

STYLE



The Height of Style

Former model **Kendall Conrad** juggles all the elements of her busy life with style. This multitasking Montecito mom successfully divides her time between a handsome hubby, David Cameron (a former fashion designer turned commercial director), two adorable daughters, and a new line of luxury handbags.

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You're the daughter of Barnaby (writer, painter and former bullfighter) and Mary Conrad, cofounders of the Santa Barbara Writers Conference. What was your childhood like?

Very bohemian. Lots of travel, music and glamorous parties my parents hosted with fabulous people—great writers like James Michener, Ray Bradbury and John Steinbeck, musicians and actors like Artie Shaw, John Ireland and Bing Crosby.

How did you end up modeling?

I was 14 when I did my first shoot for *San Francisco Magazine*, which was really fun. They were saying, "We'll get you going—you're great!" But I had also just gotten accepted into Taft, a boarding school in Connecticut, and I really wanted to get an education. So I thought I'd wait and see if I still wanted to model after I graduated, and I did, so I started with the Elite modeling agency then.

Who did you model for?

Valentino, Calvin Klein, Isaac Mizrahi and Armani. I did a lot of European *Vogues*. In America, I did *Harper's Bazaar*, *Vogue*, *Elle*, *Mirabella* and *Mademoiselle*. My favorite photographer to work with was Helmut Newton, who was the greatest ever.

Did you pick up any fashion tricks?

Less is more—in everything. I once read that you should get completely ready then take off one accessory before walking out the door.

Who are your fashion icons?

Anouk Aimée, star of the French film *A Man and a Woman*, Carine Roitfeld, editor of *French Vogue*, and Dominique Sanda, a French actress. They know who they are and what to do with themselves. They are feminine, but strong. I'm really inspired by art and film—the original *Thomas Crown Affair* with Faye Dunaway, and Catherine Deneuve in *Belle de Jour* because of her exquisite chicness.

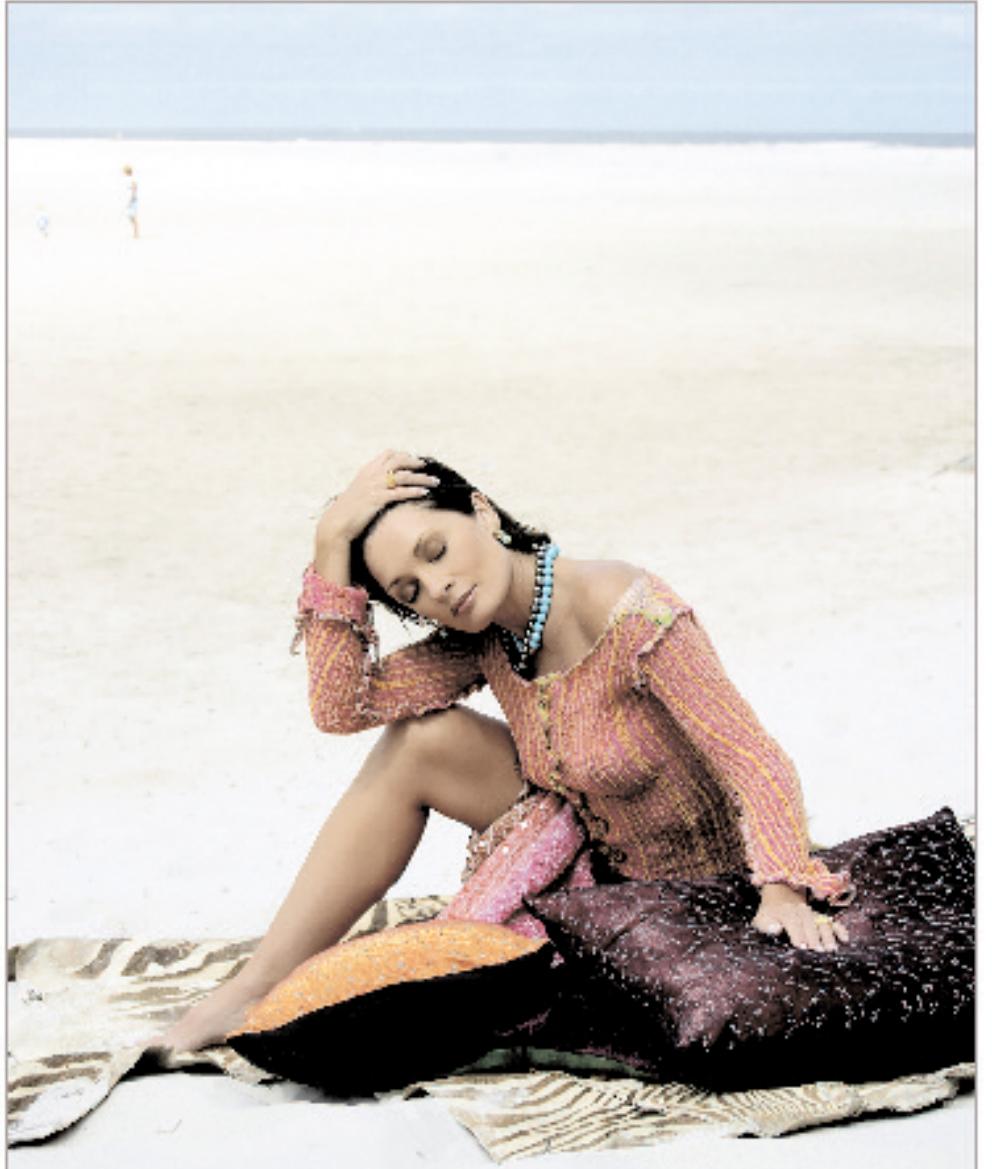
Do you remember the first bag you owned and loved?

Yes, it was an Italian leather messenger bag

The N°9 bag in black crocodile from Kendall's collection. OPPOSITE, TOP: On the go in her favorite custom-made tunic dress and her N°2 bag in brown suede. OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: Wooden heels by Roberto Cavalli

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that I took all over Europe while I was modeling there. I kept everything in it. If that bag could talk!

Describe your line of bags.

They're very upscale—structured alligator, crocodile and leathers—with Italian hardware. The zippers are all plated in 24-karat gold. There are nine different styles in brown, black and white.

What do you keep in your own bag?

I always have my Clé de Peau lip balm, Kiehl's hand lotion, my Motorola V60i and a chocolate brown wallet I designed.

What is your beauty regime?

I love taking baths with REN's Moroccan rose otto bath oil from London. On my face, I use Susan Ciminelli essential oils and seawater and La Roche-Posay Anthelios sunblock, which is the best. I wear Clé de Peau makeup, but only at night.

Your daytime look?

I love wearing this tunic that I had made in every color—it's my uniform for the day. I usually add lots of jewelry to it, and when it's cold, I wear a scarf around my neck.

Where did you meet David, your husband of nine years?

At the Coral Casino when I was 16. He had just moved to Santa Barbara—it was love at first sight. He designed my dress for my San Francisco debut—he was 21 and I was 18. It was a long, white sleeveless silk velvet col-

KENDALL'S FIVE FAVORITE THINGS

- 1 Bag N°9 in chocolate brown crocodile from her eponymous new purse collection
- 2 Gold and leather cuff bracelet by LFrank
- 3 Cashmere scarves and sweaters by Denis Columb
- 4 Oversized sunglasses by Gucci or Oliver Peoples
- 5 French or Italian lingerie



Inside Kendall's bag: oversized Gucci sunglasses, an iPod, a digital camera and a wallet of her own design. (N°9 bag in brown crocodile.)

umn dress—I had David on my arm as well as my long white leather gloves.

Was that the first dress he made?

At the time, he was already designing clothes for Michael Vollbracht, who he worked with for four years before starting his own company. In 1986, he won the Perry Ellis Award—it was the very first year they gave it out. I was in a few videos for his collections as well as some other commercials and small films he did.

Does your husband prefer you dressed up or casual?

He has such a sophisticated eye. It's unerring. I think he likes to see me wearing the clothes, not the clothes wearing me—just classic and simple.

Who are your favorite designers?

Yves Saint Laurent and Gucci always fit well.

Has your height (five-foot-10) ever stopped you from wearing heels?

Oh gosh, no, bring it on! The taller the better. There's no middle ground for me—I either wear complete flats or very high heels. My husband is six-foot-two so I'm never taller than him with heels. I love my

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A gold and leather cuff bracelet by LFrank. OPPOSITE: Jewelry by LFrank, candle by Votivo, painting by Fred Gowland.

Roger Vivier pumps—they're super high and pointy cockroach killers, which have lots of toe cleavage. I also love my brown strappy Louboutins (see top photo, page 70).

You are known for your extra-long legs.
Do you have trouble finding pants that fit?
Always. The best are Shagg jeans by Sally Hershberger [the hairdresser who gave Meg Ryan her famous shag now has a hip new clothing line, Shagg Downtown].

Where do you like to shop outside of Santa Barbara?

I go to New York two or three times a year, and my favorite shops there are Bergdorf Goodman, Jeffrey New York in the Meatpacking District, Bathing Ape in Soho, shops on Elizabeth Street and, of course, Madison Avenue. In Paris, I like Colette and a really great store called L'Eclaireur.

Do you speak French?
Yes, and Spanish and Italian, but not all fluently and sometimes all at once—a true trans-Euro hodgepodge language. I know just enough to communicate.

Do your girls Louisa, 7, and Fanny, 5, ever play dress up in your closet?

They love to go shopping with me and try on what I try on in stores, and they've been known to throw impromptu fashion shows. They love it—they are very girly.

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What was the last gown you wore?
A long black sleeveless Azzedine Alaia gown that David bought me.

You're known for your party music mixes.
Who are your favorite bands right now?
I love everything—Scissor Sisters and General Electric. I like melody, beat and funk. I love Gorillaz's "Feel Good Inc."

How do you stay in shape?
I'm pretty health conscious—I only eat good, whole, organic food. I never eat sweets, except dark chocolate—that's my favorite.

Do you have any fashion don'ts?
Chewing gum. There is nothing worse than a beautiful girl in a gorgeous outfit smacking on gum. And bracelets over sleeves, I can't stand that.

How would you describe your style?
There is a wonderful French saying, "Etre bien dans sa peau," which means to feel good in your skin.

—SAMANTHA HUTCHINSON

For information on Kendall Conrad bags, call 805-455-4033; prices: \$1,300-\$5,000.



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