

# SUE ROSSI

## THE ETERNAL MODELLING BEAUTY

Try as we may, we are unable to guess her age... Strong yet flexible, vintage yet cutting edge, Modelle International founder Sue Rossi walks around with an aura of timeless elegant beauty, and has inspired too many aspiring models to mention. Bowed over by our curiosity, we have asked the cat walk queen to give us some juicy details about her life! Read on and learn!

*"Recollections of my early childhood bring to mind feeble attempts to walk tall on my mother's heels adorned with a make shift couture dress.* The spectacle encouraged me to take up sewing earnestly during my primary school days at Immaculate Conception School, Tarxien. These were followed by a term of years at Maria Assumpta, Hamrun where I reached an ordinary level standard of education.

Work opportunity as a part-time sales girl with a textile shop in Valletta was a stepping stone for my long standing career. There, I had the greatest privilege to meet one of the top designers and artists of the time, the young and brilliant Ray Ashley: a true friend who gave a personal touch to my outfits. Through his persistent encouragement I seriously pondered on taking up modelling and eventually signed up with an agency run by Anne Borg. The organiser kept a keen eye on promising students and lent me a hand in several fashion shows of renowned outlets during the eventful eighties. Photo shoots provided another attractive activity that lured me toward the world of entertainment and art.

A scholarship at the prestigious Model Nouveau School, Nottingham paved the way for an exciting international experience. In the United Kingdom, I followed modelling lessons and instructor courses which proved to be quite intense and challenging. I recall being very appreciative of the outcome especially on obtaining successful distinction results for the examinations held there.

On my return to Malta, I witnessed the realisation of another dream by opening my own Modelling agency. After a relatively short time back home, an assignment with an international magazine, PIC (People in Camera) meant more than front page covers and ushered in a hectic period of travelling to exotic venues like Jamaica, and beyond. At that time I also managed without hesitation to coordinate with international photo models on a regular basis.

Meanwhile, the newly founded agency in Malta was prospering and holding courses for a multitude of local students coming from all walks of life. The time was ripe for the fruition of my first competition in the 80's under the title of Miss Maltese Beauty. Such was the success that its popularity kept on growing annually for the past twenty-five years.

Collections for the season made by Ray Ashley were the order of the day during such shows, and attractive clothes with unique designs added enough spice to engulf inspiration and serenity. Apart from the yearly appointment, promotions for various clients as well as provision of hostesses for conferences were in great demand in the business circles. Students were prepared thoroughly for the exercise and the agency became renowned instantly for its wide network of well groomed personalities and excellent provision of services to clients.



Sue, during one of her photo shoots in the late 80's

*My beloved daughter Valentina came to be during my involvement in an international show by the world class Valentino, thus explaining the choice of name given in 1994 to my daughter.* Giving birth, seeing to rehearsals and keeping my fingers crossed for all to go well were I must say the most unforgettable experiences, which made life worth living. Soon after, the agency was awarded the license for Miss World by Miss World Jersey Ltd and was thus in a position to organise the events which fall under the title of Miss Maltese Islands, later referred to as Miss World Malta. Assisting promising contestants for participation in the Miss World event is truly satisfying and requires tough decisions. Retaining high standards is daunting but imperative for the global event.

With much on my mind, my second child's birth coincided with the demise of an ever supportive mother whose zeal and foresight gave me endless strength and inspiration.. A State Registered Nurse who qualified and worked at Noble's Hospital Isle of Man, my mother was a beacon of hope and fortitude. Her memory and the continuous backing of a kind father transmit a veritable sense of courage and uncompromising determination.

As time went by, both siblings grew quite independently and responsible in their day to day encounters. In fact Valentina is working part time with the agency while Dean is at MCAST following a demanding course.

Looking back twenty five years on, I feel deeply honoured and grateful for all the accomplishments which have the stamp of various characters. Ray Ashley, my parents and numerous others contributed in one way or another in an adventure that goes beyond organisation and success. Human relationships, compassion and a genuine understanding of those who walked on my path were the quintessential reasons and ingredients for the fruition of several projects. I thank God for all the blessings and congratulate my competitors whilst extending my appreciation to the models, media, local designers, photographers, and sponsors on the local as well as on the international scene".



Sue, during one of her photo shoots in the early 90's



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