



Sass, Sparkle & Pop

Reality starlet Stassi Schroeder uses her powers for good

Words by Vanessa Pascale

It's a mid-November night, and I find Stassi Schroeder—in a black Natalie Chapman neck tie, and ethereal white shirt paired with black pants—waiting for me in the lobby with my vodka-soda request in a Solo cup. After some misconstrued meeting location confusion, a cocktail is warranted. I was sent to The Gansevoort, where Stassi stayed the night before, but as of this morning she is staying here—a friend's place in New York's Financial District. Coincidentally, her *Vanderpump Rules* cast mate Tom Sandoval was at The Gansevoort too, when I was there minutes ago.

"I saw him today as I was checking out," says Stassi. Tom said some not-so-nice things about Stassi in a recent interview. "I try not to read any of that stuff because yeah, he doesn't really know me very well anymore. I don't know actually what was said, I just know that it was not nice." I tell her what I read. The resilient blonde-blue-eyed beauty shrugs Tom's comments off. Having been mixed up in much of the SUR staff's drama, and at times at the center of it, this is nothing new for the New Orleans-born-and-raised reality star.

Awhile back Stassi walked away from the Bravo show, but has returned for Season Four. What made you jump back on that bandwagon, 'cause you were off? "I was so off of that bandwagon!" she says animatedly. "And I've said this in my podcast. I've said this a couple of times, I feel like I look bipolar or insane." She laughs. "And it is, of course, embarrassing that I had said so much that I was done with it and then to go back. All of the heat I'm about to get, I expect that. You will see why I came back... that will be explained," she says cryptically.

I feel like you get such a bad rap from people (the episode she returns in is titled "The Bitch Is Back") -- do you think they portray you accurately? Do you think it's twisted? "No, I take full responsibility for everything I do on-camera. Obviously, there is a lot more that I live, and they can't show my whole life. They can only show 20 seconds of it... I own everything that I say and that's fine... I never say, 'I can't believe they edited me like this,' 'cause well, I did say it. But I also said other things... I'm not going to complain about it. I know what I signed up for." In the episode leading up to Stassi's return, ex-flame Jax Taylor sums up her departure: "Stassi didn't really just disappear, she pissed off *everyone*..." She's not on the outs with everyone though --Stassi has forgiven Kristen Doute and from the last couple episodes and previews seems to be trying to make amends with Katie Maloney and her former boss, *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*' Lisa Vanderpump.

Vanderpump Rules wasn't Stassi's first taste of reality television, she had done *The Amazing Race* when she was a 16-year-old gothic girl "going

through the worst awkward stage of my life," and *Queen Bees* "an embarrassing reality show" at 19. "I knew like how to do it, I guess. That sounds weird, but it wasn't new for me," she says of being cast on *Vanderpump Rules*. After working at SUR for two years, one day, producers walked in to the restaurant to interview the staff for a reality show about SUR's sexy servers. Of course, the no-holds-barred bombshell was cast. With all the success the show has received, does the cast really still work at SUR? "Yeah, most of them still work there. All I can say is life goes on and we're all going to have our different paths, so I can't just stay working at SUR forever. I wanted to do other things. I was there for four years," she says of her departure. Though, she's no longer at SUR, the show invited her back. "It's like I can't escape reality TV," she laughs.

This style maven has redirected her energy toward her own projects and passions. She's been filling her time with her style blog, *Style By Stassi*. Her obsession with fashion blogs had her poring over fifteen blogs a day. "Whenever I would look at blogs, I always left feeling inadequate. *I'm not that skinny and my skin's not that perfect. I can't afford to have a head-to-toe designer. My body type doesn't work for this.*" She decided that she would create her own blog, but it would be relatable. To pop that perfect-world bubble, Stassi shares the not-so-hot happenings during her photo shoots, embarrassing moments, her struggle with psoriasis (and the makeup she uses to cover up the patches on her face)... "I talk about, yes, of course I Facetune my shit. *This is not totally real. Nothing you normally see in magazines or anything is real. I want it to be funny. I want girls to feel like they're not alone, to feel inspired and more comfortable. Like, Oh, she goes through that stuff, too...*"

But when it comes to really connecting with others, her weekly podcast *Straight Up with Stassi* --which she's been doing for almost a year now-- feeds that need. When CBS radio approached Stassi about her own podcast, she was hesitant and unsure of whether she could fill an hour simply talking. "I've seen how hard that is and that is such a specific talent. And I don't have that talent." With the help of her boyfriend Patrick Meagher and her best friend Taylor Strecker, both are SiriusXM radio hosts, Stassi took the leap. It also didn't hurt that she'd been hanging around Sirius for the last two years, learning and listening. "I was like, this is so fucking scary, I can't not do it." Patrick and Stassi sat down to brainstorm, and soon enough they had a format and show name, *Straight Up with Stassi* (she credits him for both). "It has literally been the most important and most rewarding thing that I've actually done, because it's unedited... I've given my blog email away so listeners can email me. The emails that I get back from people... I actually feel like I'm legitimately connecting with people

through this podcast and I never thought I would say that."

And then there's the Daily Vice app, who she's been curating for, which features accessories, handbags, jewelry and such. "I believe in this app, because I really like things that are affordable. If I see a sale, I'm obsessed. This app is like a 24-hour sale, but it's only one item, so it takes up .001 % of your time. I wake up in the morning, I go and check Instagram, Daily Mail, Twitter, my emails, go to Daily Vice. *Do I like this item, before I was curating it? No? Yes? Yes, I'll buy it. No, I won't.* I like that it's very quick. Now, I'm the curator and it's been really fun." As we wrap up, Stassi notices my semi-full cup. Her own glass is the opposite. "You haven't been drinking, but that's why I gave you a to-go cup, in case you didn't finish it. I thought ahead," she says with smile.

So what would be your ideal gig -- *Fashion Police*? "I would die to do *Fashion Police* or some sort of fashion-related show that's all in good fun. I want fashion to become something that's good with reality TV again. There was *The Rachel Zoe Project* and I was obsessed with it. But I feel like there could be something that is more relatable and more fun for people, 'cause I know that people want to see relationships, friendships, conflict, ups and downs. They don't want to just see the glamorous side of fashion, because it isn't all glamorous. People want to be able to relate." Stassi is trying to figure out how to fuse all her passions into one job. "Joan Rivers is my idol. I want to be a woman who can mix humor and comedy with another passion --whether it's fashion, food, or architecture... I like making things funny. Life's not that serious... If I could find a way to combine fashion and comedy and just being real, and make a full living off of that. That's all I want." **ML**

Keep up with Stassi on Twitter: @StassiSchroeder Instagram: @StassiSchroeder Podcast: *Straight Up with Stassi* and www.stylebystassi.com

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Scream Queens - #1-Fan

"I'm obsessed with *Scream Queens*. I'm making my friends watch it downstairs," says Stassi, who dressed up as Emma Roberts' character Chanel for Halloween. "I am so inspired by their comedic timing and the writing. It's really good. I ask you to please give it a shot, and start from the first episode. It's the creator of *Glee* and *American Horror Story*, so dude knows what he's doing. I've watched every episode like four or five times."