q-AND-A: LYNNE DIAMANTE OF GAME OF CROWNS

The beauty queen and CEO of OPTX Eyewear in Johnston stars in Bravo’s new reality TV series “Game of Crowns,” which follows the world of women who compete in Mrs. United States competitions.

July 25, 2014 by Jamie Coelho



How did you first get into pageants? It goes back to when I was about five years old. My mom was not a stage mom. She held me off. I kept asking. My mom was like we'll see. She acquiesced, and I won the first one and I loved it. I loved the crown. It was nothing else but winning that crown. So here I am this five-year-old with this little sparkly tiara. Dear Lord that was the end of it as we know it.

And how are you involved in pageants as an adult? I was Miss Rhode Island USA in 1991, and I went to the mother of all pageants, Miss USA in Wichita, Kansas, that year. I was in Mrs. United States as Mrs. Rhode Island in 2010. There was close to a twenty-year break between going to Miss USA and Mrs. United States. One of the best things that happened is I won the Community Service Award there. My husband and I are involved in promoting for St. Jude. For my send-off, my husband threw an amazing black tie party at Cafe Nuovo and we had over 150 guests. We didn't want gifts. We had St. Jude reps come, and all of my guests gave donations. At the end of the night, a Rhode Island businessman matched those donations dollar for dollar. Going to Mrs. United States, they gave an award to the state delegate who did the most community service, and they selected Rhode Island. I would have liked the crown, but that was a huge honor for me.

Did you compete this year? This year, I'm actually Mrs. Massachusetts for the same pageant system for 2014. I have a law license in Massachusetts, so if you hold any professional license, whether it's an accountant, a hair stylist, a lawyer or a doctor, or have professional residency in a state, you can enter in that state.

Do you still practice as a lawyer? I don't. I got out of law school, and passed the bar. It was a very difficult time in my life because my dad passed away a few weeks before my wedding, and a few weeks before my graduation. It was a dream my dad and I shared. He wanted a lawyer in the family. I wanted to do it. I had my first jobs as an attorney, had a great career, loved working in law, but it did not ignite my passion. There was something missing because my goal with going to law school was to be connected in some way to the fashion industry or the entertainment industry. Initially, I thought it might turn out that I would be an entertainment lawyer or a contract lawyer who deals with fashion houses, but it would have necessitated a location change, and this is my home. I wanted to be near my mom, especially with my dad having just passed. My husband was establishing his medical practice here, so our life was here, and I love Rhode Island.

How did you launch OPTX? We were in a hole in the wall when my husband started his medical practice. His patients who needed glasses asked, "Can we get glasses here?," and the answer was, "No we don't do that." It started to become almost inconvenient for them to go somewhere else. They wanted to do one-stop shopping. OPTX, ironically, was born from a need. I call it my Buggy Siegel moment, where he is standing in the middle of the desert, and suddenly he realizes he's going to build Las Vegas. We had our first retail gallery on Atwood Avenue. It was at that point we realized we were going to sink everything we earned and bet the farm and we bought this piece of property to construct OPTX. For some of the higher end stuff, it can take a year to two years for them to okay that it can come to your gallery. They can't just drop Cartier in a place that doesn't look right. We went through credentials processes, and it slowly built. It's stunning to me because we're a Rhode Island company and our proudest achievement is that we're a homegrown company. Now we have Miss USA corporate sponsorship and Miss Universe is the parent company.

How did you get discovered for the Bravo reality TV show “Game of Crowns”? It was the stuff on Youtube, our OPTX channel, that led them to me. In the pageant circuit, I am pretty high profile. I've been involved for a very long time as a judge and corporate sponsor to Miss USA. I guess my name must have come up to the powers that be. I'm the pageant-queen-lawyer who runs a business. There's something funny about that.

What has being involved in pageants done for you? I think it's fun to break stereotypes. One of the nice things about the show is that all of the women are accomplished. I think it has become very easy in society for people to make snap criticism that pageant pursuits might not be the most intellectual thing on earth. The opposite is true. The pageants for unmarried women provide opportunity for them to enter colleges and to pay for college bills. There are so many pageant girls out there that we should have achieved world peace by now. The women who enter pageants are really accomplished and educated women. Olivia Culp, perfect example, couldn't be more proud of her. Everything I needed to know as a CEO I learned in pageants and everything to be a lawyer, too.

Are you still friends with the women on the show? That's a tough question. It's a great cast. Everyone has their unique personalities, and we work well together.

What's the most time-consuming thing you need to do to get ready for these pageants? I am one of those girls – my saying is I am always pageant ready.

What's in your pageant wardrobe? Lots of long sparkly dresses which you'll see a lot of on our show. A plethora of competition swimsuits, all cleverly beaded and crystallized. For the Mrs. competitions, girls like to be a little more modest because you have your in-laws in the audience and kids in the audience.

Actually, that's the most time-consuming aspect. Fitness. When you cross over to your forties, it becomes a commitment. I am a runner. I like to lift weights. One of my best friends is a personal trainer who comes over my house a few times a week. I try to run five times a week.

What's this about butt glue? When you walk in high heels in a swimsuit, your swimsuit starts to ride up, and then you're showing a lot more than you want to show. The butt glue sticks the suit to your butt. I am pretty sure it's waterproof. I have a friend who got stuck to a toilet seat – the poor thing – she had to take it off with alcohol or baby oil. You have to try to get it off before the evening gown competition because then your evening gown will stick to you. It's not pretty. It's Bowler's adhesive used by bowlers, gymnasts and some football players, called It Stays.

Any other pageant secrets? The Cuchini? The Cuchini could be your best friend. It gets rid of the camel toe. I mean really, who want to look at a camel toe? You're up on stage, you're above eye level and the judges are usually down below at the judge's table looking up at you. And those suits are tiny and they're tight, because that's the point. You're supposed to see your body in a swimsuit competition. So with a tiny, tight suit, camel toe is going to happen. In order to prevent that, the cuccini saves you from embarrassment.

Tell us about the blue tips in your hair. I started experimenting with hot pink. I had that for quite some time, and then I started seeing a lot of people do the hot pink, so I ventured over to lavender for fun. That lasted for six months, then I had tie dye, which was a fade. Then I got into turquoise. The turquoise has lasted the longest. I've had it a little over two years. I just changed to blonde. It's a temporary color, so it fades after a few shampoos, and I have to have it reapplied. I do wear it in competitions. I love my blue hair.

And you're obsessed with modifying sports cars? I've collected and modified seven different corvettes. I'll do little things I'm capable of doing that don't require a full garage. On my last corvette, I opened the hood and took out the cold air intake. It's easier than it sounds. I'm a bit of a grease monkey.

Is your daughter Giulia (eleven) into pageants? She loves what she has seen and wants to compete as a teen. She is in fifth grade and currently in competition dance and field hockey. We are quite busy with those two pursuits. She's the priority. My daughter is and always will be. She's a little glamourista, she just launched her own fashion line. She's taking her place in the empire. I am super proud of her.

What's the craziest thing you have witnessed or seen in a pageant? The weirdest thing that happened to me was having a roommate at one of the major pageants who got up way before me in the mornings of competition. She would throw soap all over the bathroom floor so I would slip. I was at a pageant when someone dumped the girl's foundation, and put self tanner in the bottle, so she had all these crazy orange streaks everywhere. I think a lot of girls come up with a plan at the rehearsals, like "Oh, I'm going to take her down." But for the most part, you don't see a lot of nastiness.

Viewers can watch the drama unfold by watching “Game of Crowns” on Bravo Sunday nights at 9 p.m. The show stars several Rhode Island women who are involved in Mrs. competitions, including Diamante; Susanna Paliotta of Johnston, Mrs. Rhode Island 2014 and CEO of Glitzy Girl Industries; and Leha Guilmette of Cranston, Mrs. Rhode Island America and an account manager and recruiter working with several Fortune 500 companies. There are also three women from Connecticut: Lori-Ann Marchese, Mrs. Connecticut 2013 and owner of Body Construct LLC; Vanassa Sebastian of Ledyard, Mrs. Connecticut America 2012 and certified registered nurse anesthetist; and Shelley Carbone of Wethersfield, Mrs. Connecticut America 2010 and Mrs. America 2011. Here's the video promo for the show.

Watch a "Games of Crowns" interview by "The Derek Z Show."



Leave a reply

f t i p You Tube RI