

TRIUMPH OF WILL

ADVERSITY, CHALLENGE,
BALANCE, AND MOTHERHOOD

Actress Brooke Burns is more than just a pretty face. Far from resting upon her innate natural beauty, she has carved her own path through Hollywood by sheer force of will and determination.

By Dana Priggé

PHOTOGRAPHER: GILLES TOUCAS

STYLING: MARISSA PEDEN

HAIR: FRANKIE PAYNE AT OPUS BEAUTY USING NUMBER 4 HAIR CARE

MAKEUP: JULIANNE KAYE USING MAC FOR CLOUTIER REMIX

PRODUCER: MICHELE DINARDO

LOCATION: THE AMERICANA BRAND LUXURY APARTMENTS IN GLENDALE, CA

Swimsuit: Beach Riot
Blazer: Max Mara
Sunglasses: Wildfox



Dress: Aq/Aq
Ring: Roseark

Burns, who first received notoriety for her role on “Baywatch,” went on to score recurring roles in TV staples like “Melrose Place” and hosting the popular game show “The Chase.” She is a lesson in complexity whose adventurous career motivations conflict with her desire for balance. In fact, you could say that Burns lives at the crossroads of “Why not?” and “Family first!”

Chase the Shooting Star

Nowhere is that sense of adventure more readily apparent than in Burns’ role as host of “The Chase,” which was just renewed for its fourth season on GSN. She attributes the show’s energy and pace as what keeps her motivated. “If we’re having fun, the audience is having fun. It really just draws people in and keeps it watchable and entertaining.”

Burns credits the show’s format for its success. “Having been previously established in the UK, it works just as well in the states. It really draws people in.” What she most enjoys? “How the contestants catch the wave and enjoy the ride,” she says.

It’s just that attitude that’s defined her career to date and she’s sure to bring to her upcoming projects – nine movies for the Hallmark Channel based upon a book series called “The Gourmet Detective,” written by Peter King. Appearing alongside Dylan Neal, Burns explains that working with Neal on the streets of San Francisco to shoot these mystery films was an experience that appealed to her adventurous side. “I have a bit of my father in me when I say that a love of adventure compels me to take opportunities.”

She credits such sense of adventure and a willingness to take chances for much of her career success.

“I’m a big believer in saying ‘yes.’ Certain doors opened and certain opportunities were available to me that other people may have shied away from because it was new or uncharted territory,” says Burns. “Taking those chances – whether good or bad – you learn something about yourself ... whether it’s a new passion or skill, you learn it because you’re open to things in life and are unafraid to say ‘yes’ and just go for it.”

Fashion Fun and Must-Haves

Burns is no stranger to high fashion and glamour, having transitioned from the runway to the soundstage. While she can light up a photo shoot, she’s also just as comfortable in a more casual atmosphere.

“I’m kind of a staple girl. I have my go-to’s in my wardrobe and my accessories. I’ll kick it up and have fun every once in a while. I love having my silver studs and my gold studs.”

“I’m also a jeans and t-shirt/tank top kind of girl. I definitely have a deep love of glamour and fashion, but being an everyday mom, that works for me too.”

Burns continued her style and beauty advice: “The one thing that helps everyone look their best is to get sleep. After that, take care of your skin; I’ve been using Armani foundation, it’s a must have.”

Grace Under Fire

The 36-year old star clearly isn’t your ordinary actress. She is a multi-talented, modern woman whose origins are in ballet and dance. When a severe injury ended her hopes and dreams of plies and pirouettes, Burns transitioned toward a new career, utilizing the grace that defined her dance to help her glide down the fashion runway.

“I have found in every area of my life that grace is a huge trait that not only took me into modeling, but has applied in every other area of my life – not only as an actress, but in social situations as well.”

Burns’ path was not free of obstacles. Her dance career was cut short, her marriage ended in divorce, and she recently suffered a broken neck as the result of a car accident. This has not slowed down her drive nor diminished her determination.

“When you have a setback, don’t take a step back, get ready for your comeback.”

Burns describes her principles in overcoming adversity quite matter-of-factly: “You’re going to fail. How do you become an over-comer? It’s about how you get back up, not just to start at the same place, but to move forward and learn to commit better the next time.”



Top: Sass & Bibe
Trousers: Rag n Bone

Burns credits her strong family relationships, strength, and the lessons she derived from her parents with helping her overcome the emotional repercussions of losing out on her early dreams in dance.

“I had an incredible foundation with my family and an amazing mom and dad,” she says. “My mother specifically helped me out during that early setback with my dancing career – she was such a rock and was very in tune to what effects it could have on my emotions. She helped guide me through that time and helped open other doors and explore other interests.”

As a parent herself, Burns recognizes how much she applies these lessons to her own family life. “I have never forgotten our family motto of getting back up and [being] ready to make a comeback.”

“I have overcome a lot in my life, from little things to when I broke my neck,” she says. “Those lessons I learned from my parents have always been there.”

Boundaries, Balance, and Discipline

“I have always made the choice to put my family first – if I’ve made sacrifices, it’s been with respect to my career.”

That’s no more readily apparent than this past holiday season. “I turned down a film out of the country because it conflicted with my daughter’s Christmas play. I also just had an experience where I flew home in between days of filming because she wanted me to do her makeup for her first high school formal. Those are the mile markers you have to show up for.”

Here was Burns speaking not of her career, but as a doting mom, filling the support role she leaned on in her childhood. “At the end of my life, am I going to go, ‘I can’t believe I didn’t take that job,’ or ‘I can’t believe I wasn’t there for my daughter at that moment?’”

Burns explained her secret in finding balance. “How much you work vs. how much family time you allot is an individual life decision.” It’s all about setting boundaries, she explains. “If you can do small things to take care of yourself and bring happiness to yourself, then you will be able to and be better equipped to give that happiness and care to others in your life.”

Willpower and self-discipline are the traits that define Burns. “I love the idea that women are encouraged to go after their dreams – do the work, do the groundwork, do the research, do it all with passion. Perseverance is key. Try it six times. Nothing is better than doing what you love. Don’t give up; stick to your goals. Persevere in the face of adversity.” ■