

# Desperately Seeking Eva

She's more domestic goddess than diva, prefers the sentimental glamour of old Hollywood and possesses an exuberant laugh that can put everyone at ease. Prepare to be charmed by Eva Longoria Parker, who couldn't be further from her *Desperate Housewives*' persona. By Terena Thyne. Photographed by Simon Upton. Styled by Kenneth Goh

Wrap dress; long-sleeved knit top; patent leather fingerless gloves; leopard-print metallic leather clutch, Louis Vuitton. Crystal necklace, Lee Angel. Triple-chain necklace (worn as belt), Kenneth Jay Lane. (Left) Cuff with crystal-paved panel, Lee Angel. Crystal-paved cuff, cuff with gold detail, Kenneth Jay Lane. (Right) Cuff with gold motif, Lee Angel. Cuff with heart tassel, Kenneth Jay Lane. Fishnet tights (worn throughout), stylist's own



Walking onto the set in her Juicy Couture tracksuit, Ugg boots and accompanied by a tiny white poodle, Eva shook

our hands with her beaming smile and immediately notices that our photographer's powder blue sweater matches his large blue eyes — talk about instant connection. She makes everyone on set feel immediately comfortable, despite her hectic day filming the day before.

She settles into a bowl of nachos, guacamole dip and a Coke. There's something remarkably wholesome about her. She sits down, has a quick flick through the visuals of what we want to do and immediately tells *BAZAAR*'s Kenneth Goh to choose the outfits for her to wear. "I'm not too fussed about seeing racks of clothes," she says. "Just tell me what works and I'll wear it." Eva gets everything done fast — hair and make-up in 45 minutes, including cutting a shoulder-length wig to a tight '20s bob and getting dressed in the first outfit.

She walks on set, a total remake of Josephine Baker, albeit younger and sexier, and asks, "So how should I pose?" She needn't have asked; she strikes a pose like a professional model. Head up, head down, chin up, mouth apart. She has all the tricks in the modelling handbook down pat, and she knows how to make herself appear longer in pictures. She breaks into her hyena-like laugh when told by Ken Paves, her hairstylist on set (a favourite among Hollywood regulars like Jessica Simpson), to "Drop the pizza, girl!"

The thing is, Eva Longoria Parker is so good at her craft that it's nearly impossible to believe that she doesn't possess an over-the-top, egocentric personality like Gabrielle Solice, the world's favourite *Desperate Housewife*. Eva shines as Gabrielle, the vivacious ex-model whose sexual exploits, skimpy outfits and brash tongue have made her one of the Hollywood's most recognisable faces. But as I discovered over the course of our conversation, she is far from her on-screen persona, who all too often puts herself at the centre of her universe.

Instead, Eva is a self-described old-fashioned housewife who is more of a domestic goddess than a diva. "I'm extremely domestic. The complete opposite of the man-eating, sex-crazed Gabrielle," she laughs. The 33-year-old may cultivate a carefree persona, but she is a serious political advocate and is deeply immersed in the Latin rights community. One of her projects in the works is producing a documentary called *Harvest*, which tells the story of youth farm workers in the US. "I'm always fighting to give a voice to those who don't have one," she says.

This sort of selfless behaviour solidifies the fact that her warm, infectious laugh and unpretentious air is the real deal. "The greatest misconception about me is that I am like Gabrielle," she says. "I love to cook. I love to sew. I love to clean." She is so passionate about cooking that she has opened her own restaurant, Beso, in Hollywood. "I love the art of cooking, mixing ingredients together. It's like painting with taste and flavour. I feel like Beso is an extension of my own living room and kitchen. I've always been cooking for my friends, my family and, of course, my husband."

Her husband, Tony Parker, is a star guard for the NBA's San Antonio Spurs, and the couple was married in a fairytale-like chateau outside Paris last year. The brunette caught his eye during a game and the

couple had a two-and-a-half year romance before tying the knot. Eva claims she has happily settled into married life, even though that means a long-distance relationship. Somehow the couple manages to make it work, shuttling between LA, San Antonio and other places in between. This Valentine's Day was spent in Phoenix, Arizona, where her husband was selected to play in the all-star game. "I'm a big basketball fan so I love watching him play," she says. For all the frequency of her travelling, Eva knows where her heart lies. "I work in Los Angeles. But I live in Texas. I can't wait to move back home to Texas."

But with her meteoric rise to fame since landing on *Wisteria Lane*, it's doubtful she will be making that move back to Texas anytime soon. She cherishes her role on *Desperate Housewives* and is thankful for the opportunities it has given her. "I hit the lotto when I landed the role of Gabrielle," she says. "No one knew it was going to be such a huge phenomenon. It's so rare that this happens for a show. Since it started everything in my life has changed. It's been a great experience."

And what about all of those rumours of catfights on the set? Eva quickly dispels any friction with her co-stars. "I love the family of *Desperate Housewives* and I love the opportunities it has given me," she says. The day we spoke, it was just announced that Nicollette Sheridan would be leaving the show, and Eva was clearly distraught upon hearing the news. "I'm so sad because she is one of my best friends on the show. When I heard about it I was completely shocked," she says. "Also, I'm going to miss her character. She is one of the funniest characters on the show."

Holding strong in its fifth season, the housewives on *Wisteria Lane* have all gone through changes, but none have been as drastic as Gabrielle's metamorphosis into a frumpy housewife. Tabloids have reported on Eva's slight weight gain, hinting at a possible pregnancy. But she dismisses those rumours and, although she had to put on a few extra pounds for her character, she is still a size zero. Most actresses would cringe at the thought of being on screen with no make-up, but Eva is confident enough that she relishes playing the character. "I love it because it means less time in make-up!" In the show, Gabby appears sans make-up, dons unflattering clothes and even wears scrunchies in her hair. "I love the change that Gabrielle has experienced," Eva says. "I love to see her growth as a character." But she hints at a return to her glamorous ways. "There is a financial situation that contributes to changing her lifestyle. You will see the old Gabby back that we love."

While she may not mind being on camera without make-up, Eva still has a hard time identifying with either of Gabrielle's characters. "The old Gabby was just too fashionable and too stylish, and the new Gabby has let herself go. She's just kind of frumpy and trying to hide her body. My own style isn't reflected in any of the characters that I play. I describe my personal style as comfortable."

Comfortable maybe, yet Eva's choices for red carpet events are a throwback to the glamorous '40s-era old Hollywood, which is one of her favourite time periods to recreate. She wore a stunning red satin Reem Acra gown for this year's Golden Globes that was elegant yet seriously sexy. "I love a lot of Latin designers," she says. "I feel that they cut for a woman really well. They always have vibrant colours that I love. I'm not a fan of black." Some of her favourite designers include Oscar de la Renta, Angel Sanchez and Carolina Herrera.



Halter-neck swimsuit with wooden embellishments; feather skirt, Louis Vuitton. Enamel earrings, Lee Angel. Ostrich feather fan, Mother Plucker. Lace gloves, Gaspar Gloves. (Left) Crystal-paved cuff; enamel bangle with multicoloured diamantés; gold cuff with pearls, M.C.L. by Matthew Campbell Laurenza. (Right) Gold bangle with pearls; pearl-encrusted gold bangle; enamel bangle with multicolour stones, M.C.L. by Matthew Campbell Laurenza. Lacquered wooden Leomonogram bangle, Louis Vuitton





Multi-fabric jacket; knit tank top; embroidered shorts; patent leather fingerless gloves; gold spiral earrings with resin embellishments; wooden, resin and brass neckpiece; suede peep-toe pumps, Louis Vuitton

But she didn't always look so fashionable. She lets out a boisterous laugh when remembering her biggest fashion faux pas. "In high school, if you had Girbaud jeans it was the thing. I just remember wanting a pair so badly, and my mom bought me the imitation ones from the flea market," she chuckles. Now that she can buy all the designer items she desires, her current must-haves are the Yves Saint Laurent platform pumps that add a few inches to her 5-foot-2-inch frame. "I have them in every colour," she says.

A Corpus Christi, Texas native, Eva grew up light years away from the glamour of Hollywood. The youngest of four girls in her family, she was raised on a ranch with chickens and cows. "My parents were very humble and we even grew our own vegetables," she says. "It's really a nice experience to grow up that way. It was very, very simple."

It's hard to believe that Eva used to consider herself an ugly duckling, but she was called "la prieta faya" or "the ugly dark one" as a child. She was the only one of her fair-haired sisters with dark eyes and skin, and she always felt like the odd one out. Her destiny for a life in front of the camera was set into motion when she won her hometown's Miss Corpus Christi beauty pageant and a chance to compete in a Los Angeles talent show. Once she reached LA, she stayed and was signed by a talent agent. The determined young actress secured her first big TV roles in 2000 on *Beverly Hills 90210* and on *The Young and the Restless* in 2001 before landing the role of a lifetime with *Desperate Housewives*.

Now as one of the most popular TV actresses in Hollywood, Eva is relentlessly chased and photographed by the paparazzi. Yet she doesn't let them upset or alter her life. "I just take it as part of the job," she says. "I just live my life and if you get photographed then you get photographed. I don't spend a lot of time or energy [worrying about] it." One of the other bonuses of the time she gets to spend in Texas is that she gets a break from being followed and can live a more normal life.

Instead, Eva actively uses her fame to spotlight issues within the Latino community, and she feels a responsibility to push for Latino civil rights. She is a national spokesperson for Padres Contra el Cancer (Parents Against Cancer), a non-profit organisation based in LA that is dedicated to improving the quality of life for Latino children with cancer and their families. She also works closely with the United Farm Workers and the National Council of La Raza. Last year she founded Eva's Heroes in San Antonio, which is an after-school programme for children with developmental challenges. Besides giving back to the community, she's quite politically active and even campaigned for Barack Obama in Colorado, New Mexico and Texas. "I was watching the election coverage at home with some friends," she says. "I was so excited when he won."

Eva is also a motivated businesswoman and formed her own production company, UnbeliEVable. She clearly has her sights set beyond Wisteria Lane and is taking a vested interest in developing and producing projects. "We have a lot of television work we are developing with ABC, ABC Family and Lifetime," she explains. "I have also secured several book rights that I think will make great movies."

So what's next for this not-so-desperate housewife? "I'm filming a movie this summer that I'm really excited about," she says. "I've also voiced my desire to play Maria Félix, one of the biggest Mexican stars when Mexican cinema was at its highest." Whatever role she plays — onscreen or off — when it's Eva, we know it's going to be big. ■



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Feather top; feather skirt;  
layered metallic calf leather  
belt with toggles; python skin  
embellished stilettos, Louis  
Vuitton. Enamel earrings,  
Lee Angel. Lace gloves,  
Gaspar Gloves. (Left) Enamel  
bangle with multicoloured  
diamantés; turquoise and  
silver bangle; enamel cuff  
with multicoloured stones,  
M.C.L. by Matthew Campbell  
Laurenza. Lacquered wooden  
Leomonogram bangle, Louis  
Vuitton. (Right) Enamel  
bangle with gold detail;  
bejewelled cuffs; enamel  
bangle with multicoloured  
diamantés, M.C.L. by  
Matthew Campbell Laurenza.  
Lacquered wooden  
Zemonogram bangle,  
Louis Vuitton

OPPOSITE PAGE: Knit top;  
patent leather fingerless  
gloves, Louis Vuitton. Feather  
headpiece, Mother Plucker

See Buylines for details

Hair: Ken Paves/Style  
Management Agency  
Make-up: Elan Bongiorno/  
Celestine Agency  
Manicure: Kimmie Kyees/  
Celestine Agency  
Digital imaging:  
www.jasonriddell.biz  
Production: David Kim/  
Visionary NY  
Photography assistants:  
Tarik Richards, Kelly Wilt  
Styling assistants: Rebecca  
Alexis, Hayachira Mendez  
Additional assistance:  
Patricia Dean